

FAQ



HEALTHY RIVERS TO
REEF PARTNERSHIP
MACKAY-WHITSUNDAY

Report card scoring

SCORES

A	VERY GOOD
B	GOOD
C	MODERATE
D	POOR
E	VERY POOR
	NO DATA/ INSUFFICIENT DATA



What's an Indicator?

Check out our [Report Card FAQ page](#) to learn more about the difference between an indicator, indicator category and index.

How are scores and grades awarded?

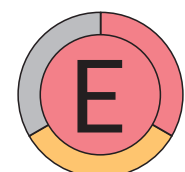
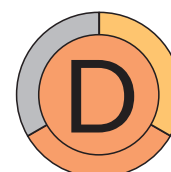
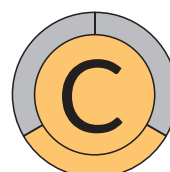
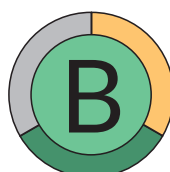
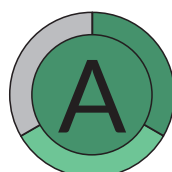
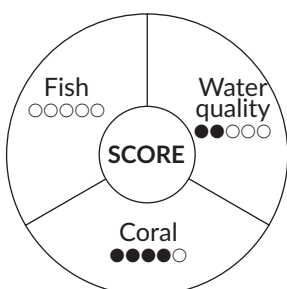
The Mackay-Whitsunday report card assesses indicators from a range of different aspects of aquatic ecosystem health (from rivers to reef). Each indicator is given a score by comparing it to a benchmark that identifies whether it is in a desirable or undesirable state.

We provide a confidence score for all our indicators in each of our reporting zones. As indicator scores are rolled-up into final scores, so are the scores for confidence.

What is a benchmark?

Data for each indicator in the report card is compared to a scientifically derived benchmark that identifies whether the indicator is in a desirable or undesirable state. Each indicator has a unique benchmark. For example:

- Water quality indicator benchmarks are set in reference to scheduled Environmental Protection (Water) Policy 2009 guideline values for the protection of aquatic ecosystems;
- Habitat and hydrology indicator benchmarks in the basins and estuaries are set in reference to their pre-development state (what the state of the indicator was before development);
- Other indicator benchmarks are set in reference to the state of these indicators at minimally or least disturbed sites.



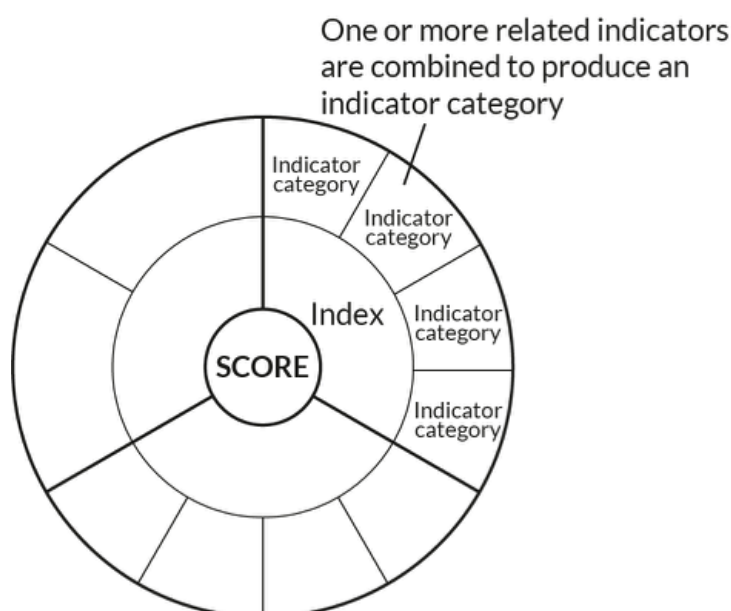
What are the report card scoring categories?

Scores for each indicator relate to one of five grades: Very Good (A), Good (B), Moderate (C), Poor (D) and Very Poor (E). Scores are translated into a 0 to 100 scoring range, within which the five grades are evenly distributed. Scores for each indicator are then combined (generally by averaging) into a category, an index, and finally, an overall score for each reporting area.

Table 1: Grades and scoring range

Grade	Scoring range
A: Very Good	81-100
B: Good	61 to <81
C: Moderate	41 to <61
D: Poor	21 to <41
E: Very Poor	0 to <21

Figure 1: An example of a 'coaster' for the Mackay-Whitsunday report card



What are grade descriptions?

Descriptions of grades for environmental indicators have been developed to help communicate scores from the report card. See Table 2 for descriptions that apply to indicators that measure condition of water quality and ecosystem health across all environments (basins, estuaries, inshore marine and offshore marine) and Table 3 for descriptions that apply to indicators that measure habitat extent for basins and estuaries.

Table 2: Descriptions of environmental condition for water quality and ecosystem health indicators

Grade	Definition of environmental conditions
A: Very Good	Conditions frequently meet guidelines or reference values and the majority of critical habitats are intact.
B: Good	Conditions generally meet guidelines or reference values and most critical habitats are intact.
C: Moderate	Some conditions do not meet guidelines or reference values and critical habitats are usually impacted.
D: Poor	Conditions often do not meet guidelines or reference values and most critical habitats are impacted.
E: Very Poor	Most conditions do not meet guidelines or reference values and most critical habitats are severely impacted.

*Reference values are determined from reference sites that are subject to minimal/limited disturbance¹.

Table 3: Descriptions of habitat extent indicators for basins and estuaries (wetlands, riparian vegetation and mangrove and saltmarsh)

Grade	Habitat extent
A: Very Good	Habitat extent is at or very close to pre-development levels
B: Good	Habitat extent is close to pre-development levels
C: Moderate	Habitat extent is moderately departed from pre-development levels
D: Poor	Habitat extent is strongly departed from pre-development levels
E: Very Poor	Habitat extent is severely departed from pre-development levels

1 DEHP (Department of Environment and Heritage Protection) 2009. Queensland Water Quality Guidelines, Version 3, ISBN 978-0-9806986-0-2.

What are decision rules?

Decision rules have been developed to define the minimum amount of information required to generate combined scores for indicators and indicator categories. For example, 50% or more of indicators are required to generate the indicator category score, and 60% or more of indicator categories are required to generate the Index score.

For more detailed information about scoring in the Mackay-Whitsundays report card, see our [technical reports](#).