



## Media Release:

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### **Fitzroy Basin waterways handed a C grade for 2016-17**

Today the Fitzroy Partnership for River Health (Fitzroy Partnership) released its seventh report card on the state of waterways across the Fitzroy Basin. Results on local waterway health for the 2016-17 year were announced at the Central Queensland Waterway Research Forum held in conjunction with the Central Queensland Mining Rehabilitation Group.

The report features results for aquatic ecosystem health, agriculture and drinking water suitability in Rockhampton Regional Council and Central Highlands Regional Council areas. The 2016-17 report provides the most comprehensive picture of waterway health available, and is endorsed by an Independent Science Panel.

“Overall the Fitzroy Basin received a C grade for aquatic ecosystem health in 2016-17, down from the B grades awarded the previous three years,” Fitzroy Partnership Executive Officer Nathan Johnston reported.

“As part of our reporting process, we examine climatic factors like rainfall, groundcover and flooding to get a more complete picture of what is going on year on year. An interesting observation is that as we look back on our ecosystem health results in the last seven years, both 2016-17 and 2012-13 report card scores are similar,” Nathan explained.

“When we took a look at the rainfall patterns reported back in 2012-13, there are similarities between the two years, with good rain in eastern catchments and drier conditions out west,” he said.

The report draws from more than 635,000 water samples from across 287 monitoring sites in the Basin. While there is plenty of data for some catchments, data for most ecology indicators is still patchy across the Basin and catchments like the Upper Nogoa.

Water suitability for stock and crops was generally good, with As and some Bs awarded in 2016-17, while drinking water suitability retained it’s A grade status.

“Yearly waterway health reports help everyone understand long-term trends and patterns emerging across the Fitzroy Basin, which enables us to monitor and determine if changes to land and water management practices are required to sustain healthy waterways and the reef,” says Nathan.

This year, long-term trends on Fitzroy estuary health have been explored and reported thanks to data collected by the Queensland Government across more than two decades.

“Since 1994, Fitzroy estuary health has generally been good except for 2010-11 and 2011-12 reporting years which were awarded Cs,” says Nathan.

The lowest score for estuary health was recorded in 2010-11 which coincided with the biggest flooding event during the two decades of monitoring.



Central Queenslanders are encouraged to access the latest Agricultural Use Reporting, Aquatic Ecosystem Health of local rivers and the estuary; and Drinking Water for Rockhampton and Central Highlands from the FPRH website at [www.riverhealth.org.au](http://www.riverhealth.org.au).

The Fitzroy Partnership for River Health formed in 2012, includes organisations from government, agriculture, resources, industry, research and community and continues its aim of providing a more complete picture of river health in the Fitzroy Basin.

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