

## Unlocking Circular Value in the Greater Whitsunday Region

### Proserpine Integrated Project

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Opportunities have been recognised in the Mackay Whitsunday region to unlock and scale circular economy initiatives in the region's sugarcane and aquaculture sectors, following the delivery of Reef Catchments' Circular Economy Initiative.

Delivered under the broader place-based Proserpine Integrated Project, the Circular Economy Initiative is one of seven innovative projects aimed at developing long-term solutions for the unique conditions of the Proserpine Catchment.

The Circular Economy Initiative brought together regional stakeholders and technical experts including project partner Bivio Consulting to explore how resources move throughout the local economy and identify opportunities to capture greater value from existing resources.

Using system mapping and material flow analysis, the study highlighted practical pathways to retain nutrients, organic resources and by-products within the region, harnessing opportunities for innovation, resource efficiency and industry growth.

"Circular economy is about turning waste into value by finding smarter ways to reuse resources and recover value from by-products, reducing costs while creating new opportunities through innovation and collaboration," Reef Catchments Sustainable Agriculture Manager Todd McNeill said.

The study's findings are particularly relevant to the sugarcane and aquaculture sectors, where interest in bioenergy, nutrient recovery, water reuse and value-added products is opening the door to additional economic and environmental benefits.

"The Mackay Whitsunday region is rich in ideas and industry expertise. The opportunity now is to foster the conditions and connections to enable these initiatives to grow and deliver long-term benefits for the region," Mr McNeill said.

Funded through the Queensland Government's Reef Water Quality Program, this study provides a foundation for a more coordinated regional approach capable of delivering long-term economic and environmental value through stronger partnerships, industry-led collaboration and scalable regional action.

"We have no shortage of promising ideas in the region. By working together, industry, government and community partners can work together to unlock new opportunities, strengthen local industries and drive sustainable regional growth" Mr McNeill said.

The study comes at an important time following the recent release of the Queensland Government's Prosper 2050 - the State's strategic growth plan for primary industries.

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Development, Infrastructure and Planning (office of Coordinator-General), and the Queensland Department of Primary Industries for their participation in the Circular Economy Initiative.

## Benefits for the region

A coordinated circular economy approach has the potential to strengthen regional resilience, support new industries and investment opportunities, improve resource efficiency, retain more value locally, and deliver environmental benefits through reduced nutrient loss and improved catchment management connected to the Great Barrier Reef.

For information about the Proserpine Integrated Project and other Sustainable Agriculture projects visit [www.reefcatchments.com.au/projects/sustainable-agriculture](http://www.reefcatchments.com.au/projects/sustainable-agriculture).

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## About Reef Catchments

Reef Catchments is the Natural Resource Management (NRM) organisation for the Mackay Whitsunday Isaac region. We are a non-government, not-for-profit organisation. We facilitate change and work for long-term solutions to sustain, and improve our region's natural resources and environment, now and into the future.

With over 22 years of regional leadership in natural resource management, Reef Catchments operates from offices in Mackay and Proserpine, facilitating over 50 skilled staff across more than 40 active projects spanning sustainable agriculture, waterway health, reef resilience and biodiversity.

In FY2026, Reef Catchments managed funding of \$32 million to enable key environmental projects. Through partnerships with community, researchers, local councils and State and Federal government agencies, Reef Catchments works to improve natural resource conditions and community capacity to engage in long-term environmental solutions.

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