

LOWER BURDEKIN WATER QUALITY PROGRAM

The Lower Burdekin Water Quality Program aims to prevent 48 tonnes of dissolved inorganic nitrogen and about 576,809 risk units (equivalent to 146 kg) of pesticides from entering the Reef's waters every year

The Lower Burdekin is in the Dry Tropics of Queensland, to the south of Townsville. Land use is dominated by grazing and irrigated sugarcane, with smaller areas of horticulture, forestry, urban and rural residential, aquaculture and mining. There are conservation areas across the catchment including protected areas and nature refuges. The Lower Burdekin region comprises the floodplains of the Houghton River, Barratta Creek, and Burdekin River which supports an irrigation scheme for tens of thousands of hectares of irrigated sugarcane agriculture.

The four-year, \$20.4 million program is managed locally by NQ Dry Tropics and aims to maximise the adoption of improved cane farming management practices focusing on actions that will substantially reduce dissolved inorganic nitrogen and pesticide runoff. Construction and monitoring of a wetland treatment system will also address important knowledge gaps in the region.

PROJECTS

Precision to Decision Nutrient Management



Burdekin sugarcane farmers are supported to use precision agricultural techniques to guide informed nutrient planning and management to reduce losses through runoff.

Project Bluewater 2



Burdekin sugarcane farmers will improve pesticide management practices to achieve a reduction in the most toxic pesticides entering the Great Barrier Reef through tailored pesticide management plans and expert assistance.

Burdekin Irrigation Project



The Sugar Research Australia-led consortium (AgriTech Solutions, Burdekin Productivity Services, Burdekin Bowen Integrated Floodplain Management Advisory Committee, Farmacist, James Cook University, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries) supports sugarcane farmers to transition to scalable, sustainable and technologically advanced practices in irrigation management using a whole-of-systems approach that includes water quality monitoring.

Major Grants Project

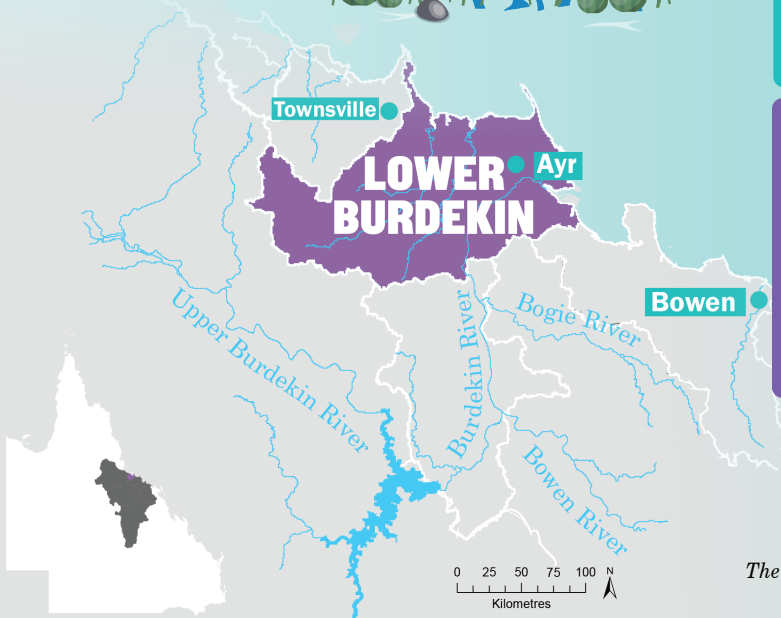


NQ Dry Tropics is administering financial incentives to farmers who implement nutrient efficiency and irrigation practice changes to reduce losses through runoff for water quality outcomes. Incentive grants provide additional support to sugarcane farmers who meet the eligibility requirements and contribute a matching cash amount.

Reef Credits



The Program is committed to purchase Reef Credits from GreenCollar. Farmers in the Lower Burdekin region will generate and sell Reef Credits through validated and audited activities that go above and beyond regulations creating impact to endure far beyond the initial investment term.



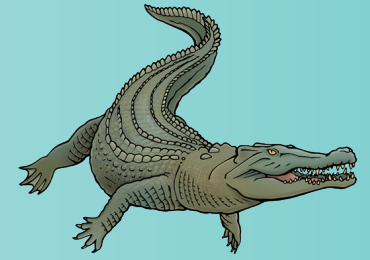
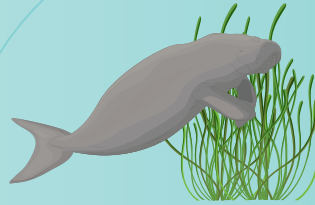
Great Barrier Reef Foundation

The Lower Burdekin Water Quality Program is funded by the partnership between the Australian Government's Reef Trust and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation.

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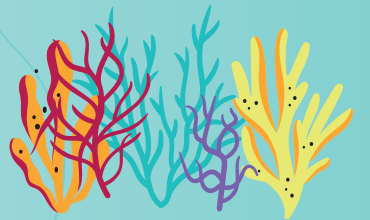


Improved nitrogen and pesticide management practices can reduce losses through runoff while maintaining productivity

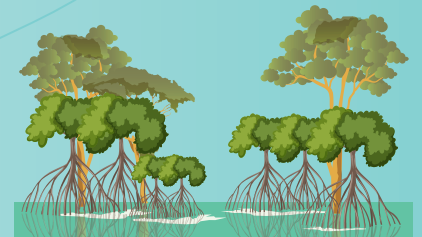
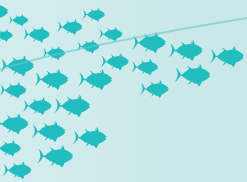


Freshwater systems in the lower Burdekin support a diverse fish community, freshwater crocodiles (non-native to the area) and several frog species

Pollutants reduce the Great Barrier Reef's ability to recover from catastrophic events such as tropical cyclones and mass coral bleaching



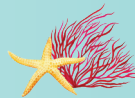
Reducing sediment also reduces phosphorous and dissolved inorganic nitrogen, other pollutants that harm Reef ecosystems



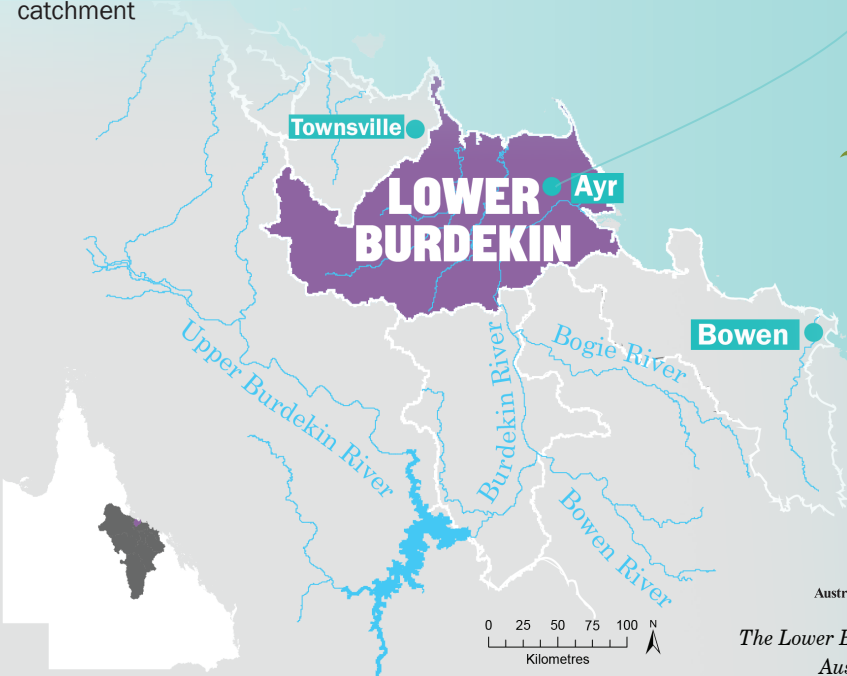
Estuarine systems in the Lower Burdekin provide important feeding areas for estuarine crocodiles, and support marine turtles, dolphins, dugongs and fisheries species such as barramundi and mud crab



The hills, floodplains and depressions in the landscape contribute to the diversity of plants and animals that live within the Lower Burdekin catchment



Pesticides affect plants in freshwater wetlands and the whole food chain, including amphibians and fish essential to a healthy ecosystem



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