

REEF RESCUE

2012

www.reefcatchments.com.au

(07) 4968 4200



Anthony Bernard

Improved Stormwater Management

With the help of Reef Rescue, Anthony Bernard has improved his stormwater management across his cane and lychee farm. The funding allowed Anthony to improve the effectiveness of his dams and sediment/detention basins to collect the majority of run-off from his farm.

Over the last 3 years, Anthony has applied for Reef Rescue funding to complete work on existing stormwater structures to improve their effectiveness to trap run-off from his farm. "I heard about the Reef Rescue program through Anna Geddes at Growcom and was keen to see how I could be supported to do some work on my farm," Anthony said.

With Anna's support he identified that improving the efficiency and effectiveness of his stormwater structures would not only have an environmental benefit for habitat and water quality but would also provide an irrigation source to improve his production.

Anthony said that some of the structures were built around 45 years ago, adding, "I remember it costing

around 800 pound to build one back then and it would most likely be too expensive to do it today." Over the years plenty of sediment has been trapped and there have been changes made to drainage across the farm which meant that the structures were not functioning at full capacity.

"It was work that I always wanted to do, but with Reef Rescue it made it a possibility to do it now rather than later," explained Anthony.

Since cleaning out the stormwater structures and improving the drainage into them he has also been able to do better weed control along the edges, controlling hymenachne and paragrass. This can prevent weeds spreading into his lychees, cane and the surrounding environment including the wetlands.



About the farm...

Anthony Bernard has a 74 ha property that borders Sandy Creek, around 16km south of Mackay. He has lived there for the entire 71 years of his life. The property was originally a dairy farm when his parents purchased it. In 1952 the first cane was planted and the whole farm was soon converted. In 2006 a decision was made to put in lychee trees to help diversify. The majority of the farm is still cane but there are now 10 ha of lychees with around 3000 trees planted on 8 meter row spacings with 4 meters between each tree.



The structures are also showing signs off having more wildlife use them with barramundi, turtles and plenty of water birds now regularly seen.

Anthony has adopted some other management practices that reduce the risk of losses including under canopy micro-sprinklers for irrigation linked to a fertigation system to apply nutrients to the crop at the right time. He also maintains excellent ground cover on his inter-rows during the wet season

“It was work that I always wanted to do, but with Reef Rescue it made it a possibility to do it now rather than later”

to reduce the risk of any erosion within the crop.

With regards to the Reef Rescue program, Anthony said, “the help I have received from Anna and also Chris Dench from Reef

Catchments has been great and helped make the whole process much easier for me.” He also added that if there was more funding available in the future he would be keen to look at some more projects that he has identified with Anna through the Growcom FMS modules.



OUTCOMES



Reduced risk of losses from efficient irrigation methods



Reduced risk of sediment losses from good inter-row ground cover



Reduced risk of losses by capturing stormwater run-off

Reef Catchments

Reef Catchments is the regional NRM body who oversees the Reef Rescue program in the Mackay Whitsunday region for the federal government.

Contact the Reef Rescue team at Reef Catchments on (07) 4968 4216 or email: reception@reefcatchments.com.au