



Media release

**Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef
and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs**

The Honourable Meaghan Scanlon

\$20.75M to help farmers and protect the Reef

- \$20.75m part of five year \$270.1m Queensland Reef Water Quality Program
- The Palaszczuk Government's has invested more than 1 billion in water quality programs since 2015

The Palaszczuk Government will invest \$20.75 million in the next three years to help farmers reduce harmful run-off, improve productivity and protect the Great Barrier Reef.

The multi-million-dollar injection into the agricultural industry will enable the continuation of the Grazing Resilience and Sustainable Solutions (GRASS) program and the agricultural industry's Best Management Practice (BMP).

In addition to the GRASS program, the Palaszczuk Government had finalised funding arrangements until 2026 for the continuation of the SmartCane BMP, Hort360 GBR BMP, and Banana BMP initiatives.

Quotes attributable to Minister Meaghan Scanlon:

"Farmers will continue to play a critical role in helping to protect our Great Barrier Reef," Minister Scanlon said.

"Both programs are aimed at helping our agriculture industry improve land condition, enhance production and, ultimately, reduce pollutants in reef catchments.

"This funding forms part of our five-year \$270.1 million Queensland Reef Water Quality Program to address water pollution, taking our total spend on water quality since 2015 to over \$1 billion.

"We have allocated \$8.68 million to Fitzroy Basin Association, the Burnett Mary Regional Group, NQ Dry Tropics and the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to continue the GRASS program until 2026.

“GRASS is aimed at improving land condition with a focus on increasing ground cover to reduce harmful run-off impacting the Great Barrier Reef.

“The program assists graziers to improve their land condition and enhance their production – a perfect example of achieving economic benefits and positive environmental outcomes together.

“GRASS program funding also provides graziers and producers with support to better understand their obligations to meet the government’s Reef protection regulations.

“The new investment in the GRASS and BMP programs is just part of the Queensland Government’s \$125.1 million investment to support the agricultural industry in its efforts to protect the reef, with funding allocated from the Queensland Reef Water Quality Program.

“This funding supports Reef regulations compliance and builds on the success of a range of voluntary programs and projects which also includes practice change projects, growing regional agricultural extension capacity, and water quality monitoring.

“We are scaling up land restoration, supporting farmers to improve runoff, banning more single-use plastics, and driving sustainability with a \$1.1 billion Recycling and Jobs Fund.

“We will continue to build on these actions, while supporting the unparalleled science and management frameworks underpinning our conservation efforts.”

CEO of the Burnett Mary Regional Group Sheila Charlesworth:

“GRASS is an important program that delivers significant environmental benefits,” Ms Charlesworth said.

“The Burnett Mary Regional Group has been developing action plans for land management in consultation with farmers to improve paddock management and pasture cover to enhance production, provide economic benefits and deliver environmental outcomes.

“The program has been very successful in achieving these objectives.”

CANEGROWERS CEO Dan Galligan:

“With over 40% of Queensland’s sugarcane-growing area now independently accredited in the Smartcane BMP program, the sugar industry is well and truly ahead of the targets agreed with the government,” Mr Galligan said.

“But we are not resting on our laurels. More and more growers are signing up to be part of the industry-led program every month and Smartcane BMP has become a central pillar of the industry’s sustainable future strategy.

“The program provides growers with a practical and credible way of communicating their environmental credentials to the community, Reef stakeholders, and sugar markets, while also maintaining productivity and profits.”