

Great Barrier Reef Urban Technology and Innovation Fund – Stormwater Challenge

Frequently Asked Questions



Australian Government



Queensland Government

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Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Stormwater Challenge?

The Stormwater Challenge is part of the Great Barrier Reef Urban Technology and Innovation Fund, focused on reducing pollution from urban stormwater run-off entering waterways and ultimately the Great Barrier Reef.

It brings together councils, industry, researchers and innovators to co-design, trial and scale practical solutions that reduce nutrient and sediment pollution and improve water quality outcomes.

2. Why is the Stormwater Challenge needed?

Urban areas make up less than one per cent of the Reef catchment, but they contribute a disproportionate amount of pollution, including nutrients and sediment from stormwater and urban development.

Existing stormwater solutions can be costly to build and maintain and/or at the mercy of proprietary device owners, in terms of maintenance delivery and costs

The challenge is designed to address these issues by developing affordable, effective and scalable solutions that can be adopted by councils and industry.

3. What makes this a “challenge-led” approach?

Unlike a traditional grant program, the Stormwater Challenge uses a challenge-led model that:

- brings together stakeholders to work on the challenge together
- focuses on real-world problems and market needs
- supports solutions from idea through to adoption and scaling

This approach is designed to ensure solutions are not just tested—but used and sustained in the long term.

4. Who can get involved?

The Stormwater Challenge is designed for a wide range of participants, including:

- Local councils
- Industry and technology providers
- Researchers and universities
- Start-ups and innovators
- Developers and delivery partners

It is a collaborative process, where different stakeholders contribute their expertise to develop and deliver solutions.



5. How can I get involved?

In the first instance you can get involved by:

- Registering your interest to participate in the challenge by completing the [registration form](#)
- Taking part in co-design workshops and stakeholder sessions

In the future we will also be looking for partners to identify and trial solutions

Participation starts early, with opportunities to help shape the challenge itself—not just respond to it.

6. When does the Stormwater Challenge start?

The program will commence in June 2026, beginning with early engagement activities such as:

- stakeholder workshops
- problem definition and co-design

Funding opportunities are expected to follow

7. What does the Stormwater Challenge involve?

The Stormwater Challenge includes:

- Co-design and problem definition with stakeholders
- Innovation trials to test new or improved solutions
- On-ground demonstration projects in urban areas
- Support to develop commercialisation pathways
- Collaboration to enable adoption and scaling of solutions

The program uses a structured, multi-stage process to move ideas from concept through to real-world implementation.

8. What kind of solutions are being sought?

The challenge is looking for solutions that:

- reduce nutrient and sediment pollution from urban run-off in accordance with or improving on load reduction requirements outlined in the Queensland State Planning Policy (2017)
- are affordable and low maintenance for councils, relative to existing products in the market
- can be scaled and adopted across different locations within but potential beyond the broader Great Barrier Reef catchment

Solutions may include new technologies, improved systems, or adapted approaches from other sectors.

9. What support is available for participants?

This will be part of the codesign process. It is intended that support is tailored to the stage and needs of each project.

Further information, including opportunities that will be available, level of funding available per trial project and what the assessment criteria will be, will be provided progressively as future stages are designed and released.



10. What is the expected outcome?

The Stormwater Challenge aims to:

- reduce pollution entering the Great Barrier Reef
- increase the availability of practical, proven and affordable stormwater solutions
- support long-term adoption by councils and industry
- create a pipeline of market-ready innovations

Ultimately, it is about delivering real, scalable change in how urban stormwater is managed.

11. Which reef catchment areas are eligible to participate

The Stormwater Challenge is open to urban areas within the following Great Barrier Reef (GBR) catchments

