



## **2019 Reef Champion Award winners announced**

The winners of the 2019 Reef Champion Awards have been announced, shining a light on farming, extension and community leaders who are working to reduce their impact on the Great Barrier Reef.

Innovative nitrogen reduction practices, dedicated approaches to extension, revegetation of farms and conservation of wetlands and native animal species were just some of the success stories honoured at the Awards dinner in Mackay this evening (Tuesday, 26 November).

The Awards, run by the Reef Alliance with support from the Australian and Queensland governments, recognise the outstanding achievements of individuals and organisations working to improve the quality of water entering the iconic Great Barrier Reef.

Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) CEO Dr Georgina Davis congratulated the winners and finalists and highlighted the importance of acknowledging the efforts of farmers and others working with the agricultural sector and local communities to safeguard the future of the Reef and coastal systems.

“The outstanding achievements of farmers, extension officers and community members nominated for these awards is testament to agriculture’s commitment and achievements in improving water quality through practice change and innovation in Reef catchment areas,” Dr Davis said.

“Critical to the success of these voluntary programs and actions is the strong partnership with the Australian and Queensland governments. It is only through working together that we can achieve mutually beneficial outcomes for farmers and the environment.”

“I would like to congratulate everyone who has participated in this year’s Reef Champion Awards and thank them for the role they are playing in protecting our precious Great Barrier Reef,” said the Australian Government Minister for the Environment, Sussan Ley.

“Water quality is critical in protecting the reef and the awards showcase some inspiring people contributing innovative ideas that show how we can all make a real difference by working together.”

Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef Leeanne Enoch congratulated the finalists and winners for their exceptional work to protect the Great Barrier Reef.

“These awards showcase the achievements of Queenslanders who are setting the benchmark for agricultural innovation to reduce run-off and delivering practical Reef projects,” Ms Enoch said.

“The work being undertaken by the farmers, advisers and community groups shows what can be achieved if we work together. Through these efforts and collaboration, we can transform the outlook for the Reef and ensure it can be protected now and into the future.”

The 2019 Reef Champion Award winners are:

### **Prince of Wales Environmental Leadership – Reef Sustainability Award**

- **Lenny Parisi**, Fishery Falls, for willingly handing over seven hectares of cane land to restore the wetland environment, while also making significant changes to his nutrient management program, improving his understanding of soil, water and nutrient interactions and better managing these risks to reduce losses.

### Reef Nutrient Champion Award

- **V Rossi and Sons**, Aloomba, for making and using compost on their farm to reduce their need for inorganic nitrogen fertiliser by 30 per cent and using multispecies fallow cropping, green harvesting, trash blanketing and subsurface fertiliser application to improve soil biology.
- **Graham Volck**, Emerald, for conducting soil tests, collecting water samples and installing moisture probes as part of the cotton industry's reef water quality project and removing one in-crop nitrogen fertiliser application, saving between \$68 to \$80 per hectare in nitrogen fertiliser.

### Reef Sediment Champion Award

- **Kate and Peter Waddell**, Ravenshoe, for undertaking earthworks, fencing, revegetation, natural grazing practices and installing off-stream watering points to prevent topsoil loss in heavy rain events, repair extensive gullies and fix eroding tailings dams.

### Reef Conservation Champion Award

- **Neil Farmer**, Yaamba, for installing five new water troughs, 9.8 kilometres of electric fencing and 4 kilometres of poly-pipe to protect riparian areas, promote vegetation regrowth and reduce sediment loss while also providing a preferred nesting habitat for the protected Fitzroy River Turtle and White-throated Snapping Turtle.

### Reef Extension Officer Champion Award

- **Ellie Carter**, Rockhampton, for demonstrating a keen interest in agricultural innovations, a proven track record for sound technical advice and, above all, a continued dedication to investing in her skills and future to benefit landholders and industry.
- **Jayson Dowie**, Home Hill, for partnering with local sugar cane farmers to develop the RP161 project which has achieved a nitrogen reduction of nearly 200 tonnes, involving over 156 farms in its first three years.

### Reef Community Champion Award

- **Jolly Rogers Fishing Club**, Rockhampton, for their steadfast passion to make an impact on local ecosystems by removing over 100 tonnes of debris from the Fitzroy River and branching out to several different community outreach programs, including feeding the homeless and opening an op-shop.

### Reef Youth Champion Award

- **William Darveniza**, Mourilyan, for his ability to communicate sensitive and complex data in his role as an extension officer through the use of graphic design to create innovative extension resources such as a nitrogen loss pathways board game, basin concept maps, site plans and other infographics.

To learn more about the winners and runners up, visit:

[www.qff.org.au/projects/reef-alliance/2019-reef-champion-awards/](http://www.qff.org.au/projects/reef-alliance/2019-reef-champion-awards/).

The Reef Champion Awards are funded by the Australian Government, and the Queensland Government's Reef Water Quality Program.

**ENDS**

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