

Mackay Whitsundays

REEFWISE FARMING PROJECT

Supporting farms, safeguarding the Great Barrier Reef



Major Grants - Guidelines and Application

The Major Grants component provides targeted funding and support to accelerate on-farm practice change identified through earlier planning. It is designed to help growers overcome financial and equipment barriers to improve nutrient, chemical and irrigation management.



PATHWAY 1 50:50 Equipment Co-Investment

Up to \$50,000 provided by Reef Catchments, matched dollar-for-dollar by the grower. Supports purchase of eligible equipment (e.g. high-rise machinery, planters, GPS systems).



PATHWAY 2 Zero-Investment: Drainage and Irrigation Planning

No financial contribution required. Provides access to drainage and irrigation management planning to support future practice change. Additional management services linked to nutrient or chemical management are also available.

Grower Testimonials

[View all @reefcatchments](#)

The following case studies are drawn from the Mackay Whitsunday Water Quality Program (MWWQP, 2020) which was a similar major grants project.

Bryce wanted to improve the efficiency and sustainability of his operation. Surface-applied fertiliser blends were becoming costly and increasing the risk of nutrient losses in runoff. The project helped him develop a nutrient management plan using on-farm data to improve nitrogen use efficiency while maintaining productivity.

“Transitioning to sub-surface fertiliser application in combination with nutrient management plans have seen better yields and has been a win for the environment.”

Bryce Jackson — Carmila West

Peter faced challenges meeting crop water demand with his existing irrigation system. Automated irrigation infrastructure improved water use efficiency, reduced energy demands, increased sugar yields per hectare, and improved water quality outcomes in local waterways.

“The problem was I couldn’t get enough water on quickly enough, and it was very labour-intensive, impacting my other farm management tasks.”

Peter Doyle — Marian

Eligibility Criteria

1. Location within the Mackay Whitsunday Isaac region with a valid legal entity/ABN.
2. Landholder consent to participate, including eligibility checks against previous funding.
3. Ability to complete activities within 12 months or the intake closure date (whichever is sooner).
4. Cost-effectiveness of water quality savings against Major Grants targets.
5. Ability to provide an equal, or more, cash co-contribution.
6. Active engagement with delivery partners and Reef Catchments, with agronomy support identifying a tangible reduction in DIN and/or pesticide loads.
7. No prior funding for the same activity or equipment. Must demonstrate capacity to contribute additional pollutant load reductions where similar projects have been undertaken.

Before Applying

- Submission of an application does not guarantee approval.
- Any equipment purchased or services engaged prior to approval will render the application ineligible.
- Funded equipment must remain in use for the life of the project (to 30 June 2028). Early disposal may require partial grant repayment.
- Applications must be informed by an existing management plan (Nutrient, Chemical or Irrigation) developed in Stage 1.

Application forms are available at reefcatchments.com.au or by contacting the office on (07) 4968 4200.

Eligibility and Application Process

1. Submit your application	Growers participating in the Reefwise Farming project can submit a Major Grants application to Reef Catchments once they have received and begun implementing their initial Chemical or Nutrient Management Plan.
2. Eligibility check consent	The EOI is submitted through the Major Grant Reefwise Register and includes consent for us to review previous project involvement and historical funding to confirm eligibility.
3. Initial eligibility review	Our team completes a first assessment to confirm whether the proposed activity is eligible to progress
4. Major Grant agreement	Eligible applicants are invited to complete a Major Grant agreement, which includes consent to share relevant information with the delivery provider for benchmarking and monitoring purposes to calculate the improvement to water quality. Delivery partners will supply water quality data to the Paddock to Reef Program Chemical, Nutrient, or Irrigation Management Plans. Major Grant recipients must participate in the social indicator P2R and other surveys to measure the Major Grants' contribution to water quality improvement.
5. Delivery provider baseline assessment	The delivery provider performs a baseline assessment through Paddock to Reef and provide recommendations for Major Grant services that are cost-effective and align with growers' interest.
6. Cost-effectiveness assessment	We assess the proposal to ensure it delivers good value and meaningful environmental outcomes.
7. Approval of Major grant and access to funding pool through grant agreement	We confirm application status and discuss growers' administration and reporting requirements linked to the Major Grants funding pool. Growers' must maintain clear and accurate records showing how grant funds and co-contributions are spent and provide this evidence to Reef Catchments if requested. Growers' must ensure that equipment or technology purchased, (hereafter termed asset) with the aid of Major Grant funds remain in use for the duration of the Reefwise Farming project in accordance with any conditions notified by Reef Catchments. If at the end of the project the Asset has not been fully depreciated and/or should the asset be sold or gifted before the conclusion of the Reefwise Farming project (30th June 2028), the recipient is required to pay an amount equal to the proportion of the undepreciated value of the asset that is equivalent to the proportion of the cost of the asset that was funded from the Major Grant funds. This includes where a property is sold and the asset is included as a chattel.



Expression of Interest

To be considered for future opportunities please scan the QR Code and complete the EOI form on our website.

