



More Growers Embracing Practices For Improved Productivity And A Healthier Reef.

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More regional growers are embracing the opportunity to improve productivity and profitability in a way which contributes to improvements in water quality flowing into the Great Barrier Reef.

Since launching around two years ago with the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, the Mackay Whitsunday Water Quality Program (MWWQP) has been gaining strong momentum. Growers across 37,906 hectares in the Pioneer and Plane Basins have engaged with agronomist delivery providers to minimise losses of expensive inputs such as fertiliser and pesticides.

Chris Dench, Program Manager for the MWWQP said, “It’s fantastic to see the number of growers and the area under cane engaged in the project. With nine projects currently supporting the region’s cane industry there is something in it for all growers.”

“We are now seeing 40% of available sugarcane land in the Pioneer and Plane Basins working in the project, which highlights that growers are serious about their environmental stewardship, and that the support provided by delivery providers is economically beneficial,” Mr Dench said.

The MWWQP includes support for growers to achieve water quality targets, which are a reduction of 26 tonnes of dissolved inorganic nitrogen (DIN) and 215kg of pesticide active ingredients.

Reef Catchment’s CEO Katrina Dent said, “It’s great to see that by working with delivery providers, growers are supported to minimise losses of fertiliser and pesticides – helping to keep them where they are most effective for the crop and the grower.”

One example illustrating the strength of delivery providers’ involvement in the MWWQP is the Sugar Research Australia project to undertake research to ensure promoted practices deliver water quality outcomes and maintain or improve yield.

The Mackay Whitsunday regional water quality improvement program is funded by the partnership between the Australian Government’s Reef Trust and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation.

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