

Fitzroy Basin regional receiving environment monitoring program guideline

For use with environmentally relevant activities under the
Environmental Protection Act 1994



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Prepared by: Coal and Central Compliance, Environmental Services and Regulation, Department of Environment and Science.

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Version history

Version	Effective date	Description of changes
1.00	22 June 2023	First published version of the guideline.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The aim of this guideline is to outline the key stakeholders, governance framework and key implementation steps to establish a regional receiving environment monitoring program in the Fitzroy Basin. In order to implement the Fitzroy Basin Regional Receiving Environment Monitoring Program (FRREMP) appropriately, this guideline should also be consulted in association with the currently endorsed FRREMP Technical Design Manual (design document).

1.2 Receiving Environment Monitoring Program

A Receiving Environment Monitoring Program (REMP) must be designed to meet the specified conditions of the environmental approval and consider the Department of Environment and Science (DES) REMP Guideline (DES 2014). The guideline states that “the aim of a REMP is to monitor and assess the potential impacts of controlled or uncontrolled releases of wastewater and associated contaminants to the environment from a regulated activity.”

A REMP comprises a design document and an annual results report.

Regulated activities in the Fitzroy Basin may have a requirement to undertake a REMP as a condition of their Environmental Authority (EA) under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (EP Act). From a regulatory perspective, the REMP provides a basis for evaluating whether the discharge limits or other conditions imposed upon an activity have, over time, been successful in maintaining or protecting receiving environment values.

1.3 Project inception

The Fitzroy Partnership for River Health (FPRH) undertook a catchment-wide monitoring efficiency review in 2015–16 and identified the opportunity for individual site REMPs to be replaced by a basin wide REMP. Subsequently, the FPRH developed a proposal for a basin wide REMP in 2017, which received general support from industry partners.

FPRH engaged the Water Science Support unit of the Science Division within DES (DES Science) to undertake the Fitzroy Coal Mine Receiving Water Monitoring for Regulation – Efficiency Review and Gap Analysis (Claus and Ramsay 2018). The review highlighted an opportunity to create efficiencies in monitoring and greater consistency across sites as well as a number of recommendations for monitoring and data management.

The key points and recommendations of the review were incorporated into the FRREMP Technical Design Manual.

1.4 Project aim

Initially, the FRREMP will focus on coal mines, however the scope of the project may be expanded to other regulated activities in the future.

The FRREMP will replace the individual REMPs for each participating coal mine with a single basin-wide integrated program that meets the REMP regulatory requirements for coal mines.

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2 FRREMP Stakeholders

2.1 Department of Environment and Science (DES)

2.2.1 Science

The Water Science Support unit of the Science division within DES provides monitoring and assessment services for surface waters and groundwater throughout Queensland. Providing advice, technical assessments and decision support tools for licensing and development approvals and investigation of environmental incidents.

2.2.2 Environmental Services and Regulation (ESR)

The Coal and Central Compliance Branch of the ESR division within DES delivers environmental assessment services in relation to coal mining activities throughout Queensland including exploration, mining, mineral processing and bulk material handling for coal. ESR also delivers environmental compliance activities, statewide proactive compliance programs and environmental/emergency incident response.

2.2 Fitzroy Basin Association

Fitzroy Basin Association (FBA) is a natural resource management organisation based in Rockhampton. FBA works with agriculture, resources, industry, government, research and community interest groups across the Fitzroy Basin in central Queensland.

FBA is the FRREMP Program Manager, and is responsible for the delivery of the FRREMP including:

- a. Meeting the obligations of the endorsed FRREMP design document
- b. Contractual engagement with the Participants that triggers financial contribution to the FRREMP costs
- c. Tender for the engagement of a suitably qualified field samplers(s) for the collection of field readings, sampling, in-situ measurements and taxonomic testing
- d. Tender for the selection of a NATA certified analytical laboratory (can be performed simultaneously with the field work contractor)
- e. Prepare the annual report and submit data to DES Water Tracking and Electronic Reporting System (WaTERS).

2.3 Participants

EA holders located in the Fitzroy Basin can elect to participate in the FRREMP.

There are more than 50 coal mines within the Fitzroy Basin which would be eligible to join the FRREMP scheme.

Participants must meet the participation requirements in this guideline for the FRREMP to satisfy their REMP regulatory obligations.

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3 FRREMP Governance

3.1 Appointment of Program Manager

FBA is appointed as the FRREMP Program Manager and will manage the participation, delivery and reporting of the FRREMP.

3.2 FRREMP Design

The FRREMP design is specifically tailored to meet REMP requirements for coal mine EAs in the Fitzroy Basin, for operations participating in the program.

DES Science review and assess the proposed FRREMP design document. DES Science endorses the final FRREMP design document.

DES Science advises DES ESR of any issues identified with the FRREMP design document.

3.3 FRREMP EA Application Management

DES ESR will undertake the assessment and management of all FRREMP EA amendment applications for participating coal mines.

3.4 FRREMP Compliance

DES ESR will undertake the compliance review of the FRREMP annual report in accordance with the requirements of the FRREMP design document.

4 Participation in the FRREMP

4.1 Expression of interest

Following invitation from the FRREMP Program Manager (or existing industry participants) EA holders will submit an expression of interest via email to the FRREMP Program Manager. The FRREMP Program Manager will enter into commercial arrangements with each of the proposed FRREMP participants.

4.2 Notification to DES

Each interested participant in the FRREMP will be required to propose local monitoring sites to be included in the FRREMP Technical Design Manual. DES Science will review the proposed local monitoring sites in consultation with the participant.

Following agreement on local monitoring sites, the participant corresponds with DES ESR seeking in principle agreement to be admitted as a participant for the FRREMP.

- a. DES and Participant agree on a list of provisional monitoring sites to offer for inclusion in FRREMP; and
- b. FRREMP Program Manager will then select those that further support the delivery of the FREEMP (this overcomes issues around monitoring overlap or duplication).

4.3 Confirmation or refusal of applicant as participant

Following in-principle agreement with DES, the FRREMP Program Manager corresponds with the applicant and:

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- Confirms applicant as FRREMP participant. Details of inclusion of local monitoring sites in Participant Contract and FRREMP design document are confirmed.
OR
- Refuses applicant as FRREMP participant. FRREMP contract is terminated. FRREMP Program Manager issues letter to Participant notifying of termination of contract.

4.4 Design document update

The FRREMP Program Manager updates Appendix 1 of the FRREMP design document with the full list of all participants local automated monitoring sites proposed to be included in the FRREMP.

DES Science reviews and endorses the updated FRREMP design document.

Minor amendments to the FRREMP would be implemented during the field component (i.e. access or safety issues). A review of the trigger for the minor amendment will be performed by the FRREMP Program Manager and determined if the amendment applies to that monitoring round only (i.e. access road blocked or fire / flood) or requires a permanent resolution (i.e. change to PPE or access to the site). For more details on minor amendments refer to the FRREMP design document.

Major amendments, including permanent changes to sampling locations, sampling procedures, and or analysis methods, shall be incorporated in an annual operational review (section 7). Any updates to the FRREMP design document will be reviewed and endorsed by DES Science prior to implementation of the proposed changes.

4.5 Amendment of the Environmental Authority (EA)

Participants in the FRREMP will apply to DES ESR to amend their EAs by agreement to include EA conditions enabling participation in FRREMP to their existing REMP conditions. Amendment proposals must be submitted by the EA holder. The FRREMP EA conditions are detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. EA conditions for sites participating in the FRREMP

Condition Ref	Condition description
RR1	Conditions <insert site specific REMP condition references> do not apply if the environmental authority holder is a participant of the FRREMP.
RR2	The environmental authority holder must notify the administering authority in a written statement within twenty (20) business days of ceasing to be a participant of the FRREMP. The written statement must detail how the environmental authority holder is going to fulfil the requirements of conditions <insert site specific REMP condition references>.
Definitions	<p>'Participant of the FRREMP' means an environmental authority holder that is identified as a current participant by the organisation carrying out the Regional REMP.</p> <p>'FRREMP' means a Fitzroy Basin Receiving Environment Monitoring Program for the region in which the EA is located, that has been endorsed in writing by the administering authority.</p>

4.6 Leaving the FRREMP

A Participant can choose to leave the FRREMP at any time, if they no longer want to be a Participant.

If a Participant chooses to leave the FRREMP:

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- a. their participation ceases on the day they inform the FRREMP Program Manager in writing of their intention to leave; and
- b. they are no longer eligible to use the FRREMP conditions within their EA.
As per condition RR2, the EA holder must notify DES ESR in a written statement within twenty business days of ceasing to be a Participant of the FRREMP. The written statement must detail how the EA holder is going to fulfil the requirements of the EA site specific REMP conditions.

DES ESR will undertake amendments by agreement for EA holders who are no longer Participants of the FRREMP and provide written agreement to removal of the FRREMP EA conditions.

DES ESR will undertake s215(b) *Notice of proposed amendments* for EA holders who are no longer Participants of the FRREMP and do not provide written agreement to removal of the FRREMP EA conditions.

4.7 Change in EA holder

If the EA holder for a Participant changes, the new EA holder can choose to continue as a Participant or leave the FRREMP program and comply with the relevant EA REMP conditions. Notice must be provided to DES ESR as per condition RR2.

5 Data and Reporting

5.1 Data management

The FRREMP Program Manager will ensure that all monitoring data is of appropriate quality, is managed in accordance with the design document, and stored securely.

Data collected under the FRREMP must be submitted annually to WaTERS database by 30 September each year.

5.2 Reporting

The FRREMP Program Manager will prepare a final annual FRREMP report in accordance with the design document for the preceding program year and provide to DES on behalf of the Participants by 30 October each year.

6 Compliance review

DES will undertake a review of the FRREMP annual report in accordance with the requirements of the FRREMP design document. This will include a review of the reporting, data management and quality assurance/quality control requirements for the FRREMP.

DES ESR will provide the FRREMP Program Manager with outcomes of the review including any necessary corrections and improvements to future reports.

In the event that FRREMP data indicates an impact or anomaly, DES ESR will engage directly with the relevant EA holders to further investigate the results. This engagement may be with multiple EA holders and where appropriate involve communication with any agent involved in sampling relevant to the results.

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7 FRREMP annual operational review

The FRREMP Program Manager will undertake an annual operational review. The review will include the following aspects:

- review of the monitoring locations, parameters and data to identify any necessary changes to the design document
- identify any improvements for inclusion in the program design
- confirm participants and local monitoring sites for the next year
- review any report recommendations.

The process for the review and update of the FRREMP is summarised in Figure 1.

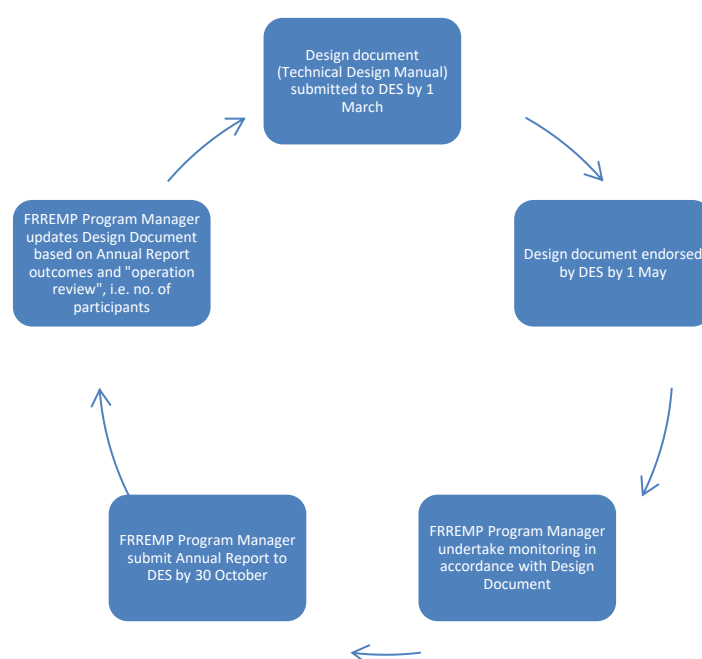


Figure 1. FRREMP review and update process

8 References

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