

MEDIA RELEASE



CANEGROWERS

Friday 11 August 2023

Delegates visit growers in the Herbert District to understand and observe the impact that regional program on-ground activities are having on improving farming practices and water quality.

A team of six delegates of the Australian Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) recently met with Herbert District growers to see a sample of the work funded under the Reef Trust Partnership, including the Lower Herbert Water Quality Program (LHWQP).

It was an opportunity for delegates to speak with on ground staff and growers and learn how the Lower Herbert Water Quality Program has had an impact and why funding like this is important for water quality and practice changes.

The new DCCEEW team were keen to get an 'on the ground' perspective from funding recipients and key stakeholders, with the feedback giving them a better understanding and appreciation of the information they receive through the progress reports, annual work plans and reports.

Herbert Grower Chris Bosworth said extension staff on ground building relationships is important for the success of programs and builds trust with growers.

"Finding staff to stay in the district has been an ongoing challenge but we are working towards getting young school leavers interested in the sugar industry to keep them living and working in our community," said Mr Bosworth.

The LHWQP is giving growers the tools, knowledge, and innovation to make changes quicker than they would without the support and advocate for the sugar industry to be more environmentally and financially sustainable.

Hinchinbrook Shire Council Mayor and Grower Ramon Jayo said growers value their land and the environment and rely on the land to make a living.

"We want to look after it and programs like the LHWQP help to accelerate practice changes. Without them it would be a lot harder to make changes, especially after a tough season," said Mr Jayo.

The Lower Herbert Water Quality Program aims to prevent 140 tonnes of dissolved inorganic nitrogen from entering the Great Barrier Reef lagoon from the Herbert River catchment each year. Under the Reef 2050 plan to reduce runoff of dissolved inorganic nitrogen the Herbert River is one of the highest priority river catchments. The \$16.2 million program is funded by the partnership between the Australian Government's Reef Trust and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation with coordination support provided by CANEGROWERS Herbert River.

[More information and interviews:](#) Jason Wolfgram | Communications Manager | 0436 469 018



Great Barrier
Reef Foundation