

\$9.4M Water quality project stopping 26,000 tonnes of sediment polluting our Reef annually

Burnett Mary Regional Group secures funding and forms consortium

The Great Barrier Reef Foundation has announced \$9.4M of funding for a program of work to stop 26,000 tonnes of sediment at its source every year in the Wide Bay area. The Mary River Recovery Consortium led by Burnett Mary Regional Group is using this funding to deliver on the Mary regional water quality improvement program over the next four years. The MRRC consortium is a formal delivery group partnership between Burnett Mary Regional Group, Mary River Catchment Co-ordinating Committee and Alluvium Consulting. The Great Barrier Reef is Australia's irreplaceable ecosystem, but poorer water quality from runoff is one of a growing combination of threats to its health. This project will build on the high calibre of work already being undertaken by Queensland's farmers and agricultural community to help reach the targets set out by the Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan. The main aim is to stabilise and revegetate badly eroding sections of the Mary River by working directly with cooperative landholders. BMRG CEO Sheila Charlesworth says: The catchment modelling states that around 70 per cent of the fine sediment from the Mary River that enters the Great Sandy Strait comes from streambank erosion. BMRG are thrilled to have received funding from the Great Barrier Reef Foundation to formulate the Mary River Recovery Consortium and work with MRCCC, Alluvium Consulting on addressing this. MRCCC Brad Wedlock says "We have a very well developed and engaged network of landholders who understand these issues and are ready to work with us on their properties to restore their riverbanks." Great Barrier Reef Foundation Managing Director Anna Marsden said, "This program builds on the high calibre of work Queensland's farmers and agricultural community are already undertaking to safeguard the future of our Reef." "By working with farmers and scientists we're not only improving conditions for the Reef's precious corals, we're also saving endangered turtles and dugongs that feed on the region's seagrass beds that need clean water to thrive," Ms Marsden said. "We need less sediment running into the Reef's waters in large plumes which smother the corals and seagrass, preventing them from receiving the natural light they need to survive. "These projects are an important part of our ambitious plan to prevent 500,000 tonnes of fine sediment from polluting the Great Barrier Reef each year by 2030." The Mary River Recovery Project is funded by the Great Barrier Reef Foundation's partnership with the Australian Government's Reef Trust.

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