



**Sarina Landcare Catchment Management Assoc.**

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## **Media Release**

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### **Sarina Community rallies together to improve water quality at Middle Creek Dam**

Sarina Landcare Catchment Management Association (SLCMA) recently held an information session at Middle Creek Dam to discuss their continued involvement with the local community to improve water quality at the dam. Middle Creek Dam is located at the top of Plane Ck Catchment and has a history of blue-green algae outbreaks. These outbreaks can have detrimental affects on aquatic life both in the dam and downstream.

The focal point of the morning was guest speaker and Associate Professor Larelle Fabbro, from CQUniversity. The problems associated with blue-green algae were highlighted by Larelle who discussed the importance of monitoring blue-green algae outbreaks and the affects of blue-green algae on local ecosystems, human and animal health.

Stuart Boyd from the Mackay Regional Council Water and Waste Services provided information about monitoring of blue-green algae at the dam and the current closure of the dam to recreational users since December 2011, due to an algae bloom.

The information session was attended by staff from Local Council and businesses, community members and landholders who were able to view one of the seven new aquaponic units constructed by Sarina State High School agricultural students. These units will be placed onto the dam in upcoming weeks.

During the morning, SLCMA staff provided information on a new project for the Middle Creek Dam catchment; '*Landholder engagement and on ground activities for improved water quality*' funded through Australian Government Caring for Our Country Program. The new project compliments a previous project delivered by SLCMA, which involved the placement of aquaponic units (floating pontoons) onto the dam to reduce excess nutrients from the water column. The new project will encourage local landholders to implement sustainable land management practices that will reduce nutrient runoff into the dam, help improve water quality and potentially reduce the incidence of blue-green algae outbreaks.

Some forms of blue-green algae can produce toxins which can have both short and long term affects on the health of humans and animals. Community members are asked to report any instances of the algae outbreaks at the dam, which may appear as a 'green scummy slick on the surface of the water', by phoning Mackay Regional Council on 1300 622 529 or SLCMA on 49 561 388.

This project is funded through Australian Government Caring for our Country Program and is supported by Mackay Regional Council, CQUniversity, Reef Catchments Mackay Whitsunday and Sarina State High School.

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For more information please contact Margaret Meng (SLCMA Project Officer) on 4956 1388.

**Photo:** Professor Larelle Fabbro of CQUniversity speaking at the community information session held at Middle Creek Dam.

