

MEDIA RELEASE

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Mackay Isaac Whitsunday Agribusiness Export Supply Chain Mapping Study to enhance the region

Producers in the Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday (MIW) regions will reap the benefits of a new project looking to identify new export market opportunities for existing and new high value agricultural products.

The Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia (CRCNA) collaboration brings together the Greater Whitsunday Alliance (GW3) and key stakeholders North Queensland Bulk Ports (NQBP), Regional Development Australia Mackay Isaac Whitsunday (RDAMIW) and Bowen Gumlu Growers Association to transform the region's agriculture, production, infrastructure and export sectors to meet existing and future international market demands.

The \$215,000 Mackay-Isaac-Whitsunday agribusiness Export Supply Chain Mapping Study will examine how local and international supply chains will need to be developed, enhanced or supported to overcome market access barriers and deliver agri-food export produce and agri-food waste products to market.

It will also identify and map the export freight task for MIW agri-food products, outline potential new agribusiness opportunities and provide a platform for further advocacy on future infrastructure investment needs for the region.

CRCNA Chair Sheriden Morris said the project will highlight how agricultural and export market development can be a catalyst for generating future growth in the region.

"Establishment of a long-term regional investment strategy and a multi-industry agreement is critical to ensuring the MIW producers have robust supply chain systems which enable them to access significant growth opportunities and maximise production to meet future international demand," said Ms Morris.

GW3 CEO Garry Scanlan said the study will support and inform the delivery of the Growing Greater Whitsunday Agri-food Strategy recommendations to develop regional road maps and action plans and partner with industry stakeholders to develop and promote Regional Agri-food Export Readiness Programs.

"This study is the first of its kind for the region and when completed will contain relevant, consolidated data and detailed analysis which will identify opportunities for our region."

Ms Morris said the MIW research project will also inform a broader northern Australian approach to improving agricultural supply chains.

"GW3 has joined with Townsville Enterprise, Advance Cairns, Central Queensland University and the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to form the Northern Queensland Agricultural Supply Chain Alliance, while the CRCNA is progressing discussions with the stakeholders in the Northern Territory and Western Australia to undertake similar work in those jurisdictions.

"The end result will be an integrated plan to improve and enhance agricultural supply chains across the north, to the benefit of all producers and agribusinesses."

ACIL Allen Consulting have been appointed to deliver the Mackay-Isaac-Whitsunday agribusiness Export Supply Chain Mapping Study and will be in the MIW region undertaking research and stakeholder engagement over the next few months.

The final report is due to be completed by the end of 2019.

Project snapshot

The Mackay -Isaac-Whitsunday Agribusiness Export Supply Chain Mapping Study will:

- Map the current capacity and export supply chains of the MIW agriculture sector to develop a plan to optimise the region's capacity to supply to international markets.
- Complete a MIW agribusiness configuration and capacity assessment through analysis of available data sources and validation of the data through producer and stakeholder interviews and engagement
- Complete a detailed analysis that identifies opportunities to enhance export opportunities and efficiencies across MIW agricultural export supply chain.

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The Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia (CRCNA) mission is to grow the economy, investment, employment, markets, skilled population and wellbeing of the communities of Northern Australia.