

# CASE

# STUDY

## QUICK FACTS

**Landholder**

Chris and Vicky Smythe

**Project**

Queensland Government's Natural Resource Investment Program (2019-2020)

**Location**

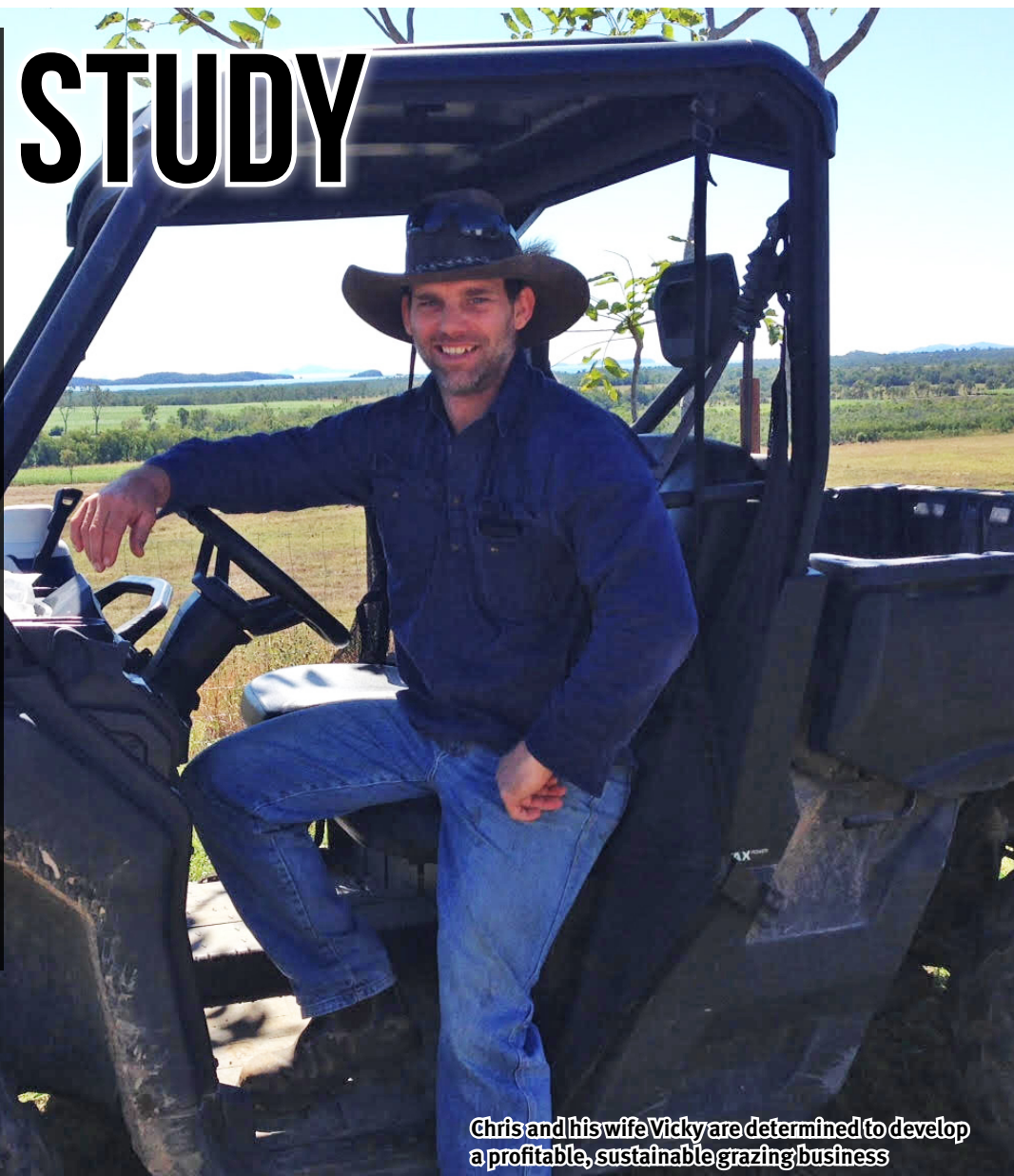
Seaforth, 40 km north of Mackay

**Area**

69ha of grazing

**Rainfall**

1600mm to 1700mm per year



Chris and his wife Vicky are determined to develop a profitable, sustainable grazing business

## BACKGROUND

Chris and Vicky purchased their 67ha, ex-sugarcane property in 2017. With little useful fencing present, they initially patched existing fences to form two main paddocks. Since then they have undertaken further fencing to divide the back paddock into three smaller paddocks and the front paddock into four paddocks. Water infrastructure consisted of two dams and seasonal waterholes along the creeks.

The couple breed Droughtmaster and Brangus cattle, aiming to turn off weaners to the local market with the best heifers kept for replacements. They have reduced their breeding season to three months with calving better timed to coincide with the green date. This has resulted in an improvement in breeder condition at calving and improved weaning weights.

Pastures are currently dominated by intermediate and non-preferred pasture species such as paspalum and grader grass. Chris and Vicky are currently taking part in another Reef Catchments project, Holistic Farm Management project funded through the Federal Government's National Landcare Program, to improve their soil health, biodiversity and native vegetation condition. A dry phosphorus lick is fed all year round to naturally distribute phosphorus on to pastures which are known to be deficient.

**REEF CATCHMENTS (MACKAY WHITSUNDAY ISAAC) LIMITED**

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## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Chris and Vicky had been made aware of the State Government's Natural Resource Investment Program Water Quality grazing project by their neighbours who had previously received funding. The couple applied for and were granted funding to undertake 2.2 kilometres of land type fencing to improve pasture utilisation and maintain ground cover.

A land type is an area of grazing land that has characteristic patterns of soil, vegetation and landform. Livestock will show preference to particular land types which can lead to overgrazing and land degradation, so it is important that grazing pressure is managed. This can be achieved through effective paddock design.

The Smythe's property has 2 major land types; coastal eucalypt forests and woodlands and eucalypt hills and ranges. With funding through the project, they have installed fencing between the hills and the flats, with further internal fencing planned on each land type to implement a rotational grazing program.

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## ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

- Installation of 2.2km of land type fencing to improve pasture utilisation and maintain land condition
- Undertake soil testing of paddocks to determine any limitations to pasture growth
- Complete a two-day Introduction to Holistic Farm Management course delivered by Terry McCosker from RCS

## FUTURE GOALS

- Undertaken further internal fencing to establish a rotational grazing system
- Investigate the use of a Yeoman's plough to improve aeration and rooting depth of pastures
- Install a formal water infrastructure network to exclude stock from waterways and improve water quality
- Implement the use of grazing charts for effective land condition monitoring

Chris said: "The funding we received through the project has helped us to undertake continuous improvement starting with the fencing and following with our watering points."

"Working with Reef Catchments has given us access to a wealth of knowledge to draw on."



Weaners are turned off and sold to local markets

## WHAT IS NRIP?

**THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT'S NATURAL RESOURCE INVESTMENT PROGRAM COMMENCED IN 2018 AND HAS PROVIDED FUNDING TO NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT REGION BODIES TO SUSTAIN NATURAL RESOURCES AND IMPROVE REEF WATER QUALITY ACROSS THE STATE. REEF CATCHMENTS WAS SUCCESSFUL IN THEIR BID TO RECEIVE FUNDING TO UNDERTAKE TWO REGIONAL PROJECTS.**

► IMPROVING THE RELATIVE ECOLOGICAL CONDITION OF FRESHWATER STREAMS AND WETLANDS IN THE MACKAY WHITSUNDAY REGION

► ADDRESSING PRIORITY SUB-CATCHMENT WATER QUALITY TARGETS THROUGH GRAZING MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS

THE FUNDING REFLECTS THE ONGOING COMMITMENT OF BOTH THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT AND REGIONAL NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT BODIES TO ENSURE THE STATE'S NATURAL LAND AND WATER RESOURCES ARE SUSTAINABLY MANAGED.



Funding through the project has allowed Chris and Vicky to fence according to land type



Queensland  
Government

This project is funded through the Queensland Government's Natural Resource Investment Program and Reef Catchments