

# Reef Trust Partnership

**Water Quality Regional Programs**

**Lower Herbert**



## **COMMUNICATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

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Australian Government



Great Barrier  
Reef Foundation

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### 1. Introduction and background

The Reef Trust Partnership (the Partnership), made by the Australian Government in 2018, is the largest ever single investment in protection of the Great Barrier Reef (the Reef). Through the Partnership the Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF) will lead the collaboration of science, business, government, industry, philanthropy, and communities to amplify the impact of this investment and the benefits it delivers for the Reef.

The Partnership aims to initiate new and innovative collaborations, involving a diverse mix of public, private, corporate, community and research across a broad portfolio of Programs and Projects. There are five components to the portfolio: Water Quality, Reef Integrated Monitoring and Reporting, Crown-of-Thorns Starfish Control, Reef Restoration and Adaptation Science and Traditional Owner and Community Reef Protection Activities. The approaches to Sustainable Financing, Science and Innovation and Communication and Engagement are consistent across the portfolio.

The Lower Herbert Water Quality Program (Program), supported by the Lower Herbert Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Plan, is part of a \$201 million investment in the Water Quality portfolio. Run-off of sediments, nutrients and pesticides from land-based activities poses one of the most significant long-term threats to the health and resilience of the Reef. Efforts to address poor Water Quality have become increasingly important due to the cumulative impact from other threats including climate change.

The Lower Herbert Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Plan is critical to building understanding, trust and community ownership of the Partnership projects in the Lower Herbert. It is also important to ensure Program activities are collaborative and complement existing activities. The main communication goal is to work together to engage the Lower Herbert community to increase understanding and facilitate changes to farm management practices that improve catchment Water Quality and support the Partnership's goal for the Reef.

To understand how change can be supported and enabled in the Lower Herbert, we need to understand and work with the different communities of stakeholders, guided by an effective Lower Herbert Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Plan. The community of stakeholders, growers, who implement that change belong to the Community of Place. Growers are the primary Program audience. The community of stakeholders who influence that change are the people and organisations in the Community of Practice. The community of stakeholders who are interested in that change are the people and organisations in the Community of Interest.

The Program Coordinator and Communications Manager, as part of the Canegrowers Herbert River Partnership Coordinator role, will be responsible for the management and delivery of all engagement and communication activities regarding the Program.

The Partnership has a nested approach to communication and stakeholder engagement planning in order for all Partnership Programs and Projects support the water quality outcomes and impacts for a healthy Reef. The Lower Herbert Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Plan complements the Partnership Communication and Engagement Plan. Similarly, each Delivery Partner, within the Program, will develop and implement a project-level Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Plan that complements these Plans. It is expected that Delivery Partners build on the regional-level communications plan to ensure alignment of messaging across projects and clear articulation on how linkages and synergies will be achieved.

### 2. Purpose

The regionally developed Lower Herbert Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Plan will promote a sense of regional ownership of, and unity in, the design and delivery of the Program, by the GBRF, Program Coordinator and Delivery Partners. It provides a framework to communicate and engage with Herbert sugarcane growers, intermediary groups involved in the Herbert sugar industry and other key stakeholders. It provides a framework to monitor and evaluate the success of communication approaches and stakeholder engagement in supporting the goals of the Program and identifies potential synergies, opportunities and roles to maximise engagement and participation of all stakeholders.

### 3. Goals

This Plan will serve as a resource for the Program to support effective communications and meaningful engagement opportunities with the Lower Herbert community. This Plan has Program communication and stakeholder engagement goals, to promote the Program and engage with relevant audiences and intra-Program communication goals, to ensure successful delivery of the Program. Achieving these goals will empower the Lower Herbert community to achieve the DIN target for the Lower Herbert River catchment.

#### **Communication and stakeholder engagement goals**

To ensure successful delivery of the Program the Program Coordinator and Delivery Partners will work together to achieve the following goals:

Goal 1: ENGAGEMENT: By June 2024, the Program has successfully engaged with the target communities to raise awareness and generate support of the Program and its key messages.

Goal 2: UNDERSTANDING: By June 2024 there is increased understanding among Herbert sugarcane growers of farm management practices that improve productivity, profitability, and sustainability of their farms.

Goal 3: FACILITATE IMPROVED FARM MANAGEMENT: By June 2024 active engagement of Lower Herbert River communities has improved farm management practices and enabled the end of catchment, target load reduction of 140 tonnes of DIN to be achieved.

#### **Intra-program communication goals**

To ensure successful delivery of the Program the GBRF, Program Coordinator and Delivery Partners will work together to achieve the following goal:

Goal 4: COLLABORATION: By June 2024 intra-program strategic collaboration, open communication, accountability, and transparency have collectively harnessed synergies to achieve the end of catchment, target load reduction of 140 tonnes of DIN.

#### 4. Key messages

**Growing a productive, profitable and sustainable Herbert sugar industry together, now and into the future.**

##### **Productive and Profitable**

Herbert growers maximise their own productivity and profitability and utilise various mechanisms to do so.

The Herbert sugar industry is productive and profitable. Each grower farms to their highest standard of farm management practices possible.

Herbert growers manage their nutrient and pesticide inputs to best suite their crop and business requirements and reduce nutrient and pesticide losses as runoff.

##### **Sustainable**

Stewardship is everyone's responsibility. Collectively the Herbert sugar industry is committed to the legacy of a productive agricultural landscape, vibrant, multi-cultural rural community and healthy natural environment.

Herbert grower's value healthy, surrounding natural ecosystems, including wetlands, rivers, estuaries and the Reef. They are committed to further improvement of their farming practices to improve water quality which is important for a healthy Reef.

Climate change is the most significant threat to the Great Barrier Reef and other ecosystems along the Queensland coast. Urgent action is required by everyone to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, slow down climate change and build resilience to climate change.

##### **Together**

Local coordination of the Program brings together the Herbert sugar industry and enables greater innovation, integration and collaboration across the range of Herbert projects.

The Herbert sugar industry works together, applying the best available science and industry knowledge with a culture of innovation, to respond to challenges, individually and as teams.

The Program is supported by the Australian Government and Great Barrier Reef Foundation through the Reef Trust Partnership to coordinate decision making, accountability and performance evaluation and prioritise investment in the Lower Herbert region.

The intergovernmental Reef 2050 Plan provides the overarching framework and shared pathway for the Reef's future and the Reef Trust Partnership is key to collectively harness and build on synergies between the work of government agencies, scientists, industry, universities, communities, and Traditional Owners.

Everyone has a role to play. There is no one individual or organisation who can grow a productive, profitable, and sustainable Herbert sugar industry. There is no one individual or organisation who can save the Reef.

It will take the collective will and effort of everyone in the Herbert River community and sugar industry to make a measurable impact. The Herbert sugar industry has a history of working together to solve problems and this collective impact is needed now to ensure the Herbert sugar industry is productive, profitable and sustainable, now and into the future.

## 5. Stakeholders

To understand how change can be supported and enabled in the Lower Herbert River catchment, we need to understand and work with the different communities of stakeholders, or audiences, relevant to the Program. The diagram below illustrates the different communities. The community of stakeholders who implement that change belong to the Community of Place, the growers. These people are the primary audience of the Program. The community of stakeholders who influence that change are the people and organisations in the Community of Practice. The community of stakeholders who are interested in that change are the people and organisations in the Community of Interest. These communities of stakeholders are discussed below.

The Community of Place in the Program are the growers who manage the 60,000ha of sugarcane land in the Lower Herbert River catchment. The 580 growers are the primary regional stakeholders, people whose professional practices involve farming and business systems. The growers are responsible for implementing on-ground change on their farms through their involvement with Delivery Partners and the over-arching Program to address this farm practice change challenge. Members of the Community of Place are the foundation of the Community of Practice.

The Community of Practice is a diverse group of people, represented by various intermediary groups and organisations, who influence or work with Herbert growers regarding nutrient management practices and a broader suite of associated farm and business management practices. The Community of Practice influence farm management practices in the Lower Herbert and how improvements to the current situation will have benefits for industry productivity, profitability, and sustainability. The Community of Practice includes:

*Delivery Partners:* involving people whose professional practices are to implement each of the on-ground Projects as well as their usual business activities.

*Contractors:* involving people whose professional practices are to implement on-farm farm management practices according to each grower's requirements and following industry best practice.

*Sugar Marketers:* involving people whose professional practices are to work with growers to improve their understanding and ability to manage their own sugar pricing.

*Resellers:* involving people whose professional practices are to recommend and supply products (nutrients, ameliorants, pesticides) according to each grower's requirements and following industry best practice.

*Machinery and Equipment Sale Companies:* involving people whose professional practices are to sell, repair or modify machinery and equipment that enables growers to implement their desired farming practices.

*Queensland and local Government departments:* involving people whose professional practices are to guide farm management practices, provide information and work with growers to improve their business and farming systems.

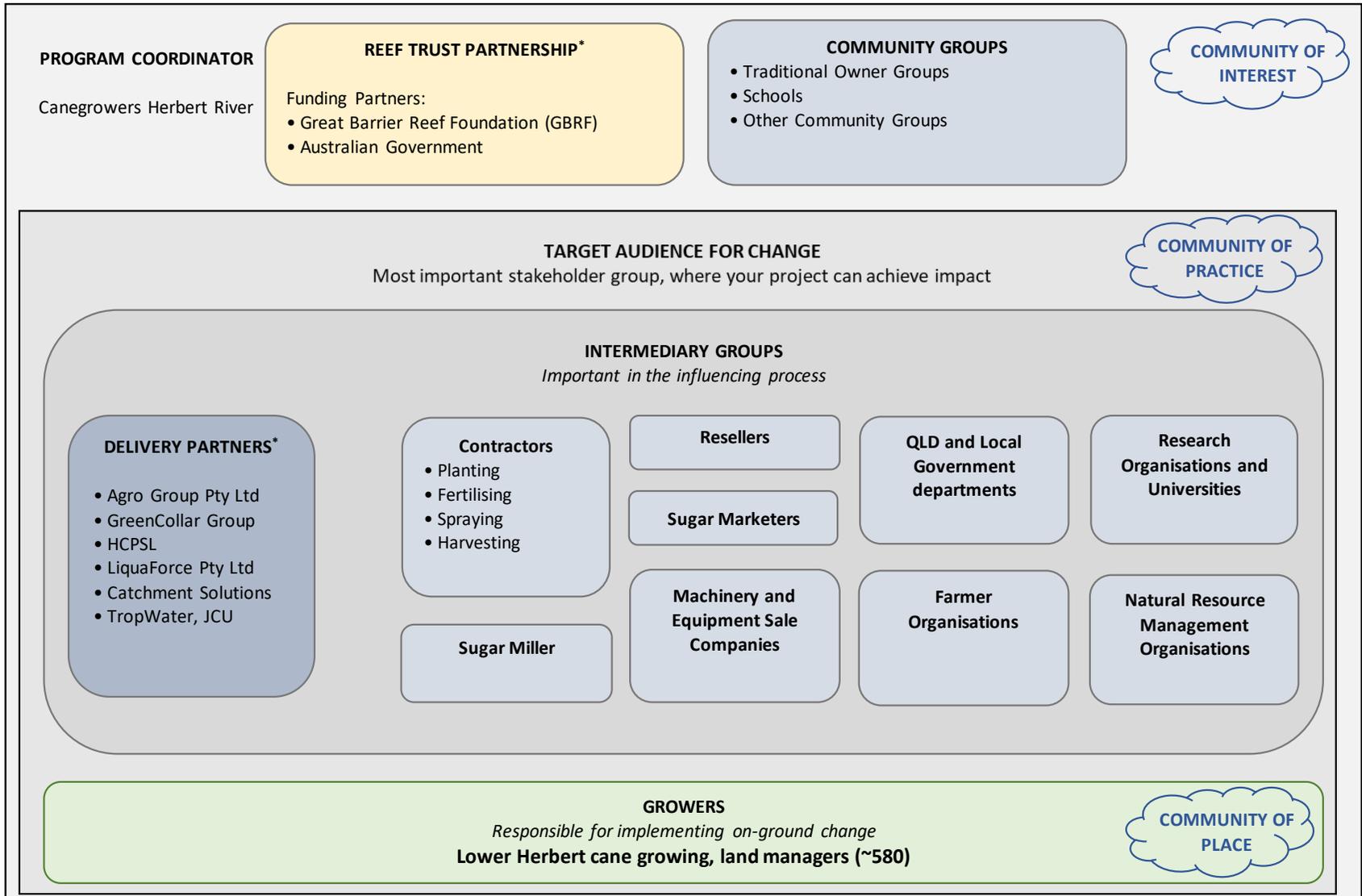
*Farmer organisations:* involving people whose professional practices are to represent the best interest of growers and help growers regarding pertinent farming issues.

*Research organisations:* involving people whose professional practices are to conduct scientific research (farming systems and water quality) that guides farm management practices in different contexts.

*Miller:* involving people whose professional practices are to work with growers and harvesting contractors to transport sugarcane and process, transport and market sugar.

The Community of Interest includes the wider community of Traditional Owner groups, schools, community groups, regional residents, recreational users (boating, fishing, outdoors) and Natural Resource Management organisations who are interested in the Program and Project activities, outcomes and implications for the Lower Herbert environment and downstream ecosystems.

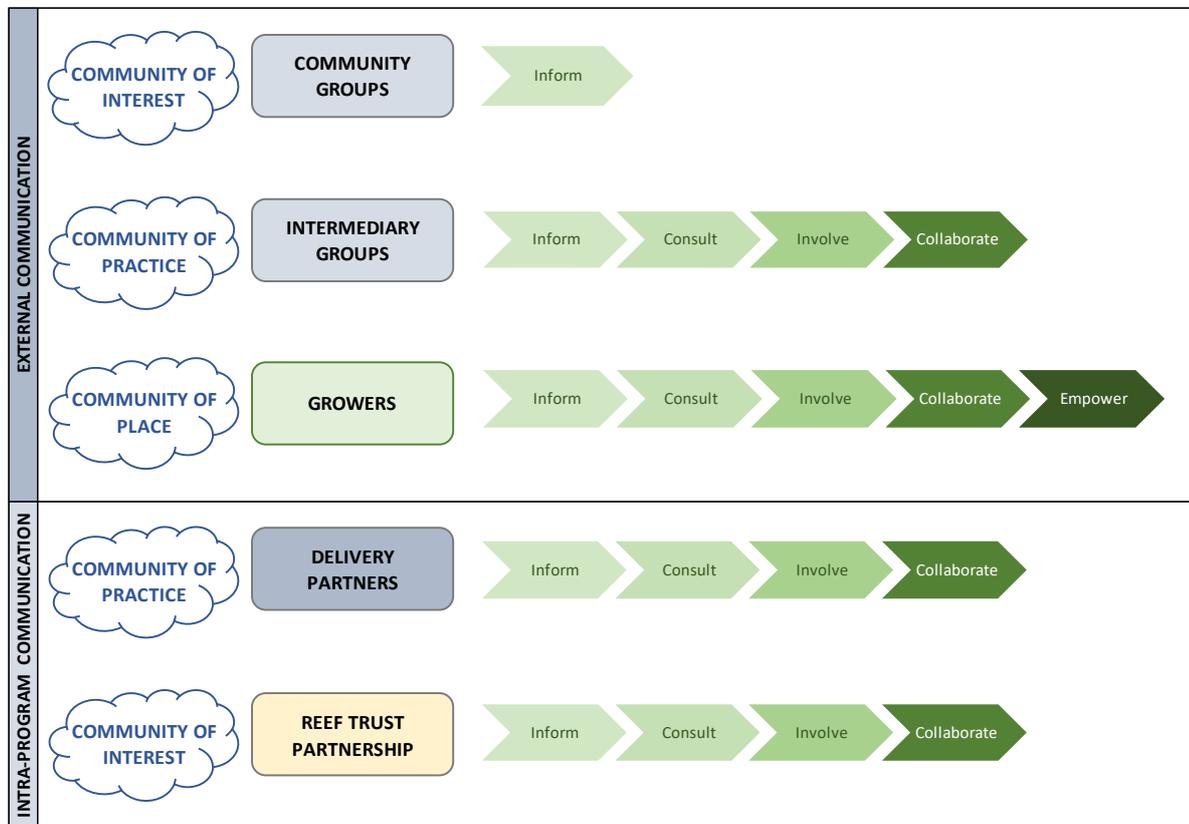
The communication requirements of these stakeholders are outlined below.



\* - Internal stakeholders

## 6. Communication / Stakeholder Engagement approach and audience

The proposed communication/engagement approach for each of the communities of stakeholders, or audiences, are illustrated below. The external communication and engagement approaches are specifically for growers, intermediary groups and community groups. The intra-program communication approaches are only for the GBRF and Delivery Partners who are responsible for the implementation of the Program.



### External communication and stakeholder engagement approach

The external communication and engagement approaches are specifically for growers, intermediary groups and community groups. The Community of Place (Growers), Community of Practice (Intermediary Groups) and Community of Interest (Community) are the three Program audiences. The communication and engagement approaches for each of these vary in the timing and scale of involvement and the information provided, as indicated in the tables below. In most instances the messages are the same and will be conveyed to different audiences

Growers in the Community of Place are the primary audience and main focus of the Program’s communication and engagement activities. They will be informed, consulted and involved in order to foster collaboration and empower growers to improve their farm management practices and farm to their highest standard possible. The Delivery Partners will enable farm management practice improvement, the program will facilitate active engagement to achieve this.

Intermediary groups in the Community of Practice will be informed of the Program and its goals and actively engaged through consultation, involvement and collaborate where possible, by the intra-program parties. Expertise of intermediary groups will determine the level of their involvement.

Community groups in the Community of Interest will be informed of the Program and its goals. Working with schools is considered an important approach to promote the key messages of the Program.

**Intra-program communication**

The intra-program communication approaches are only for the GBRF, Program Coordinator and Delivery Partners who are formally engaged in the implementation of the Program. The focus of this communication goal is collaboration that maximises the outcomes that can be achieved in the Lower Herbert.

Communication between these internal stakeholders shall be in line with contractual agreements and transparent in order to achieve the overarching goals of the Program and the Reef Trust Partnership. Internal communication protocols will be established for ensuring all relevant personnel and entities are included in decision-making and development and distribution of materials as required. This will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis at the Lower Herbert Regional Partner Forum.

As part of the Program Coordinator role of Canegrowers Herbert River the Program Coordinator and Communications Manager will be responsible for the management and delivery of all engagement and communication activities regarding the Program including:

- leading internal and external communication
- channel content and resources management
- planning, coordination and delivery of major stakeholder engagement forums
- developing content as required for engagement and communication activities
- media and stakeholder enquiries, responses and data reporting (phone, email, website and events)
- reporting and presentations.

7. Communication and engagement activities

An overview of the Program communication and engagement activities are presented below. To achieve each communication goal the audience is stated and the key messages and purpose of each Channel, including method and/or activity and frequency are indicated. The ways to describe the Indicators, or measure of success, of each communications/engagement activities are listed, including a target for each Indicator. Many of the activities build on existing regional engagement processes, relationships and networks and complement current programs and maximise opportunities to leverage knowledge and resources across all the Program stakeholders.

It is expected that by implementing the communication and engagement activities below, the project can effectively communicate and engage with the audiences identified, growers, intermediary groups, community, and internal stakeholders.

**Goal 1: ENGAGEMENT: By June 2024, the Program has successfully engaged with the target communities to raise awareness and generate support of the Program and its key messages.**

Audience	Key messages	Purpose	Channel	Method and/or activity	Frequency	Indicators or measure of success	Target
Growers Intermediary Groups	Together	Program promotion	Website	Program information	Quarterly	Website traffic	100 av hits, time at site
Growers	Together	Program promotion	Grower webpage	Podcasts, grower information	Monthly	Website traffic	# hits, time at site
Growers Intermediary Groups	Together	Program promotion	Radio	Podcasts	Weekly	Take up and reach	100 regular listeners
Growers	Together	Program promotion	Weekending emails	Grower information	Weekly	# read, Response to some content	# and average response rate over time
Growers Intermediary Groups	Together	Program promotion	eNewsletters	Program and Grower information	Quarterly	# read, Response to some content	# and average response rate over time
Growers Intermediary Groups	Together	Program promotion	Media Outlets (Radio/TV/Print)	Media release, Program information	Quarterly	Media take up and reach	4 Media outlet articles per year
Growers Intermediary Groups Community	Together	Program promotion	Facebook	Program and Grower information	Weekly	Number of Members Frequency and variety of content	100 likes
Growers Intermediary Groups Community	Together	Program promotion	Print Media; factsheets, infographics	Program and Grower information	Quarterly	# outputs produced, dissemination #s	10 Program factsheets produced
<b>Notes</b>							

\*Indicators of success may include:

**Effectiveness (Ev)** – Did the program deliver the communications and engagement products committed?

**Efficiency (Ec)** – Did the program deliver these on time and within budget?

**Appropriateness (A)** – Were the messages to stakeholders clear, digestible, and suitable for target audiences?

**Impact (I)** – What difference did it make? (eg, did people come to the events?)

**Legacy (L)** – Did the program learn valuable lessons from the communications and engagement activities (eg what worked and what didn't) that could be applied/change to future projects?)

Goal 2: UNDERSTANDING: By June 2024 there is increased understanding among Herbert sugarcane growers of farm management practices that improve productivity, profitability, and sustainability of their farms.

Audience	Key messages	Purpose	Channels	Method and/or activity	Frequency	Indicators or measure of success	Target
Growers Intermediary Groups	Productive & Profitable, Sustainable	Increased understanding	Website	Program information	Quarterly	Website traffic	# hits, time at site
Growers	Productive & Profitable, Sustainable	Increased understanding	Grower webpage	Podcasts, Knowledge hub; information and important links	Monthly	Website traffic	# hits, time at site
Growers Intermediary Groups	Productive & Profitable, Sustainable	Increased understanding	Radio	Podcasts	Weekly	Take up and reach	100 regular listeners @ week
Growers	Productive & Profitable, Sustainable	Increased understanding	Weekending emails	Grower information	Weekly	# read, Response to some content	# and average response rate over time
Growers Intermediary Groups	Productive & Profitable, Sustainable	Increased understanding	eNewsletters	Grower information	Quarterly	# read, Response to some content	# and average response rate over time
Growers Intermediary Groups	Productive & Profitable, Sustainable	Increased understanding	FaceBook	Grower information	Weekly	Number of Members Frequency and variety of content	100 likes
Growers	Productive & Profitable, Sustainable	Increased understanding	Events - Branch Meetings	Grower information	Quarterly	# branches and # members, attendee response questionnaire	4/year, 6 branches, 100 members
Growers	Productive & Profitable, Sustainable	Increased understanding	Events - Training	Identified training	Bi-Annually	# attendees, attendee response questionnaire	2/year, 30 attendees
Growers	Productive & Profitable, Sustainable	Increased understanding	Surveys	Repeatable design with key themes	Bi-Annually	# responses, responses	2/year, 50 responses
Growers Intermediary Groups	Productive & Profitable, Sustainable	Increased understanding	'Spotlight on the Project' field days/forums	Showcase what is happening across region	A	# attendees, scope of content, attendee response questionnaire	1/year, 50 attendees
<b>Notes</b>							

Goal 3: FACILITATE IMPROVED FARM MANAGEMENT: By June 2024 active engagement of Lower Herbert River communities has improved farm management practices and enabled the end of catchment, target load reduction of 140 tonnes of DIN to be achieved.

Audience	Key messages	Purpose	Channels	Method and/or activity	Frequency	Indicators or measure of success	Target
Growers	Productive & Profitable, Sustainable	Improved management	Projects	Assist Delivery Partners with Project comms	Quarterly	# events, # attendees, attendee response questionnaire	4/year, 6 branches, 100 members
Growers	Productive & Profitable, Sustainable	Improved management	Events - Branch Meetings	Grower information	Quarterly	# events, # branches and # members, attendee response questionnaire	4/year, 6 branches, 100 members
Growers	Productive & Profitable, Sustainable	Improved management	Events - Training	Identified training	Bi-Annually	# events, attendees, attendee response questionnaire	2/year, 30 attendees
Growers	Productive & Profitable, Sustainable	Improved management	Surveys	Repeatable design with key themes	Bi-Annually	# responses, responses	2/year, 50 responses
Growers Intermediary Groups	Productive & Profitable, Sustainable	Improved management	'Spotlight on the Project' field days/forums	Showcase what is happening across region	Annually	# attendees, scope of content, attendee response questionnaire	1/year, 50 attendees
Intermediary Groups, CGHR, Delivery Partners	Together	Facilitate improvement of farm management practices	Regional Advisory Committee	Consult with Intermediary Groups as required	Quarterly	Scope of meetings, collaboratively progressing issues	4/year, 10 attendees
<b>Notes</b>							

Goal 4: COLLABORATION: Intra-program strategic collaboration, open communication, accountability, and transparency have collectively harnessed synergies to achieve the end of catchment, target load reduction of 140 tonnes of DIN.

Audience	Key message	Purpose	Channels	Method and/or activity	Frequency	Indicators or measure of success	Target
GBRF, CGHR	Together	Strategic program delivery	Program Steering Committee	Regular meetings, as required to track Program implementation	Quarterly	Due process followed All issues managed	4 meetings per year
Internal stakeholders, GBRF, CGHR, Delivery Partners	Together	Partner engagement	Partner Forum	Collaborative and participatory decision-making forums	Bi-Annually	# Forums held, All Partners actively participate	2 Forums per year, All Delivery Partners
Internal stakeholders, GBRF, CGHR, Delivery Partners	Together	Scale proven strategies and accelerate positive outcomes	Partner Forum	Collaborative and participatory decision-making forums	Bi-Annually	# Forums held, All Partners actively participate	2 Forums per year, All Delivery Partners
Internal stakeholders, GBRF, CGHR, Delivery Partners	Together	Integrate opportunities	Partner Forum	Identify opportunities to build capacity and capability across critical areas in the design and delivery of engagement activities	Bi-Annually	# Forums held, All Partners actively participate	2 Forums per year, All Delivery Partners
Internal stakeholders, GBRF, CGHR, Delivery Partners	Productive & Profitable, Sustainable, Together	Proactively identify emerging issues	Partner Forum	Issues Monitoring	Bi-Annually	# Forums held, All Partners actively participate	2 Forums per year, All Delivery Partners
CGHR, Delivery Partners	Productive & Profitable, Sustainable, Together	Identify and consider issues of concern	Partner Meetings	Consult with partners	On-going, Monthly	Success of each Project, # issues that pose risk to Program delivery	Successful tracking of each project
CGHR, Delivery Partners	Productive & Profitable, Sustainable, Together	Promote information exchange and shared learnings opportunities	Partner Update email	Updates of activities, issues and milestones.	Bi-Monthly	Updates sent	6 updates
GBRF and experts	Productive & Profitable, Sustainable, Together	Expertise to guide identified components of the Program	Technical Working Group	As needs arise	Bi-Annually	Issues addressed in a timely manner	All issues actively managed for success
<b>Notes</b>							

## 8. Risk and Mitigation

Table z identifies the main risks and mitigation actions associated with communication, engagement and messaging regarding the Program.

Risk	Mitigation
<p>If misinformation is released and/or misunderstanding of the Program results, then there is a potential risk of not effectively promoting the Program, its achievements or united messaging from the Herbert sugar industry.</p>	<p>This Communication and Engagement Plan will enable a thorough and systematic approach to communication that promotes clarity and consistency of messaging by all Program and Project proponents.</p> <p>If Program and Project proponents become aware of prevalent misinformation and/or misunderstanding then this will be addressed in an effective, united manner.</p>
<p>If one or more elements of the Program or Projects fail or falter, then all parties will be exposed to reputational risk.</p>	<p>Development and delivery of the Program and implementation of this Plan will involve all Delivery Partners as well as regional stakeholders. This will go some way to mitigating the likelihood of reputational damage due to some failure of the Program or projects.</p>
<p>If the Program attracts widespread public and media interest, resulting in Herbert growers being in the spotlight, then growers may resent, and withdraw from, their involvement in the Program or Projects.</p>	<p>Ensure promotion of positive farm management practice improvements by growers, showcasing growers work and commitment to continual improvement.</p> <p>For promotional materials relevant to individual growers only their first name will be used and grower consent for these materials will be obtained.</p>
<p>If the key messages fail to engage the grower audience to improve their farming practices, then Program deliverables will be impacted.</p>	<p>Reassess, review, update Communication and Engagement Plan (potentially by an external) to increase likelihood of success.</p>
<p>If members and/or public perceive the actions of the Program to be different to the expected role of CGHR, then criticism of CGHR and loss of membership may result.</p>	<p>Provide high quality, consistent Program messaging open communications between all members one-on-one communications with these members</p>