

# Project Catalyst Update



PROJECT  
CATALYST

Welcome to Project Catalyst's Spring edition update. It seems that winter has whizzed by without too many cold mornings and summer will soon be upon us. We hope the weather holds, to see you through the crush following delays this year in harvesting and planting across many districts.

Now over 18 months since Victoria and New South Wales first introduced COVID restrictions, it's hard for us lucky North Queenslanders to imagine our interstate-based project partners once again stuck in lockdown. We hope to see them all in the not-too-distant future.

## Events

### Forum 2022

We're pleased to announce the next Project Catalyst annual Forum and Field Trips will be held at the Pullman Cairns International from Sunday 20th to Tuesday 22nd February 2022. Invitations and ticket booking details will be sent out in the coming months for you to secure your place in this event. Please save the dates and we look forward to bringing you another fantastic event.

### Fallow Cover Cropping Legume & Mixed Species Workshop

Growers are invited to join us on Thursday 7th October at Wagoora (North of Calen) for a Legume & Mixed Species Workshop for Fallow Cover Cropping in the Mackay Whitsunday region. This Project Catalyst event is presented jointly with Farmacist and Nutrien Ag Solutions, and growers will be able to listen and chat to local agronomists and DAF economists about real life fallow cropping successes in the Mackay Whitsunday region, inspect mature fallow crops and check out seeding equipment available for their use. A BBQ lunch and refreshments will be provided. For further information please call Che Trendell at Farmacist (0439 588 627) or Annette Corcoran at Nutrien Ag Solutions (0419 027 026). RSVP by 5th October please.



## Opportunities

### Interest in Future Innovation

We're putting together ideas for the next generation of sugarcane farming innovation to build a library of fully scoped and costed, high-quality trials to provide to potential funding partners. Expressions of Interest forms will be available next month, so please bring your ideas forward and work with your On-Ground Service Provider to develop up your shovel ready ideas. Proposals should align with Project Catalyst underlying ethos that best practice farming improves productivity and environmental performance.

## Projects

### Mackay Whitsunday and Lower Herbert Water Quality Improvement Projects Ahead of Target

Project Catalyst continues to produce outstanding environmental outcomes thanks to Great Barrier Reef Foundation funded practice change programs operating in the Pioneer, Plane Creek and Lower Herbert Catchments. According to latest milestone results, for this season to date a significant amount of Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen (DIN) has been saved from leaving farms and impacting the Reef.

With 24 new growers joining these programs in 2021, the results are a real credit to all Catalyst growers and On-Ground Service Providers - very well done to all.

The bottom line is that less DIN lost to the environment means fertiliser savings, more money in your hip pocket and a more productive outcome for growers and the Reef.

Pioneer and Plane Creek growers saved **3.2 tonnes** of Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen (DIN) over 3,268ha of farmlands through legume fallow and N reduction on plant and later ratoon crops.

In the Lower Herbert, growers saved **18.8 tonnes** of Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen (DIN) over 754ha of farmlands, through a combination of legume fallow and mill mud practice changes.



Great Barrier  
Reef Foundation



## Coca-Cola/WWF-Australia Practice Change Adoption Program Welcomes 13 New Growers

The planned expansion of the Coca-Cola/WWF-Australia Practice Change Adoption Program into the O'Connell and Proserpine areas is going well, with Nutrien Ag Solutions now working with 13 new growers in their first year on Coca-Cola's practice change pathway. We look forward to meeting up with these growers and for them to become involved with project shed meetings and events.

## Information

### What is Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen (DIN) And Why It's Important To Control?

Common man-made fertilisers contain large amounts of synthetic nitrogen (N) and a portion of this N (known as DIN) dissolves into surface and groundwater. If this DIN enters waterways or groundwater systems, it can impact the Reef in several ways.

As a rich nutrient source, DIN feeds microscopic marine algae and causes large scale algal matting and harmful blooms that starve coral and seagrass of light. This algae will also out-compete coral if the coral becomes damaged, for example by a cyclone. Increased nutrient levels from DIN are also believed to be a major cause of crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks.

Reducing or preventing DIN from entering the natural environment will prevent damage and help the Reef recover.

### Website Updates

Trial Reports and Broader Adoption and Practice Change Case Studies for the 2020/2021 season are now available on the Project Catalyst website: [www.projectcatalyst.net.au](http://www.projectcatalyst.net.au). We've also now added the Herbert region Legume & Mixed Species Fallow Crops guide and will be producing a similar guide for the Mackay & Whitsunday regions soon. Please make the most of this valuable information as it showcases the wonderful innovation work Catalyst growers have done, as well as showing the progress of new growers on Catalyst's practice change pathway. If you have any questions about the reports, the case studies or want further information please feel free to contact your local Project Catalyst On-Ground Service Provider or Project Catalyst coordinator Ross Neivandt. We're here to help.

## Items of Interest

### Podcast

We have just recorded a podcast with HCPSL and Catchment Solutions about the Lower Herbert Water Quality Program. Produced by Canegrowers Ingham for the GBRF program, we thank Jason Wolfram the team for their great work in putting this together. Listen to the Podcast here: [Link](#)



In this podcast you will learn about Project Catalyst, one of the on-ground projects that are underway in the Lower Herbert sugar industry. Hear from Ross Neivandt from Catchment Solutions and Lawrence Di Bella and Bethany Donker from HCPSL.

**Canegrower Ingham produce Project Catalyst Podcast (Link Above)**

### Reef Regulations Information

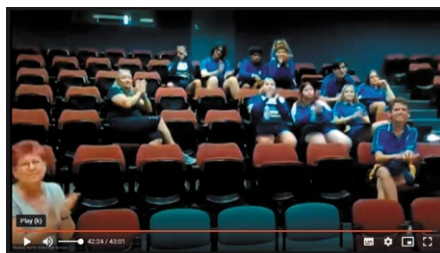
As requested by growers following DAF's presentation of Forum 2021, we're pleased to provide you with a link to the video "Reef Protection Regulations - Sugarcane Nitrogen and Phosphorus Budget". Learn about this important topic here: [Link](#)



### Project Catalyst Hits the Classroom

Following on from our work experience student's visit that you read about in the last newsletter, Alice's article has raised awareness of our important work with students and educators across Australia. This has turned into a golden opportunity to spread the word about Catalyst amongst our next generation of farmers.

Lynn Hong, Coca-Cola's Head of Water and Climate, ASEAN & South Pacific, recently spoke to Mackay North High School's AgriFutures students about Project Catalyst and Coca-Cola's own Water Replenishment program. In the virtual classroom, students learned about the passion of sugarcane growers involved in Project Catalyst's innovation and practice change programs and of the significant contributions Project Catalyst growers continue to make by improving productivity and water quality on a global scale. These young and aspiring AgriFutures students learned the immense value of investing in sustainable farming for the future and saw that passionate people with great ideas can be part of making incredible world-wide change.



**Lynn Hong, Head of Water and Climate, ASEAN & South Pacific in Sydney speaking with Mackay North State High School AgriFuture students**



## New Project Staff

Keep your eyes out for our new project partners Bethany Donker and Annette Corcoran. Working with HCPSL in the Herbert region, Bethany is helping Megan and Lawrence deliver Project Catalyst's Lower Herbert Water Quality Program. Annette joins Audra and Darren and the Nutrien Ag Solutions team who are running the Mackay Whitsunday Water Quality Program and Coca-Cola/WWF-Australia Practice change program in Proserpine and the O'Connell. A few words from our newest recruits!



**Bethany Donker - HCPSL, Ingham**

"It has only been a few months since I joined HCPSL's Project Catalyst team in the Lower Herbert but I have already gained a strong sense of the innovation history here. The experiences I have had since arriving, from harvesting a mixed-legume trial to hearing new growers speak about what they are looking to achieve, have all confirmed for me that I'm in the right place to see real impacts and that's truly exciting."



**Annette Corcoran - Nutrien Ag Solutions, Mackay**

"I am thrilled that Nutrien Ag Solutions and Project Catalyst have given me an opportunity to continue my rewarding 43-year career in the Australian Sugar Cane industry. I must say it has been an absolute pleasure meeting new work colleagues and being back out in the field. What I'm enjoying the most though is talking with sugar cane growers to identify practice changes that will improve their farming practices, reduce negative impacts on the environment and enhance their crop production."

## Grower and Service Provider Visits

One of the best things about Project Catalyst is that our team is able to work with so many different partners and growers and understanding how we can continue to work on improving farming systems. As always, Project Coordinator Ross Neivandt will be meeting with On-Ground Service Providers and growers in the Mackay Whitsundays, Burdekin and Wet Tropics as often as often as he can. Please make contact if you wish to catch up with Ross or discuss anything Catalyst.



Please visit the  
**Project Catalyst website**  
for all the latest news  
and project information.

**PROJECT CATALYST  
WEBSITE**

Project and Forum videos  
are also available at  
**Project Catalyst's  
YouTube Channel**

**PROJECT CATALYST  
YOUTUBE CHANNEL**

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