

## Briefing document - MEDIA ALERT

### **SEED AND SONG – The Watershed Land Art Project at Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens.**

This August in Mackay, get your hands in the soil and have fun celebrating positive innovations in local agriculture!

Award winning artists in collaboration with council and local farmers welcome the community to be part of the *Watershed Land Art Project* at the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens. The project - a stunning circular crop of sugarcane and sunflowers - is a demonstration of local achievements in eco-friendly farming systems.

On **Sunday 26th August from 12-4pm** join us for SEED AND SONG. It's your chance to help plant sugarcane and sunflowers, learn about soil health, and find out what farmers and the community can do to support the Great Barrier Reef and human wellbeing.

The Sakwolo Islander Dancers will perform and fresh sugarcane juice and local healthy foods will be served!

Following the August planting, this living work of art will continue to grow until the sunflowers bloom and a harvest celebration and concert is staged on 24th November.

Mackay farmer Simon Mattsson, a key member of the *Watershed Land Art Project* team, says:

“Sugarcane and sunflowers help each other by supporting a wide variety of soil biology, which means better outcomes for both. If both species grow healthier then there is less need for the farmer to use chemicals to fix problems.”

Artists Lucas Ihlein and Kim Williams, from Wollongong, have been working with the local community in Mackay since 2014. Last year they helped create *Sunset Symphony in the Sunflowers*, a concert in an amphitheatre carved out of a crop of sugarcane and sunflowers on Mattsson's farm in Marian. Ihlein says,

“Staging events like *Sunset Symphony in the Sunflowers*, and the new Watershed project at the Botanic Gardens, is a way to bring farmers and the wider public together, raising awareness of exciting new ecological farming methods being developed within the sugarcane industry.”

Groups associated with the project include Mackay & District Australian South Sea Islander Association (MADASSIA), Yuwibara Aboriginal Corporation, Central Queensland Soil Health Systems, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), Pioneer Catchments and Landcare, Artspace Mackay, Australian Farmers for Climate Action, Mackay Conservation Group, and Reef Catchments.

#### **DETAILS:**

**Sunday 26th August from 12-4pm**

**The Meadowlands, Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens**

Car parking on Crowleys Road, off Alexandra St.

For more information contact the artists on 0423 745 736 (Lucas) or 0405 700 142 (Kim)

**RSVP:** info@watershedmackay.land or visit [www.watershedmackay.land](http://www.watershedmackay.land)