

Reinstating natural flow

East Micalo Island floodgate

The site

Micalo Island was historically recognised as one of the most ecologically important areas of the lower Clarence River because it provided essential nursery and breeding habitat for a diverse range of species including recreational and commercially important fish. However, the island has been severely degraded by past traditions of clearing land for agriculture, and drain and levee bank construction for flood mitigation.

Proponent: Fred and Chris Welsh (landowners)

Land use: private, grazing

Habitat grant: \$10,000

In-kind support: 26,733

The project

Fred and Chris Welsh, who run a number of cattle and horses on their property, recognised the importance of healthy aquatic habitat to native fish populations and improved land management. They applied for funding to install a tidal floodgate at the mouth of a drain and increase the width of a pipe running through a levee bank, thereby providing a stronger connection between the drain and the main river channel.



Contractors laying the new floodgate pipe. Photo: F.Welsh

The outcomes

The new tidal floodgates and larger pipe have:

- introduced tidal flows and fish passage to over 5 kilometres of waterway and extensive areas of saltmarsh
- increased the range of fish in the newly opened habitat to include mullet, flathead and bream
- improved water quality
- reduced nuisance aquatic weed growth.



'We see this as a win-win situation for the environment and property owners' Fred Welsh. Photo: I&I NSW