



## **TRAINEE AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION OFFICER**

- Are you passionate about Agriculture and making a difference to the Great Barrier Reef?
- Are you looking to widen your industry experience?

This is your opportunity to be mentored by experienced extension practitioners to develop the skills required to engage with primary producers and improve land management practices throughout the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) Catchments. This is a unique opportunity to be part of an exceptional program and cohort of cross-industry trainees over a 15-month period. Participants will have the chance to collaborate with professionals from diverse sectors, gaining valuable insights and skills that extend beyond their own industry. The program offers a well-rounded experience designed to enhance both personal and professional development, positioning trainees for future success in their respective fields.

### **POSITION DESCRIPTION**

<b>Program</b>	Agricultural Extension Work Placement Program (2025-2026)	
<b>Position Title</b>	Trainee Agricultural Extension Officer	
<b>Salary</b>	\$70,000 p.a plus superannuation Plus a training and support program with a value of more than \$30,000	
<b>Incumbent</b>	This position is full time commencing in February 2025, ceasing in May, 2026 (15 months duration only)	
<b>Host Organisation</b>	MAPS – Mackay Area Productivity Services	
<b>Location</b>	Mackay QLD	
<b>Reports To</b>	CEO – Anthony Schembri	
<b>Key Relationships</b>	<b>Internal:</b>	Maryanne Volker – Principal Mentor MAPS Staff
	<b>External:</b>	Mackay Growers, Industry Organisations, QFF and other Industry Extension Staff

### **Position Summary:**

The Queensland Government engaged Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) to facilitate the Agricultural Extension Work Placement Program (AEWPP), which aims to improve the capacity of up to nine early career extension officers (trainees). The program will enhance your extension skills as you assist in delivering Agricultural and/or Natural Resource Management (NRM) projects with landholders in the Great Barrier Reef Catchments (GBR), developing expertise in one or more of the following areas: land management, nutrition management, irrigation management, pest management, chemical management, precision agriculture, GIS systems, water quality and soil health.

Trainees will be employed for 15-months to assist with the delivery of extension services through their host organisations, supported by mentoring from experienced advisors and a tailored training program. Trainees will also have the opportunity to build professional and local networks with their fellow trainees, industry advisors, previous trainees as well as in their local communities.

### **Host Organisation and Work Location:**

MAPS is the main provider of sugarcane advice and extension for Mackay Sugar growers. MAPS is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee which is funded jointly by sugar cane growers and Mackay Sugar. We work on most issues including pests, diseases, clean seed propagation, variety management, nutrition & chemical management, irrigation, harvesting and fallow management. Our mission is to enhance the profitability and sustainability of the sugar industry through innovative productivity programs and plant protection services.

The MAPS team has a mix of experience and youth and are well respected within the sugar industry. Through our strong relationships with growers, we are able to provide quality one-on-one agronomic extension to all Mackay Sugar growers.

Based in Mackay, the Trainee will work with members of the MAPS productivity and extension team, their mentor and other industry providers to improve growers' productivity, profitability and sustainability and improve the water quality entering the Great Barrier Reef. MAPS is a close-knit and supportive team that has twelve staff and will welcome the trainee into our strong team environment. Our team will be focused on training and developing the skill set of the trainee by participating in the MAPS core duties and into our water quality projects.

The trainee will engage in on-farm visits dealing with growers' daily requirements learning about farming practices and farm management decisions and has the opportunity to be involved in the planning and working of the MAPS Approved Clean Seed Farm. Through involvement with MAPS, the trainee will gain an insight into the local sugar industry and understand the challenges associated within the agriculture industry.

### **Trainee Role & Responsibilities:**

The Trainee Agricultural Extension Officer will:

- Work on projects directly contributing to the targets set out by the **Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan**.
- Collaborate on projects such as Smartcane BMP Program - An industry developed, robust and practical system that is about improving productivity, profitability, grower and environmental sustainability.
- Agtrix Farming Project - use of AGTRIX spatial GIS software program – Agtrix Farming. Helping growers keep better records to make better farming decisions.
- Engage with stakeholders to enhance the implementation of sustainable agricultural practices across the region.
- Contribute to the design, management, and delivery of projects. Participate in fieldwork, data collection, and analysis.

- Engage in community workshops and stakeholder meetings to facilitate knowledge sharing and promote initiatives.
- Support the development and delivery of project reports and submissions to government bodies.
- Work closely with the Mackay Sugar growers and Industry bodies (Canegrower, Mackay Sugar, SRA)

Trainees will be required to attend all training activities listed below:

- The program induction workshop (to take place within the first month of commencement).
- The Reef Extension Think Tank
- The Australasia Pacific Extension Network (APEN) or similar event to be held in 2025.
- A cross-industry bus trip to expose the trainee to different extension practices across the Great Barrier Reef Catchments.
- The mid-term evaluation workshop.
- The final evaluation workshop and graduation event.
- Complete online extension training with Ag Consulting Co.

## **Eligibility Criteria:**

### ***Essential***

To be eligible as a trainee, candidates must:

1. Be a citizen or permanent resident of Australia
2. Hold a 'Class C' Queensland driver's license
3. Have completed studies in Agriculture, Science or Environment (holding at least a Certificate IV in a related field)
4. Be at the beginning of your career or a new entrant to the extension field with no more than one (1) year of experience in extension or advisory services.
5. Be willing to work for MAPS. It will be the trainee's responsibility to organise relocation to the MAPS office at their own cost.
6. Be able to commence work in February 2025.
7. Be able and willing to travel throughout a region and the GBR Catchments as part of their work. This may include multiple days away at a time.
8. Actively participate in specified training and demonstrate competency in agreed key performance indicators
9. Demonstrate capacity to work independently within a team environment
10. Have a high-level verbal communication skill and demonstrated networking skills.

### ***Desirable***

1. Demonstrated training in fields valuable to deliver Reef health outcomes is desired, such as land management, nutrition management, irrigation management, pest management, chemical management, precision agriculture, GIS systems, water quality and soil health.

**QFF and MAPS support equal opportunity employment, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders are encouraged to apply.**

## Selection Criteria:

Applications will be assessed by the project manager and host organisation against the following criteria:

### Prerequisite

- Have completed studies in Agriculture, Science or Environment (holding at least a Certificate IV in a related field)
- Understanding of national and state legislation and policy relating to sustainable land management including the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act and Vegetation Management Act.
- Able to utilise GPS devices, GIS, and Drone applications and/or other software programs to effectively record and track the progress of on-ground actions.
- Ability to lead, build and sustain relationships, resolve conflict, handle negotiation effectively and develop collaborative working relationships in an environment where there is a conflict of priorities or use of resources.
- Well-developed written and oral communication skills, with a demonstrated ability to negotiate and influence outcomes with stakeholders, partners, and management.
- Proven research/analytical skills and strong organizational/communication skills.
- Energetic and achievement oriented as well as commercially aware and proactive.
- Strong awareness of self and what it means to be a team player.
- Current C Manual class driver's license.

### Desired

- Basic understanding of asset management and maintenance principles;
- Basic understanding of project management principles;

### Applications will be assessed based on:

- Academic achievements and proficiency in relevant fields.
- Communication and stakeholder engagement capabilities.
- References supporting the applicant's suitability for the position.
- Commitment to contributing to improved land practices within the region.
- Ability to build networks and liaise effectively with a variety of stakeholders including primary producers.

## Submitting an Application:

Candidates are asked to submit the following information:

1. Current Curriculum Vitae (CV).
2. Cover Letter (maximum two pages), or a 3-minute video clip that responds to the selection criteria and summarises why you are interested in this role and why you should be considered for this role.
3. Proof of nationality or a permanent residence visa.
4. Certified copies of your academic record and academic transcript.
5. Two (2) references, reference reports/letters that support your claims for the position are favourable.

## Application and Assessment Cycle:

The following sequence outlines the work placement cycle.

Event	Proposed Date
Applications Close	10 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
Interviews of Shortlisted Applicants	11 <sup>th</sup> – 22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2024
Applicants Advised of Selection Outcomes	6 <sup>th</sup> December 2024
Proposed Starting Date	Early February 2025
Induction workshop	5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> March 2025

*These are tentative dates. You will be advised of any changes.*

If you are successful, MAPS will contact you to discuss the details of your employment and contract. The details will be aligned to the grant agreement between MAPS and QFF, according to the provisions of the Deed of Funding Agreement from the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI).

## Further Information:

For any queries related to the Agricultural Extension Work Placement Program, please contact Tim Bradley at [tim@qff.org.au](mailto:tim@qff.org.au)

To find more about the program please go to:

<https://www.qff.org.au/projects/agricultural-extension-work-placement-program/>

Below you will find some useful links about the project partners and relevant organisations.

[QFF](#)

[DES](#)

[Office of the Great Barrier Reef](#)

[Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance](#)

[Reef Alliance](#)

[Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan](#)

[Paddock to Reef](#)

[MAPS.org.au](http://MAPS.org.au)