

# 2014 water quality IMPROVEMENT PLAN

## Mackay City Management Area Progress Report

### Summary of progress

The Mackay City catchment area is subject to pressures and demands of multiple high intensity land uses that include cane production, urban and industrial development, and to a lesser but significant level, grazing. A little under 15% of the catchment is National Park with approximately 10% identified as wetlands.

In 2007, the Mackay City catchment area freshwater systems were rated as being in relatively poor ecological condition compared with other catchment areas in the Mackay Whitsunday region. The estuarine area of the catchment is considered amongst the lowest rated in the region. Between 2007 and 2013, there has been considerable effort to improve agricultural and urban water quality management. As a result, the water quality of the Mackay City catchment area has improved, however efforts will need to continue to meet community values for ecosystem health and water quality health.



*“Best management practice farming systems with controlled traffic and wider rows has meant better soil management, real time savings and even some extra ratoons”* Phil Deguara, Mackay City catchment cane farmer

### Agriculture implementation highlights

- Cane farmers have improved management of soil, nutrients and herbicides on more than 10% of the intensive cropping land with Reef Rescue support
- Graziers have improved pasture management on more than 200 ha with Reef Rescue support
- A sediment detention basin has been constructed on 1 cane property to manage water quality leaving the farm

### Ecosystem implementation highlights

- 5 Stormwater Quality Management Plans developed and adopted by Mackay Regional Council
- 7 Coastal Management Plans developed and adopted by Mackay Regional Council
- 2 barriers to fish migration removed with the construction of baffle fishways
- Foreshore, dune revegetation and weed control programs on 7 Mackay City beaches
- Gross pollutant stormwater traps installed
- Development of Urban ABCD management practice framework
- Logwood control program across 270 ha of the catchment

### Future priorities

Grazing and cane management practices that reduce nitrogen and phosphorus loads are the highest priority for continued water quality improvement in the Mackay City catchment. As marine risk exposure from pesticide and nutrient loads is rated as high in the near shore environments, management practices that reduce other nutrients and residual herbicides, particularly diuron, are also a priority.

All system repair actions that improve fish habitat and species richness are critical to improve the poor ecological health rating for the Mackay City catchment. Investment in estuary and mangrove restoration to improve ecological condition is also crucial to build the resilience of coastal systems.



Gross pollutant stormwater trap installed at Paget as part of a management program that includes monitoring the type and quantity of debris collected from industrial and urban areas