



**THE HON JOSH FRYDENBERG MP**  
Minister for the Environment and Energy

**SENATOR THE HON IAN MACDONALD**  
LNP Senator for Queensland

**THE HON WARREN ENTSCH MP**  
Federal Member for Leichhardt

**JOINT MEDIA RELEASE**

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**MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR BOOST TO FARMERS  
TO IMPROVE REEF WATER QUALITY**

The Federal Government is continuing to implement water quality improvements in the Great Barrier Reef by investing a further \$4.46 million to reduce nitrogen runoff flowing from the Reef's catchments.

Delivered as part of the Government's \$225 million Reef Trust, this investment will support sugarcane farmers in the Wet Tropics and Burdekin regions to reduce runoff by better matching fertiliser application to crop requirements.

The funding, coordinated by Terrain NRM (Wet Tropics) and NQ Dry Tropics (Burdekin region), supports committed canegrowers to change practices, save money and support the Reef.

“Runoff from agricultural land is one of the key threats to the health of the Reef and is linked to outbreaks of the coral-eating crown-of-thorns starfish,” said Minister for the Environment and Energy Josh Frydenberg.

“Successful farmers are already being contracted and will collectively reduce nitrogen entering the Reef by more than 145 tonnes over four years. This is in addition to a reduction of around 140 tonnes that was contracted earlier this year under the first \$4.7 million round.”

Federal Member for Leichhardt Warren Entsch said this builds on the fantastic work done by canegrowers right up the eastern seaboard over the past decades, which has seen changes in practices by the sugar industry produce significant improvements in Reef Lagoon water quality.

“While the financial support from the Federal Government is important, we also need to acknowledge the significant and personal contributions of farmers,” Mr Entsch said.

“They have been prepared to alter their management practices and carry the associated risks for the betterment of the Great Barrier Reef.

“At the same time, it has also provided farmers with good economic returns through improved sustainable practices.”

Northern based Government Senator Ian Macdonald said farmers across the region were leading the way in adopting smarter and more efficient farming practices to ensure the long term protection of the natural environment.

“I heard of the great work of farmers at the Reef Trust Awards Night that I attended just the other week,” Senator Macdonald said.

“Our local growers have invested considerable time and effort to adopt best practice farming methods to ensure the overall health and sustainability of the natural environment, while at the same time working to improve their productivity.

“It was encouraging to see recognition of this at the Awards Night. They are to be congratulated for their hard work and innovation in reducing runoff in their local catchments.”

There is still \$2.64 million available for future rounds to help sugarcane farmers in the Wet Tropics and Burdekin regions to improve their efficiency while improving the quality of water entering the Reef.

A further funding round as part of this Project is expected early next year.

More information on the Reef Trust Repeated Tenders – Wet Tropics and Burdekin can be accessed via <http://www.environment.gov.au/marine/gbr/reef-trust/repeated-reverse-auctions>.

**Ends**

Media contacts:

Kane Silom – Office of the Hon Josh Frydenberg MP – 02 6277 7920  
Kylie Wyer – Office of Senator the Hon Ian Macdonald – 07 4771 3066  
Angie Trivisonno – Office of the Hon Warren Entsch MP – 07 4051 2220