

About Us

The **Watershed Land Art Project** is a community effort - and you're invited to get involved too!

The project is driven by the following artists, farmers, growers, environmental champions and community leaders:

Artists Kim Williams and Lucas Ihlein, farmer Simon Mattsson and family, John and Christene Sweet, Central Queensland Soil Health Systems (CQSHS), Starrett Vea Vea and Jemal Davis with the Mackay and District Australian South Sea Islander Association (MADASSIA), Kellie Galletly, Cherrie Hughes, Tegan McBride, Yuwibara Aboriginal Corporation, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Reef Catchments, Pioneer Catchments and Landcare, Artspace Mackay, Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens and many more.

Contact Us

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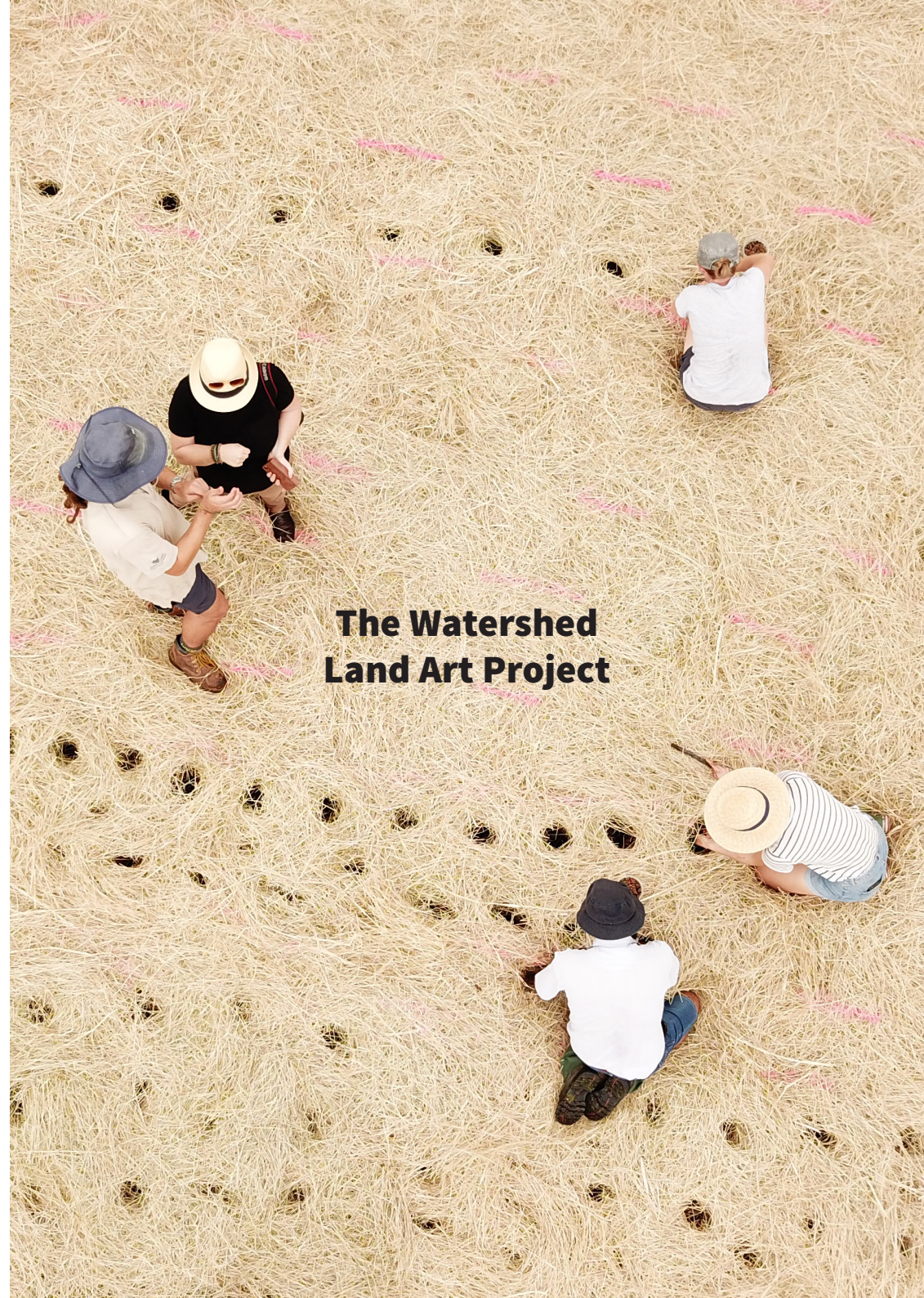
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For more information visit
www.watershedmackay.land



The Watershed Land Art Project



The Watershed Land Art Project: A Regenerative Agriculture Showcase at the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens

The Watershed Land Art Project brings together a diverse cross section of the Mackay community to create a unique botanical artwork - **The Beacon** - at the Botanic Gardens.

The purpose of this artwork is to:

- Create a striking botanical art installation for the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens;
- Demonstrate principles of Regenerative Agriculture (RA);
- Show how RA principles can be applied within industrial agriculture, particularly sugarcane farming;
- Catalyse improved environmental management practices in the catchment of The Great Barrier Reef;
- Celebrate the contribution of the Australian South Sea Islander (ASSI) communities in the sugarcane industry in Queensland;
- Bring together diverse communities within the Mackay region (farmers, Indigenous custodians, ASSI community members, scientists, and the general public);
- Generate deeper understanding of the complex roles played by agriculture in the region's economy, social life and ecology;
- Engage with public education through schools (including with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Reef Guardians program).

The Beacon aims to show how methods of Regenerative Agriculture can be used by the sugarcane industry to benefit farmers, the environment and society.

Regenerative Agriculture is based on a range of principles, including the following:

- No bare soil - keep it covered with forage, mulch or crop residue
- Always have living roots in the ground
- Maximise plant diversity
- Minimise soil disturbance

By applying these principles sugarcane farmers can:

- Improve plant, soil and ecosystem health
- Reduce the need for synthetic inputs and fertilisers
- Reduce soil and fertiliser run-off into local waterways and The Great Barrier Reef
- Increase soil carbon sequestration

In July 2017, our collaborative team of farmers and artists presented **Sunset Symphony in the Sunflowers** at Simon Mattsson's sugarcane farm in Marian. We hosted 220 people within a bespoke auditorium carved out of a dual crop of sugarcane and sunflowers. While enjoying local food and drinks, the audience experienced performances from the Mackay Youth Orchestra and Jazz Band, The Sakwolo Islander Dancers, and viewed the premiere screening of a locally produced documentary about soil health.

Sunset Symphony in the Sunflowers demonstrated that diverse communities can be brought together through socially-engaged art events, to improve public understanding of the contribution of regenerative agriculture methods, and to encourage transformations in industrial monoculture farming practices.