

Mackay Whitsunday Water Quality Program

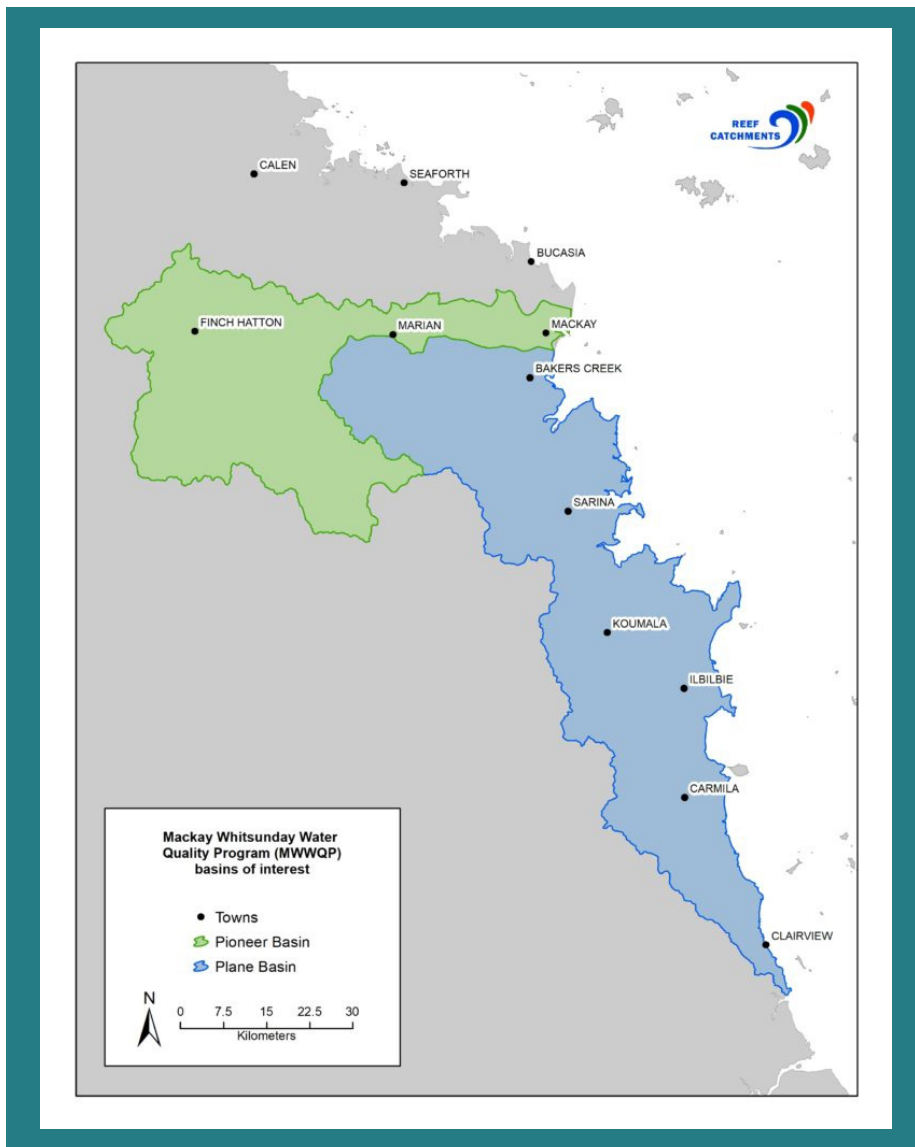
The Mackay Whitsunday Water Quality Program (MWWQP) is part of the larger Reef Trust Partnership Water Quality Program involving the Australian Government and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation. Funding of \$22.7 million has been allocated under the Reef Trust Partnership for this four-year program.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The MWWQP is focused on working with landholders in the sugarcane industry to improve nutrient management, pesticide management, and irrigation practices on farm while maintaining or improving productivity and profitability.

Growers will receive agronomic and technical support, as well as financial incentives, to address barriers to change. The program focuses on greater retention of chemicals and nutrients in the paddock and aims to establish enduring economic drivers to maintain best practice that will lead to ongoing water quality improvement.

The MWWQP focusses on sugarcane industry practice change in the Plane and Pioneer catchments, to reduce pesticide and dissolved inorganic nitrogen (DIN) loads. Target load reductions for pesticide and DIN are 215kg and 26 tonnes respectively.



Funded by the partnership between the Australian Government's Reef Trust and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation

Focus Areas

The following targeted projects are being delivered by MWWQP Delivery Providers as part of the program.

DISSOLVED INORGANIC NITROGEN (DIN)

Delivery Provider: Catchment Solutions Project: Project Catalyst

The goal of Project Catalyst is to reduce the environmental footprint, enhance crop production and increase farm viability within sugarcane production systems in the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) catchment by accelerating the identification, validation and adoption of innovative farming practices.

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Delivery Provider: Liquaforce

Project: LAND, a Local Area Nutrient Datahub

Liquaforce has developed a Local Area Nutrient Datahub (LAND) to deliver a paradigm shift in the level of actionable insight and accessibility of key agronomic information for growers of all levels of digital maturity. LAND not only produces an optimal Six Easy Steps nutrient management plan for each grower tailored to their region and to specific farm, paddock and soil lab data inputs, it also provides secure, private, digital storage of all their farm, soil and production data year on year, enabling easy long-term monitoring of crop and financial performance over time, and a far greater understanding of underlying agronomic issues and solutions suitable for their farms. The quality and accessibility of the connected data in LAND delivers farmers the information capacity for widespread practice change, which will result in substantial water quality outcomes for the Great Barrier Reef.

Contact: Don McNichol (0429 540 066) and Don Pollock (0428 289 294)

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Delivery Provider: Farmacist

Project: Point of Difference-Refining farm nutrient management strategies

Point of Difference works with sugarcane growers in the priority catchments of Plane Creek and Pioneer to improve nutrient management practices, to achieve a reduction in nutrient loads, mainly nitrogen and phosphorous entering the Great Barrier Reef. All participating growers receive a tailored nutrient management plan including locations where variable rate programs can be introduced into the farm nutrient plan. Expert assistance will be used to identify variable yield potential across the farm using high definition soil and yield maps. The mapping and processing of soil variability maps will be undertaken on farms as part of Point of Difference. Equipment upgrades will be supported by an incentives program to help growers transition to improved nutrient management. Point of Difference is a cooperative and interactive approach that promotes shared learning between growers, resellers, application contractors, scientists and extension staff.

Contacts: Zoe Egger (0436 004 437) and Nick Hill (0428 422 997)

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Delivery Provider: Mackay Area Productivity Services (MAPS)

Project: Nutrient Management Plans and Agtrix Framing Software Support

This project works one-on-one with growers developing property specific Nutrient Management Plans and implementing Agtrix Farming program to manage the nutrient applications on-farm with a real focus on improving the regional water quality.

Contact: Devraj Chalise (0417 326 667)

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Delivery Provider: Sugar Research Australia (SRA)**Project: Cane to Creek**

The focus of this project is to engage growers to directly participate in evaluating alternative management strategies related to pesticide and nitrogen management. A large component of the project is to work with growers to develop a better understanding of cause and effect of different management decisions; i.e. how does water quality change if different management decisions are made. For example, management decisions may relate to the choice of herbicide product, timing of application, or band spraying. The effects on run-off water quality will be measured by collection and analysis of block run-off. This brings the cause/ effect back to farm level.

Contacts: Matt Schembri (0422 800 670)

Email: mschembri@sugarresearch.com.au



Sugar Research
Australia

Delivery Provider: CANEGROWERS Mackay**Project: The Irrigation Project**

The Irrigation Project will assist growers to optimise water use efficiency, improve irrigation efficiencies, provide management strategies to increase productivity, profitability and to mitigate nutrient losses off farm. Ineligible for Major Grant Project funding.

Contact: John Eden (4944 2605 or 0438 730 379)

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**PESTICIDES****Delivery Provider: Farmacist****Project: Project Bluewater 2**

Project Bluewater 2 works with sugarcane growers in the priority catchments of Plane Creek and Pioneer to improve pesticide management practices, to achieve a reduction in pesticide load entering the Great Barrier Reef. All participating growers receive a tailored pesticide management plan and expert assistance to calibrate and upgrade their pesticide application equipment. Equipment upgrades will be supported by an incentives program. Bluewater 2 is a cooperative and interactive approach that promotes shared learning between growers, resellers, application contractors, scientists, and extension staff.

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**REEF CREDITS****Delivery Provider: Green Collar****Project: Reef Credits**

Reef Credits is a market-based solution to value the work undertaken by farmers to enhance productive enterprise while caring for the environment. The sale of Reef Credits, created by farmer projects will provide payments to farmers for 10-25 years, delivering measurable and quantifiable water quality improvements. GreenCollar works in partnership with farmers to develop, deliver and verify Reef Credit projects, tailored to suit individual circumstances. GreenCollar also secures purchasers for the Reef Credits.

Contact: Carole Sweatman (0439 743 163)

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Contact Information

MAJOR GRANTS

Delivery Provider: Reef Catchments

Project: Major Grants

The Major Grants Project (MGP) strengthens the Mackay Whitsunday Water Quality Program outcomes by providing funding support to incentivise sugar cane growers to participate and partner with delivery service providers to accelerate practice change adoption.

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PARTNERSHIP COORDINATOR

Delivery Provider: Reef Catchments

Project: MWWQP

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COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA

Delivery Provider: Reef Catchments

Project: MWWQP

Contact: Misty Bland (0451 272 057)

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For more information please visit:

<https://reefcatchments.com.au/projects/mwwqp/>

Scan the QR Code

