

Project Catalyst Update



It's been a busy time for the Project Catalyst team and our growers.

We want to keep you informed on activities occurring with the project, changes to funding and of course future planned activities.

Project Catalyst updates are also available on the Project Catalyst website www.projectcatalyst.net.au. A text and email will be sent out to notify you when updates are available to be viewed.

Catalyst Team

Project Catalyst continues to grow with the appointment of Ross Neivandt as Project Coordinator and Burdekin Productivity Services joining as a Catalyst On-Ground Service Provider. Ross has over 30 years' experience in agronomy research, environmental consulting and large-scale project management and is excited to support Project Catalyst.

Burdekin Productivity Services' Rob Milla and Jasmine Connolly have joined us to run a legume crop, nitrogen rate innovation trial and are also working with five growers to implement farm management practice changes as part of the Broader Adoption Validation program. We welcome Ross, Rob and Jasmine and look forward to hearing about and reporting on their future achievements.

Ross's profile page can be viewed at <https://catchmentsolutions.com.au/files/2019/09/CATCHMENT-SOLUTIONS-profile-Ross-Neivandt.pdf>

On-Ground Service Providers Meet in Townsville

In October, Project Catalyst's management team (Catchment Solutions and WWF), our On-Ground Service Providers (Farmacist, Canegrowers Innisfail, T.R.A.P Services, Mossman Agricultural Services, HCPSL and Burdekin Productivity Services) as well as members of the DAF economics team met to layout the

road map for the next year, give updates on the direction and development of Project Catalyst, support members with media training and provide a forum for discussing projects, ideas, successes and improvements. The overall enthusiasm generated a positive and productive vision.



On-Ground Service Providers meet regularly to discuss Project Catalyst



Ross Neivandt - Project Catalyst Coordinator

Great Barrier Reef Foundation

Great Barrier Reef Foundation funding is now in place, which has allowed Project Catalyst to begin ten selected new innovation trials and forty Broader Adoption Validation and Grower support activities.

The New Innovation Trials are:

- Assessing the use of Precision Agriculture technique of Variable Rate Technology to strategically target phosphorus applications in a sugarcane system (Wet Tropics)
- Low cost recycled carbon materials for capturing nutrients and pesticides from a cane farm (Wet Tropics)
- Prescription (Zonal) application of Imidacloprid (Wet Tropics)
- Subsurface mill mud trial (Wet Tropics)

- Smarter weed control through the use of drone technology (Wet Tropics)
- Investigating the effect of various nitrogen rates following a harvested legume crop (Burdekin)
- Dynamic Nutrient Planning - Getting Nitrogen Right in Time and Place (Mackay Whitsunday)
- Low risk strategy for growing legume crops and transitioning back to cane (Mackay Whitsunday)
- Mixed species fallow into sugarcane (Burdekin)
- Trialing new Groundwater nitrate monitoring technology and their potential use in nitrogen fertiliser budgets (Mackay Whitsundays)

Coca Cola Foundation / WWF Australia

The annual application to the Coca Cola Foundation to fund Project Catalyst was completed and submitted in September 2019. Both the CCF and WWF Australia are long term supporters of Project Catalyst and have been actively involved with the project since it was conceived more than 11 years ago. There continues to be strong support for the project and its focus on innovation of farm management practices but also acknowledging the need to support growers with agronomic and extension support as part of a broader adoption program.

Project Catalyst Grower Forum 2020

Each year Project Catalyst hosts a Grower Forum to provide an opportunity for all sugar cane growers, industry bodies and suppliers to meet, network, share ideas and hear from guest speakers on a range of topics to do with the industry, water quality and the Great Barrier Reef.

From our last update you will recall that Forum 2020 was planned to be held on Daydream Island. Unfortunately, due to instability and changes with the resort events management team the Forum is now being held at the Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre (MECC) in the

heart of Mackay on the 23rd, 24th and 25th of February 2020. The MECC is a fantastic facility and they are keen to look after all of us and deliver a fantastic forum experience. Information on the MECC and the events it hosts can be viewed at:

<https://www.themecc.com.au/>

Invitations to Forum 2020 have been emailed out and tickets are now available. If you have not received an invitation and would like to attend please contact Joanne at Catchment Solutions on 07 4968 4216 or email jjgibbs@catchmentsolutions.com.au

Grower Stories



Ray Vella and farm manager Shane Butler discussing water storage on farm

One of the really interesting aspects of Project Catalyst, is connecting with so many different growers and understanding what they're doing with their business, why they're interested in innovation and improving their practices and of course how they see the future of farming and the industry.

Kim Kleidon captures these great "Grower Stories", we have been producing and we publish them on the Project Catalyst Website.

One of the latest stories is on Ray and Leah Vella who have purchased the Faust Farms property to the south of Proserpine and are planning to increase water harvesting and integrate cattle for soil health. You can read their story here

<https://www.projectcatalyst.net.au/app/uploads/2019/09/Ray-and-Leah-Vella.pdf> and follow other Grower Stories as they are published here <https://www.projectcatalyst.net.au/project-category/grower-stories/>



Ray Vella with his cattle herd

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