

Project Catalyst Update



It's an exciting time of year with the crushing kicking off and the recent cold spell reminding us that winter is definitely here. Our thoughts remain with our interstate-based project partners who continue to be impacted by COVID lockdowns and travel restrictions. We hope to see them all in the not-too-distant future.

Project Catalyst Achieves Outstanding Environmental Outcomes



Apart from providing growers with support to innovate and improve on-farm productivity, the project's success is also measured in terms of environmental outcomes and improvements. The results are now in for Project Catalyst's performance over the 2019/2020 seasons and the numbers are outstanding.

The Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF) and The Coca-Cola Foundation projects covered 42,937ha and the Paddock to Reef modelled results show that innovation and practice change resulted in enormous improvements to the quality of water leaving farms and entering the Reef.

Saving: Over 39 tonnes of Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen (DIN)

Saving: Over 6,750 tonnes of Fine Sediment

Saving: Over 7.6kg of Pesticides

These results are a credit to all Catalyst growers and On-Ground Service Providers - very well done to all.

Current Activities

Innovation Trials Continuing!

Recognising the important role of

innovation in improving on-farm and environmental performance and in developing the practice changes of the future, the GBRF has provided funding to continue 10 of Project Catalyst's innovation trials for the 2021 season. As innovation has always been at the core of Project Catalyst, we are pleased that the following trials will be continuing:

- Low risk strategy for growing legume crops and transitioning back to cane (Frank Clayton)
- Dynamic nutrient planning - getting nitrogen right in time and place (George Williams)
- Match Variety to Soil Type (Manuel Muscat)
- Two Year Fallow (Gerry Deguara)
- Mixed species fallow into sugarcane (Denis Pozzebon)
- Groundwater Nitrate Monitoring and Reduced N Rate (Bryan Langdon)
- Investigating the effect of various nitrogen rates following a legume crop (Andrew Cross)
- Smarter weed control through the use of drone technology (Mario Porta)

- Precision agriculture - variable rate technology to target phosphorus application (Michael Waring)
- Prescription (zonal) application of Imidacloprid (Alan Pace)

To underpin the great importance of our innovation work, we look forward to seeing these trials presented at Forum 2022.



Mackay Whitsunday Water Quality Program

The GBRF funded Pioneer and Plane Creek Practice Change Adoption program has moved into its second year and has introduced 10 new growers to the practice change pathway project. There are now 14 growers in this four year program, with 20 more to be enrolled over the next two and a half years.



Great Barrier
Reef Foundation



The Coca-Cola Foundation Practice Change Adoption Program

Project Catalyst continues to roll out the Coca-Cola Foundation funded Practice Change Adoption program which now enters its second year. The generous support of the Foundation allows 19 growers in the Burdekin and Wet Tropics to be supported for a second year and uptake additional improved farming practices. Thank you to Farmacist, Burdekin Productivity Services, Cane growers Innisfail and Mossman Agricultural Services for working with these growers. We also now have the opportunity for 13 new growers to join the Practice Change Adoption program in the southern districts. To improve the projects coverage, the O'Connell and Proserpine areas will be the targeted by Nutrien Ag Solutions in the coming months to deliver this project.

Lower Herbert Water Quality Program

Like the Mackay Whitsunday Water Quality Program, the GBRF funded Lower Herbert Practice Change Adoption project has kicked off, and recruitment of 14 growers to participate in year one of this three year program has started. 16 more growers will be given the opportunity to join this program over the next two and a half years. Please let HCPSL know if you know of growers who haven't been part of Catalyst in the past who might like to join this exciting program.



New Videos

Several new videos have been added to the Project Catalyst YouTube Channel.

Shed Talks - EM Mapping and Variable Rate Amendments

In Ingham Shed Talks bring whole communities of farmers together, to experience presentations of trial results and shared knowledge. Project Catalyst continues to inspire sugarcane growers,



through rigorous and scientifically proven farming practices. Through more than a decade of innovation, over 155 Queensland growers from Mackay to Mossman are influencing broader adoption of practices, leading to reductions in fertiliser and chemical applications - whilst increasing productivity. Ultimately improving water quality flowing from coastal catchments to our Great Barrier Reef in 2020.

Follow this links to view:

<https://youtu.be/BIW5BTMd38Q>

This is Project Catalyst

Project Catalyst commenced in 2009 as a pioneering partnership between WWF, Coca-Cola Foundation, Reef Catchments and a dedicated group of cane farmers in the Mackay Whitsunday region of the state of Queensland. In 2011 the project expanded into the Burdekin and Wet Tropics regions and now has more than 155 participating sugarcane growers, from Carmila in the South to Mossman in the North, that farm approximately 42,000 ha

of cane land. Project Catalyst sugarcane growers are leading the way in broader adoption of innovations, reducing chemical and nutrient application to improve water quality flowing from catchments along the Central and North Queensland coastline, onto the Great Barrier Reef.

Practices pioneered by Project Catalyst growers that are now being more widely adopted include minimum and zero tillage, variable rate application that matches fertiliser rates to crop demand, soil mapping, yield mapping and reduced nitrogen application rates in older ratoons. The project is making a valuable contribution to identifying and validating the innovative practices that will assist the Queensland cane industry to adopt practices consistent with the goals and targets of the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan.

THIS IS THEIR STORY.

Follow this links to view:

<https://youtu.be/Zr8UTPCwIXA>



Student Work Experience

Work experience student Alice (Grade 10) joined Catchment Solutions to learn about environmental services and Project Catalyst. Alice enjoyed her time with the team and wrote the following about Project Catalyst after visiting one of our growers.

“Project catalyst is an amazing development and community, that I and many other people never even heard about. I was so impressed that there are farmers and general people out there putting in so much effort to help the environment, improve agriculture practices and so much more, but what’s best is that it all connects together. When I joined Catchment Solutions for a week, I learned about things that we do not get taught at school, how it applies to real life situations and what an incredible team they are a part of.

I met one fella, named Tony Bugeja, when I went to his farm where he passionately explained to me about his involvement with the project and his new sugar cane farming practices. In all honesty, I never knew that the economic side of this mixed so well with the environmental benefits. As a year 10 student coming from a fairly rural background, I had never been so astounded in my life when I, as a work experience student trying to get a taste of the real world, found out that such an incredible thing existed”.



Alice checking out the machinery during her visit

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 videos are
also available at
Project Catalyst’s
YouTube Channel

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YOUTUBE CHANNEL**



For further information, contact:

Ross Neivandt

Catchment Solutions
rneivandt@catchmentsolutions.com.au
0408 139 289

Andrew Campbell

Catchment Solutions
acampbell@catchmentsolutions.com.au
0408 875 633



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