

Reef Trust Partnership

Water Quality Regional
Programs

Lower Burdekin Regional
Water Quality Program
(2020-23)

COMMUNICATIONS &
STAKEHOLDER
ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Template provided by GBRF, to be completed by Program Manager / Partnership Coordinator
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Version

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3 July 2020	Original Draft for review by GBRF
1 Feb 2021	Revision based on comments and Template provided by GBRF

1. Introduction and background

NQ Dry Tropics has been engaged to develop and oversee the four-year Lower Burdekin Regional Water Quality (WQ) Program, in partnership with the Great Barrier Reef Foundation.

Under the dual role of Program Manager and Program Coordinator, NQ Dry Tropics will work closely with regional partners to help deliver long-term water quality outcomes.

Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF) & Australian Government partnership

The GBRF entered into the Reef Trust Partnership (RTP) with the Australian Government, which included an investment of \$201 million to build the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef through targeted water quality improvements. This investment commenced in July 2018 and supports the delivery of regionally focused on-ground actions through a series of programs targeting catchments identified by GBRF as a priority for water quality investment.

The delivery of the Reef Trust Partnership will be structured around three core pillars:

- **Acceleration** (this is urgent, we need to take big bold steps)
- **Collaboration** (can't do it alone, partnership, local ownership, new ideas)
- **Legacy** (outcomes beyond length of partnership, grow and strengthen capacity, drive long-term behavioural change, implement sustainable financing solutions, create new business and delivery models).

2. Purpose

This Communications Plan is specific to the Lower Burdekin regional WQ program and will guide the planning and execution of communication activities for each individual project.

This plan supports the overarching [RTP Communication and Engagement Plan](#) developed by the GBRF, and is critical to building understanding, trust and community ownership of the Partnership projects in an area where multiple programs are underway that are underpinned by government and industry investment.

It is critical that communication and engagement activities for RTP projects are driven by the strategic objectives of the Partnership, as illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Reef Trust Partnership Communication and Engagement approach

The RTP Water Quality Program aims to achieve several key outcomes, including:

- An enduring reduction in the long-term end-of-catchment pollutant loads (based on modelled average)
- Innovative solutions for system change – ensuring the availability of innovative solutions for water quality improvement
- Maintenance of water quality in less disturbed catchments
- Increasing the Traditional Owner-led water quality improvement projects.

3. Goals

The goals of this plan include six main objectives, to be achieved by 30 June 2024:

1. An increased awareness among cane farmers of best management practices for growing cane that improve profitability and keep nutrients and pesticides on farm.
2. An increased understanding among Lower Burdekin cane growers of how better water quality in local waterways increases the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef.
3. The progress and achievements of the program are clearly communicated between GBRF, NQ Dry Tropics and Regional Delivery Partners so each is aware of each organisation's role and successes.
4. There is a clear understanding in the Lower Burdekin of the role played by GBRF, NQ Dry Tropics and the Regional Delivery Partners in delivering the Lower Burdekin Regional Water Quality Program.
5. There is a clear understanding in the Lower Burdekin that the Lower Burdekin Regional Water Quality Program has delivered outcomes that enhance production and profitability in the local cane industry as well as improving the quality of water reaching the Great Barrier Reef from the catchment.
6. There is an increased understanding of the role that Traditional Owners can play in water quality improvement and land management.

Communications for this program aligns with the objectives of the Reef Trust Partnership Communications and Engagement Plan. Communications activities will support the program to:

1. Build long-term capacity within the lower Burdekin cane community, to achieve long-term sustainability beyond the life of the program;
2. Build community and industry ownership around program activities;
3. Align and integrate effectively with existing water quality programs and activities in the Burdekin Dry Tropics region;
4. Champion innovation and the uptake of new ideas and approaches to drive behavioural change and achieve on-ground results;
5. Raise awareness of GBRF's funding role through the Reef Trust Partnership; and
6. Encourage awareness and understanding of the role that the Dry Tropics community is playing in protecting the Great Barrier Reef.

4. Key messages

During the life of program, Communications and Engagement will have given stakeholders and the broader Lower Burdekin Community a clear understanding of the following key messages:

- The four-year Lower Burdekin Regional Water Quality Program is a partnership between the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, Regional Delivery Partners and NQ Dry Tropics to support industry uptake of improved cane farming practices.
- The program harnesses local knowledge to shape the direction of water quality investment in the lower Burdekin.
- Regional partners work together to coordinate the delivery of sustainable irrigation, nutrient and pesticide management practices and wetland management to achieve water quality targets.
- NQ Dry Tropics and the Regional Delivery Partners have extensive combined experience working with cane farmers to implement practices that benefit the bottom line and the environment.
 - This is an opportunity to build on these successes through local collaboration to maximise long-term water quality outcomes.
- Involvement of local partners in the design, planning and delivery of the regional program to help ensure maximum support and adoption.
- The program aims to improve reef water quality by reducing annual dissolved inorganic nitrogen (DIN) loads leaving farms in the catchment by 48,000 kg, and pesticides by 35 kg.
- The program will benefit the local economy and help to build strong relationships between all stakeholders

For cane growers

- This is an opportunity to implement practices that will improve farm profitability and productivity while also benefiting water quality.
- How to get involved - Link to website information portal or contact a local cane extension officer.

For project partners

- Project delivery partners are working together to design and deliver effective extension support that meets cane farmers needs and helps address energy, nutrient, pesticide and water management challenges.

5. Stakeholders

This plan targets a number of primary and secondary stakeholders as listed below.

Primary	Secondary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lower Burdekin cane growers ● Canegrowers Burdekin ● Grower collectives ● GBRF ● Australian Government (Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment) ● Sugar Research Australia ● Agritech Solutions ● BBIFMAC ● Queensland Government (Department of Agriculture and Fisheries) ● Farmacist ● Greening Australia ● Green Collar ● James Cook University ● Traditional Owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Broader community. ● Queensland Government ● Burdekin Shire Council ● Local Federal and State members ● Sub-contractors ● AIMS ● GBRMPA ● TropWATER

6. Communication / Engagement approach and audience

Goal 1: By end-June 2024 there is an increased awareness among cane growers of management practices or growing cane that improve profitability and keep nutrients and pesticides on farm.

Tactic	Target audience	Distribution method	Purpose	Key messages	Frequency	Responsibility	Success Indicators
Media stories (for external media, web)	Cane growers	Newspaper/ TV/Radio/ Website	Promote good practice	Irrigation efficiency saves money and time. Using less nutrients can save money without reducing yield. Positive examples from individual farms to encourage peer support.	As opportunity arises	Comms teams	Media take-up and reach.
Social media posts	Cane growers	Facebook Twitter	Use to point to website stories	As above	As necessary	Comms teams	Reach Post engagement
Event promotion (pre and post)	Cane growers	Flyers, email, social media posts, adverts	Drive event attendance	Event information Event registration Provide link to web portal	As necessary	Core Team - Comms to review	Attendance Event evaluation
Web portal	Cane growers, general community	Email, social media, advert link to Web Portal	Provide general information, EOI portal, links to partners project websites etc	EOI information Event registration information General program delivery partner information	Ongoing and legacy item beyond life of project	Core team	Website traffic Event registrations

Goal 2: By 30 June 2024, there is an increased understanding among Lower Burdekin cane growers of how better water quality in local waterways increases the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef.

Tactic	Target audience	Distribution Method	Purpose	Key messages	Frequency	Responsibility	Success Indicators
Media stories	Cane growers, wider community, funders, industry	Newspaper/ TV/ Radio / Website	Promote water quality benefits to GBR values	Nutrients and pesticides can weaken coral and seagrasses. Protect Seagrass, fish habitats etc	As opportunity arises	Core team Comms team	Publication of media articles Reach
Social media posts	Cane growers	Social media	Promote water quality outcomes of good practices	Nutrients and pesticides can weaken coral and seagrasses. Protect Seagrass, fish habitats etc	As opportunity arises	Core team Comms team	Reach Post engagement
Event promotion (pre and post).	Cane growers Industry Stakeholders	Flyers, email, social media posts, adverts	Drive event attendance Amplify promotion	Event invite and details Event registration information Link to Web portal.	As required	Core Team, Comms Team Delivery Partners	Registration hits Attendance

Goal 3: The progress and achievements of the project are clearly communicated between GBRF, NQ Dry Tropics and Regional Delivery Partners so each is aware of each organisation’s role and successes.

Tactic	Target audience	Distribution Method	Purpose	Key messages	Frequency	Responsibility	Success Indicators
All draft comms materials sent to GBRF	GBRF	Email	Keep GBRF updated	Latest news, photos, achievements, challenges	Ongoing	Comms team	GBRF is satisfied that nothing has been released without its knowledge and approval.
Quarterly reporting	GBRF	Email	Provide detailed progress update	Latest news, photos, achievements, challenges	Ongoing	Regional Program Manager	Contract reporting
Tag GBRF and Aust govt on all social media posts	GBRF	Facebook, Twitter	Keep GBRF updated	Latest news, photos, achievements, challenges	Ongoing	Comms teams	Correct social media tags used.
Send photos and stories for GBRF to use for its Comms	GBRF	Email	Support GBRF to promote project activities	Latest news, photos, achievements, challenges	Quarterly	Regional Program Manager	GBRF is satisfied that it has received necessary info.
Ensure delivery partners are informed of program progress and achievements.	Program partners	Regular updates to partners Reporting Scheduled Meetings P2R and Regional Forums and events	Consistent and collaborative program wide communication	Regular updates Preventative planning Troubleshooting	Ongoing	Regional Program Manager	Scheduled communication activities

Goal 4: By 30 June 2024, there is clear understanding in the Lower Burdekin of the role played by GBRF, NQ Dry Tropics and the Regional Delivery Partners in delivering the program.

Tactic	Target audience	Distribution Method	Purpose	Key messages	Frequency	Responsibility	Success Indicators
Correct attribution in all comms materials.	Cane growers, wider community, funders, industry	Newspaper/ TV/ Radio/ Website Publications	Appropriate acknowledgement and attribution	Investor attribution Locally driven, collaborative approach	Ongoing	All program partners	Appropriate attribution in all publications and events

Goal 5: By 30 June 2042, there is a clear understanding that the Lower Burdekin Regional Water Quality Program has delivered outcomes that enhance production and profitability in the local cane industry as well as improving the quality of water reaching the Great Barrier Reef from the catchment.

Tactic	Target audience	Distribution Method	Purpose	Key messages	Frequency	Responsibility	Success Indicators
Press release, social media, videos etc	Cane growers, wider community, investors, industry	Newspaper, TV, Radio, Website, Forums, events	Promote the broader private and public benefits of good practice	The program has supported delivery of best-practice farming methods – benefiting farm production and profitability while enhancing water quality and reef health. The program has supported regional economic development,	Ongoing	NQ Dry Tropics and Delivery Partners	Promotion of Lower Burdekin Water Quality Program outcomes.

Goal 6: By end-June 2024 there is an increased understanding of the role that Traditional Owners can play in water quality improvement and land management.

Tactic	Target audience	Distribution method	Purpose	Key messages	Frequency	Responsibility	Success Indicators
Presentation at a Traditional Owner Management Group meeting.	Traditional owners	Direct presentation	Highlight opportunities for involvement. Facilitate linkages between projects and Traditional Owners	Overview of the Lower Burdekin WQ Program, projects details and potential for traditional Owner involvement.	Twice in the life of the Program.	Comms teams	Traditional Owner attendance and response to presentation.
Social media posts	Cane farmers, Traditional owners and wider community.	Facebook Twitter	To acknowledge and encourage participation of Traditional Owners	Positive examples from individual projects to encourage support.	As opportunity arises.	Comms teams	Reach Post engagement
Event promotion (pre and post)	Traditional Owners, land managers, wider community	Flyers, email, social media posts, adverts	Drive event attendance	Event information Event registration	As opportunity arises.	Comms team in partnership with project teams	Attendance Event evaluation

7. Communication and engagement activities

NQ Dry Tropics must be on the lookout for opportunities to tell “whole-of-program” stories. These collective opportunities will undoubtedly present themselves as Delivery Partners individually document some of the on-ground work done with growers.

Results-focused communications products may also be able to be linked to the Social Dimensions aspect of the Paddock to Reef Program.

These could be media statements, social media posts, case studies or videos.

Format	Target audience	Distribution Method	Purpose	Key messages	Frequency	Responsibility	Success Indicators
Press release, social media, videos, etc	Cane growers	Mailout, By hand peer to peer (give growers copies of flyers or case studies to pass onto their friends and neighbours)	Encourage grower participation.	The program helps growers achieve best-practice farming methods – benefiting production and profitability. The program helps farmers ensure they meet requirements of reef regulations and sets them up to easily meet ongoing regulatory change. The program supports regional economic development.	Ongoing	NQ Dry Tropics and Delivery Partners	Participation rate and level of awareness of the program in the community.

Format	Target audience	Distribution Method	Purpose	Key messages	Frequency	Responsibility	Success Indicators
Flyers, case studies	Cane growers	Newspaper, TV, Radio, Website, Forums, events	Encourage grower participation.	The program helps growers achieve best-practice farming methods – benefiting production and profitability. The program helps farmers ensure they meet requirements of reef regulations and sets them up to easily meet ongoing regulatory change. The program supports regional economic development.	Ongoing	NQ Dry Tropics and Delivery Partners	Participation rate and level of awareness of the program in the community.
Video / Commercial	Cane growers	Commercial television, Website, Youtube, Facebook	Encourage grower participation.	The program helps growers achieve best-practice farming methods – benefiting production and profitability. The program helps farmers ensure they meet requirements of reef regulations and sets them up to easily meet ongoing regulatory change. The program supports regional economic development.	Ongoing	NQ Dry Tropics and Delivery Partners	Participation rate and level of awareness of the program in the community.
Planning	Delivery Partners	Collaborative plans, meetings, etc.	Maximise media opportunities	NQ Dry Tropics will support and facilitate collaborative planning and delivery of communications and engagement.	Ongoing	NQ Dry Tropics and delivery partners	High level of participation in program communications and engagement. Effective adoption and implementations of communications protocols

8. Risk and Mitigation

Risk	Mitigation
Program partners (NQ Dry Tropics, GBRF, Regional Delivery Partners) not kept in the loop.	Scheduled program updates to ensure open lines of communication. Establish protocols/responsibilities that clearly define expectations (Appendix B)
Communication material does not align with key messages or objectives of the plan.	Stakeholder input and endorsement of plan messages and objectives.
Key stakeholders are not identified or effectively engaged.	Stakeholder input into draft plan to ensure organisations are appropriately engaged.

[APPENDIX A – Activity table \(to end June 2021\)](#)

Year 1 activities - 2020 to end June 2021

Tactic	Target audience	Distribution Method	Purpose	Messages/Information	Date released	Responsibility	Result
Media Releases NQ Dry Tropics website	Cane growers, wider community	Newspaper/ TV/ Radio/ Website	Launch program and announce NQ Dry Tropics' role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NQDT has been engaged as manager and coordinator Working with local partners to design and deliver lasting solutions. Program will include projects that will work with growers to identify potential improvements that will save money, improve profitability and improve water quality to the Reef. 	26 May 2020	Comms team	LBC20 project announced LBC20 – EOY Cane grower’s dinner and Project presentation LBC20 – Publicising EOY Dinner
Social Media	Cane growers Industry organisations Wider Community	Facebook	Launch program and announce NQDT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NQDT has been engaged as manager and coordinator Using less nutrients can save money and reduce yield. Working with local partners to design and deliver lasting solutions. 	26 May	Comms Team	Reach 1,353 Likes 35 Shares 4
Twitter posts	Industry organisations Wider Community		Launch program and announce NQDT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NQDT has been engaged as manager and coordinator Using less nutrients can save money and reduce yield. Working with local partners to design and deliver lasting solutions. 	3 June 2020	Comms Team	Impressions 160 Total engagements 11
Centralised Program Website Launch	Cane growers, wider community	NQDT website	Centralised point of information for WQ Program and project. Describe roles of NQ Dry Tropics, GBRF and Delivery Partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NQDT has been engaged as manager and coordinator Grower focused projects to support enhanced production and WQ improvements. Working with local partners to design and deliver lasting solutions. 	February 2021	Comms Team	Central point of contact for program information Links to individual project websites and information. Centralised comms and support documentation.

Reef Trust Partnership

Paddock to Reef Training Event	Delivery Partners, NQDT, GBRF	Email invite	Training activity to introduce and program M&E and data collection process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiarisation and training in P2R Quality control of data acquisition for efficient and effective workflow and M&E reporting 	4 Feb 2021	NQDT Cane Team, P2R, GBRF M&E	Efficient and effective data acquisition to support project delivery and reporting.
P2R Cane Booklet	Delivery Partner Extension Staff	Booklet publication	Facilitate consistent interpretation of P2R questions amongst all delivery staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent application of the P2R questions across all delivery organisations important to ensure accuracy of data and reporting. 	March 2021	NQDT Cane Team, Comms Team	Consistent application of P2R Questions.
Regional Integrated Science Forum	Delivery partners, Industry organisations Project proponents P2R NRM RQ	Workshop/information session	<p>Facilitate regional information sharing on current WQ projects</p> <p>Facilitate greater awareness of ongoing improvements in P2R modelling.</p> <p>Share and discuss Reef report card results for the Burdekin Region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> P2R modelling is evolving and continually improving as new information becomes available. Industry is making progress towards the adoption of management practices that improve reef water quality. 	30 March 2021	NQDT Team P2R Team	<p>Improved understanding of P2R modelling</p> <p>Awareness of project achievements and Reef Report Card results.</p>
Media Release	Coordinated Project launch	Newspaper/TV /Radio/ Website	Formal announcement of delivery partners project commencement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for cane farmers to participate in a project of their choosing that meets their needs. 	TBC	NQDT Comms and Delivery Partners	Improved awareness of projects, opportunities and pathway to participation.

APPENDIX B - Program Partner Protocols

[RTP Projects Communication Protocol](#)

[RTP Projects Communication Protocol Checklist](#)