

Project 3.1.3 Harnessing the science of social marketing in communication materials development and behaviour change for improved water quality in the GBR: a desktop review (Project 2.1.3 – Stage 2)

Project Summary

This project extends Project 2.1.3 which contains an analysis of communications to land holders for the Reef Trust Tender – Burdekin and The Reef Programme concerning readability, message framing, message tone and visual imagery, factors that significantly affect message acceptance, engagement and adoption of recommended behaviours. The analysis identified that: 1. Language used in written material is too complex; 2. Message tone may be a barrier; and 3. Visual imagery may have unintended effects. These findings have implications across wider programs and there has been considerable interest in extending this analysis to assist in developing and revising foundational material and messages.

Problem

There is inconsistency in approach and message clarity across communication materials by projects supporting the Reef 2050 Plan. Firstly, the GBR Water Science Taskforce indicated that 'poor communication and engagement' represents one of the barriers to effective program delivery. Secondly, beyond clarity of message, improving the way projects communicate and get buy in from producers will ensure greater project uptake, associated results and lasting behaviour change. Thirdly, there is a need to further strengthen the understanding and impact that visuals play in the agricultural-environmental context. This project will provide recommendations for the refinement of existing and future communications activity.



Harvesting Cane

How Research Addresses Problem

The project will draw on learnings from past research, which recognises that readability, message framing and message tone impact significantly on the way that messages are processed and on the way, they ultimately influence desired behaviours. This project will analyse existing communication material and provide recommendations for improved visual communication to play a key role in synthesising complex information for the adoption of best management practices in the sugar cane and grazing industries.



Photo: Lynne Eagle

Producing Cattle

Project 3.1.3 will conduct a readability, message tone and visual imagery analysis of communications materials from a selection of programmes for Australian and Queensland Governments and other program managers as well as extension providers. The project aims to provide programme managers and broader Reef communication community with an evaluation of collateral material, highlighting areas where changes to content and presentation of material may be warranted. It also aims to provide managers with skills and knowledge via seminars / webinars and fact sheets for them to be able to create new materials or review current material with the help of a design manual detailing checklists to consider and evidence of best practice in these areas.

Further information

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