

Bio Fuel Fact Sheet



WHY THE TRIAL

- Council at risk of large fines (up to \$1 million) due to Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) not compliant with EPA licence conditions.
- Investigate options to make STP compliant and find a use for 900kL of effluent per day.
- Investigate options that provide potential returns to reduce the operating costs and create jobs.
- Trial is located on land designated for effluent irrigation.

OPTIONS

- Hardwood Plantation – still to be investigated in detail as a long-term option.
- Diesel Trees – trialled at Ernest Henry Mines with mixed results.
- Forage Crops – quick turnaround but limited government support.
- Bio Fuels – favourable Government policy and identified crop possibilities likely to succeed.

WHY BIO FUELS

- Bio fuels chosen to leverage off Government Policy and publicity, in line with Qantas, Virgin and US Navy commitment to bio fuel targets
- Quick rotation crops, like sorghum and beans, grow well in Cloncurry and demonstrate high potential.
- Creates interest and support from the Government for agriculture within Cloncurry Shire.



COST OF TRIAL

- The Queensland State Government, via MITEZ, engaged consultants to coordinate the trial.
- Council provide in-kind support with fencing, irrigation, use of equipment and supervision of trial.
- Trial utilised funding allocated to get the STP up to compliance with EPA licence to avoid fines.
- The bio fuel trial was the most cost-effective option to reach EPA compliance, as opposed to laser levelling, importing organic matter and installing high intensity irrigation at Council's expense.

WHERE TO FROM HERE

- Trial returned the equivalent of 6 tonnes of sorghum to the hectare.
- Trial results indicate the next stage is the development of a 400-hectare commercial farm using some of the 7000 megalitres of water currently available in the Cloncurry River.
- 400 hectares would be a commercial size farm for fodder production, such as sorghum.
- Further opportunity for niche crops, potentially bush tucker or dates (irrigated with river water).

