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**MEDIA RELEASE // MACKAY – RELEASE DATE: FRIDAY 03/08/2018**

**Farmers foster fertile soils to combat climate challenges**

Farmers are taking the lead in a unique collaboration of groups and conversations on climate mitigation, carbon storage, regenerative agriculture and transitioning to renewable energy.

Farmers for Climate Action, Reef Catchments, Mackay Regional Council, and Mackay Conservation Group and the farmer-led Central Queensland Soil Health System Group are joining forces to address climate challenges, improving soil health, building soil carbon and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Deputy Chair of the Australian Cane Farmers Association, Robert Quirk has over 50 years experience in cane growing and research and says that there’s plenty of climate conscious moves being made by growers here and across Australia.

"Agriculture can be part of the answer in reducing the effects of climate change through carbon capture," Mr Quirk said.

“From my research and observations of farming operations here and overseas, it’s a really exciting time to get into smarter farming,” he said.

Local cane grower and Nuffield Scholar, Simon Mattsson, is hosting the event on his Mirani property and says that improving soil health is an important step toward reducing carbon emissions.

“To ensure food security into the future, we need to nurture our soils and adapt to changing climate conditions,” Mr Mattsson said.

CEO of Mackay Regional Council, Craig Doyle, will also talk through council’s plans to transition to renewable energy and the economic benefits of making the switch.

Reef Catchments Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator, Juliane Kasiske, says it’s important to collaborate with local groups and to support farmer lead action in mitigating climate impacts.

“The principles of regenerative agriculture are critical in building resilient and productive farming systems under changing climate conditions,” Ms Kasiske said.

Farmers for Climate Action Queensland Coordinator, Michael Kane has toured through regional Queensland talking with farmers. He says that sharing knowledge is key.

“Farmers have decades, even generations of experience in food production and research and they recognise the importance of building soil and farm resilience, so events like this can help increase our ability to mitigate climate impacts,” Mr Kane said.

Chairman of the Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group, Dave Hunter agrees - "Farmers have the ability to stop climate change in its tracks while improving soil health, human health and the health of the Great Barrier Reef. This can be achieved by adopting regenerative farming practices."

Community Organiser at Mackay Conservation Group, Maggie Mckeown said, “It’s important to remember that climate change isn’t just affecting our reef and environment, changing seasonal patterns also impact farming, so steps to reduce carbon emissions are critical right now.”

The event is on Sunday the 12th of August from 1 - 5pm with presentations from speakers and a tour of Mr Mattsson’s mixed cane and cattle farm in Marian.

RSVP here: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/farming-carbon-and-our-climate-marian-field-day-tickets-48357216737>

And share the event on facebook here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/2172458026332753/>

EVENT DETAILS:

When: Sunday August 12th, 2018
Time: 1:00pm-5:00pm
Where: Simon Mattsson’s Farm, 171 Newmans Rd Marian

ENDS

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**OUR REGION'S CLIMATE PLAN**Have you seen the **Climate Sustainability Plan 2016-2020** for Mackay Whitsunday and Isaac region? This collaborative plan was developed in partnership with CSIRO and James Cook University, through funding from the Australian Government. One of the first documents to identify locally specific climate trends, forecasts, and predictions, the Climate Plan is expected to be a critical tool in future regional and local planning. Click here to view - <http://reefcatchments.com.au/files/2016/12/ELECTRONIC_Reef-Catchments_Climate-Change-Plan_FINALlores.pdf>

Currently an addendum is being developed for the plan, which will showcase actions being taken by local stakeholders to achieve climate goals. This will be made public late 2018.