



National Environmental Science Programme

Project 2.1.3 Harnessing the science of social marketing and behaviour change for improved water quality in the GBR: an action research project

Project Summary

Working in partnership with staff from the Australian Government's Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Department of the Environment (DotE), Regional Natural Resource Management Bodies, and the Queensland Government's Departments of Science Information Technology and Innovation (DSITI) and Environment and Heritage Protection (DEHP), this project will undertake three related tasks. First, it will use data collected from land managers and elsewhere to critically evaluate the way water quality (WQ) improvement programmes are 'marketed' (this evaluation goes beyond simply looking at brochures). Second, it will use insights from those evaluations to inform the reconfiguration of marketing and engagement strategies associated with programmes scheduled for roll-out during 2017. Third, it will demonstrate methods for monitoring and assessing the extent to which different WQ improvement programmes and changed 'marketing' strategies improve adoption and alter behaviours.

Problem

Adoption of best practice land management strategies to improve WQ has been low in some regions and previous programmes may have encouraged best practice only amongst people already inclined to use it. Previous programmes have also often assumed that land managers are primarily motivated by profit – but profit is not all that drives land managers. To make a real difference, it is important to work with (rather than against) key drivers of behaviour and take care that by promoting some best practices, we are not 'crowding out' others.

How Research Addresses Problem

We would like to know "what works, for whom, in what circumstances and for how long". So this project will (a) use insights from the social marketing and behaviour change literature to identify changes that could be made to the marketing and engagement strategies of future best management practice programmes; (b) work with government to implement some of those changes; and (c) use insights from the impact assessment literature to assess the effectiveness of those and other changes.

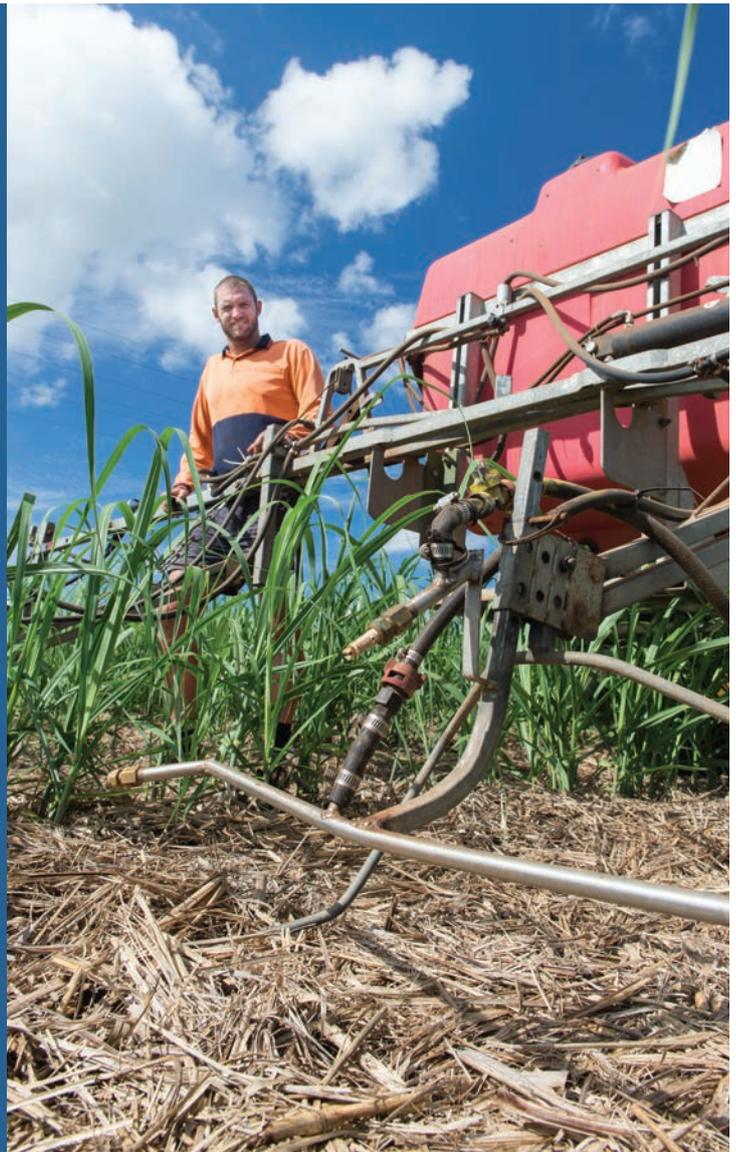


Photo: Terrain NRM



Photo: Terrain NRM

- We will analyse documents and marketing materials that were produced for the Reef Trust and for the Reef Programme that had the aim of encouraging land managers to apply for grants, attend training programs or engage with extension officers. Insights from that analysis will be provided to government agencies and partners to inform development of future documents and marketing materials.
- In 2016, we will collect data from cane farmers and graziers in the Burdekin and the Wet Tropics – including those who have and have not chosen to engage with best management practice programmes. We will ask them to tell us about:
 - o what motivates them, their goals and their aspirations;
 - o their opinion of various government best management practice programmes; and
 - o the activities they undertake on their property (relating to the control of sediment and the use of nutrients).

We will use that information to assess the extent to which formal engagement with best management practice programmes makes a difference to on-farm activities. We will also use the information to assess the extent to which motivators, goals and aspirations differ between different groups of land managers. Insights from our analysis will be provided to government agencies and partners, to inform development of future strategies to further promote practice improvement.

Further information

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- We will repeat our survey in 2017 and 2018. This will allow us to assess the extent to which attitudes and practices are changing over time and to draw inferences about the extent to which changes that are made to engagement strategies are making a difference to attitudes and practices.



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