

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Environment portfolio

Question No: 45
Hearing: Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1.1
Programme: Biodiversity and Conservation Division
Topic: Reef Trust - Wet Tropics Tender
Hansard Page:
Question Date:
Question Type: Written

Senator Waters asked:

Can you provide updates on the Reef Trust Wet Topics tender and the Grazing Project?

Answer:

The Reef Trust Promotion of A-class Grazing Management Practices project supports widespread adoption of A-class practices across the grazing community to improve the quality of water entering the Great Barrier Reef from broad-scale land-use without impact on productivity. The project will provide tailored support to graziers in high sediment source catchments in the Fitzroy and Burdekin Dry Tropics Natural Resource Management (NRM) regions.

The project is managed by the Queensland Department of Heritage and Protection (DEHP) and will be delivered by Fitzroy Basin Regional Natural NRM in conjunction with the North Queensland Dry Tropics Regional NRM. The duration of the project has been varied, with the project to commence in early July 2015 and completed in June 2018.

The *Reef Trust Tender – Wet Tropics* provides financial incentives to sugar cane farmers in the Wet Tropics to improve their nitrogen use efficiency. All successful applicants have now been contracted to commence their proposed fertiliser management practices to be delivered across 22 farms. Over four years, \$1.7 million (GST exclusive) will be provided through the reverse tender to assist farmers in enhancing fertiliser management practices. The first annual payment has been released to successful farmers.

Through the reverse tender, farmers have committed to reducing their nitrogen application rates in line with best management practice over the life of the project. The benefits of this are expected to extend beyond the project period, including long-term demonstration of best practice in the cane industry.

A wide portion of cane farmers were engaged across the Wet Tropics region through the reverse tender, with almost half of the successful farmers not previously involved in previous Australian Government reef initiatives. This brings a new pool of cane growers engaged in activities to help achieve targets for reducing nitrogen loads entering the Great Barrier Reef.