



Burdekin Advocate

Wednesday 15/08/2018

Page: 4
Section: General News
Region: QLD, AU
Circulation: 2733
Type: Regional
Size: 374.00 sq.cms.



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Green approach to waste water

THE future of waste water treatment in the Burdekin is looking greener after Burdekin Shire Council received \$136,000 in state funding to complete the detailed design of a macroalgal bioremediation facility.

Macroalgae, or Oedogonium, works as a tertiary treatment process which cleans and strips nutrients and phosphorous from effluent discharge before entering waterways.

It's envisioned that the proposed facility would improve the current Ayr/Brandon Waste Water Treatment Plant, which operates at a lower secondary treatment level.

Burdekin Shire Council Mayor Lyn McLaughlin said Council was thrilled to receive the grant under the Queensland Government's Maturing the Infrastructure Pipeline Program.

"In reviewing the Ayr/Brandon Waste Water Treatment Plan, Council looked outside the conventional waste water paradigm to see if greener and more cost-effective options were available," she said.

"We are leveraging on the great work done by James Cook University, who developed macroalgal technology that takes up nitrates and phosphorous from waste

water. We understand that there are plenty of hurdles to overcome, particularly relating

to approvals, design and licence conditions and we look forward to working collaboratively with MBD Industries to deliver this project."

MBD chief executive officer Sam Bastounas said MBD was also excited about working with Council on the bioremediation facility.

"Our innovative, low risk and cost effective solution provides practical, much-needed assistance for managing the burden of wastewater treatment around the Great Barrier Reef and improving water quality," Mr Bastounas said. "It also helps Council meet international waste water treatment standards whilst taking nitrogen and carbon dioxide out of the environment and create employment opportunities for the local community."

It is estimated that three to five hectares of macroalgal re-

mediation ponds would be able to provide tertiary nutrient treatment of the Ayr/Brandon Waste Water Treatment Plant at a fraction of the capital costs compared to conventional cartridge or filtration processes.

"As a Guardian Reef Council, we prioritise protection of

the Great Barrier Reef and are committed to always improving the way we operate," Cr McLaughlin said. "This project is a great opportunity for Burdekin Shire Council to be an innovator in waste water treatment."

Cr McLaughlin said the facility would allow Council to accommodate the future expansion of industrial, commercial and residential precincts in the Burdekin without needing to spend large amounts of money on capital outlays and hard infrastructure.

The funding is part of \$2.13 million that was allocated to North Queensland councils to mature infrastructure projects from promising ideas into solid proposals under round two of the State Government program.



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Burdekin Shire Council Director of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment Nick Wellwood, Mayor Lyn McLaughlin and Manager Water and Waste Water Shaun Johnston at the current Ayr/Brandon Waste Water Treatment Plant.