

Question on Notice

No. 1236

Asked on Tuesday, 3 September 2019

MR S ANDREW ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF, MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND MINISTER FOR THE ARTS (HON L ENOCH)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise what financial support is currently available to assist cropping and grazing businesses adopt biological-regenerative farming techniques as the best means to eliminate sediment, excess nitrogen and pesticides entering the Great Barrier Reef catchment waterways?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for the question.

The Queensland Reef Water Quality Program is investing significantly in the adoption of improved land management practices. The principles of biological-regenerative farming, particularly regarding improving soil health through reducing application of synthetic fertilisers and other chemicals, grazing management, and improving groundcover are directly supported through many projects and programs. These good farming principles also align with minimum practice standards proposed under the Reef regulations.

Through the current investment in the Queensland Reef Water Quality Program (2017-22), over \$65 million has been allocated to support agricultural businesses to adopt improved farming practices through the industry-led Best Management Practice (BMP) programs, practice change and on-ground science projects.

A new \$5.7 million Grazing Support Program will deliver one-on-one extension support to graziers in the Burdekin, Fitzroy and Burnett-Mary catchments to help graziers develop land management plans. That investment also includes \$1.4 million for financial incentives for on-farm improvements (e.g. fencing, watering points) to improve land in poor and degraded condition and assist producers to meet proposed Reef regulations minimum standards.

In addition, \$1 million has recently been allocated to support banana growers to undertake actions to reduce sediment and nutrient runoff, helping banana growers to adjust to the requirements of the proposed Reef regulations minimum standards. The Farmers in Reef Catchments Rebate Scheme of \$10.1 million will also provide rebates of up to \$1,000 to individual sugarcane farmers, banana growers and cattle graziers in Great Barrier Reef catchments for high quality agronomic advice to help improve their nutrient and erosion management practices (and further support implementation of requirements under the proposed Reef regulations minimum standards).