

**INDIGENOUS CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENTS
FOR THE 2018 MACKAY-WHITSUNDAY-ISAAC
REPORT CARD
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



**HEALTHY RIVERS TO
REEF PARTNERSHIP**
MACKAY-WHITSUNDAY



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This assessment was undertaken for the Mackay-Whitsunday Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership, thanks to the collaboration of the Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac Traditional Owner Reference Group (TORG) who represent the Yuwibara, Koinjmal/Koinmerburra, Barada/Widi and Ngaro/Gia/Juru Traditional Owners of the Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac region, Reef Catchments (Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac) Limited and external consultants Markwell and Associates.

BACKGROUND

The Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac report card provides a snapshot of waterway condition and health in the region and captures both ecosystem health and human dimensions assessments. The geographical region covered by the report card comprises the catchments of the Don, O'Connell, Proserpine, Pioneer and Plane basins, their estuaries and the adjacent inshore and offshore marine waters to the eastern boundary of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

As part of the umbrella of the human dimensions indicators (social, economic, cultural and governance), five Indigenous cultural heritage indicators were developed and assessed for the first time in the 2015 report card (released in 2016). For the purpose of this assessment, these indicators evaluated the value and condition of Indigenous cultural heritage sites associated with waterways throughout the region. A key outcome of this assessment was to help identify changes in these indicators over time. As with other human dimensions indicators, condition reporting is updated every two to three years.

WHAT WAS ASSESSED IN THE 2018 REPORT CARD?

The 2018 report card (released in 2019) presents the second assessment of the Indigenous cultural heritage indicators at the same three zones considered in the 2015 report card as well as the first assessment in a new zone at Cape Palmerston.

The 2018 report card assessment further developed, refined, streamlined and simplified the 2015 Indigenous cultural heritage indicators and scoring system. While the indicators remained the same, the 2018 assessment gave a more balanced and culturally appropriate picture, with a greater emphasis on Traditional Owner values and perspectives.

Site types that were assessed included shell middens and scatters, rock shelters, paintings, engravings, stone artefacts, quarries, stone resources and fish traps.

Indicators were assessed against the five-point (A to E) scoring system used for the report card in relation to the value and condition of the indicators at each site in a zone.

A **B** **C** **D** **E**

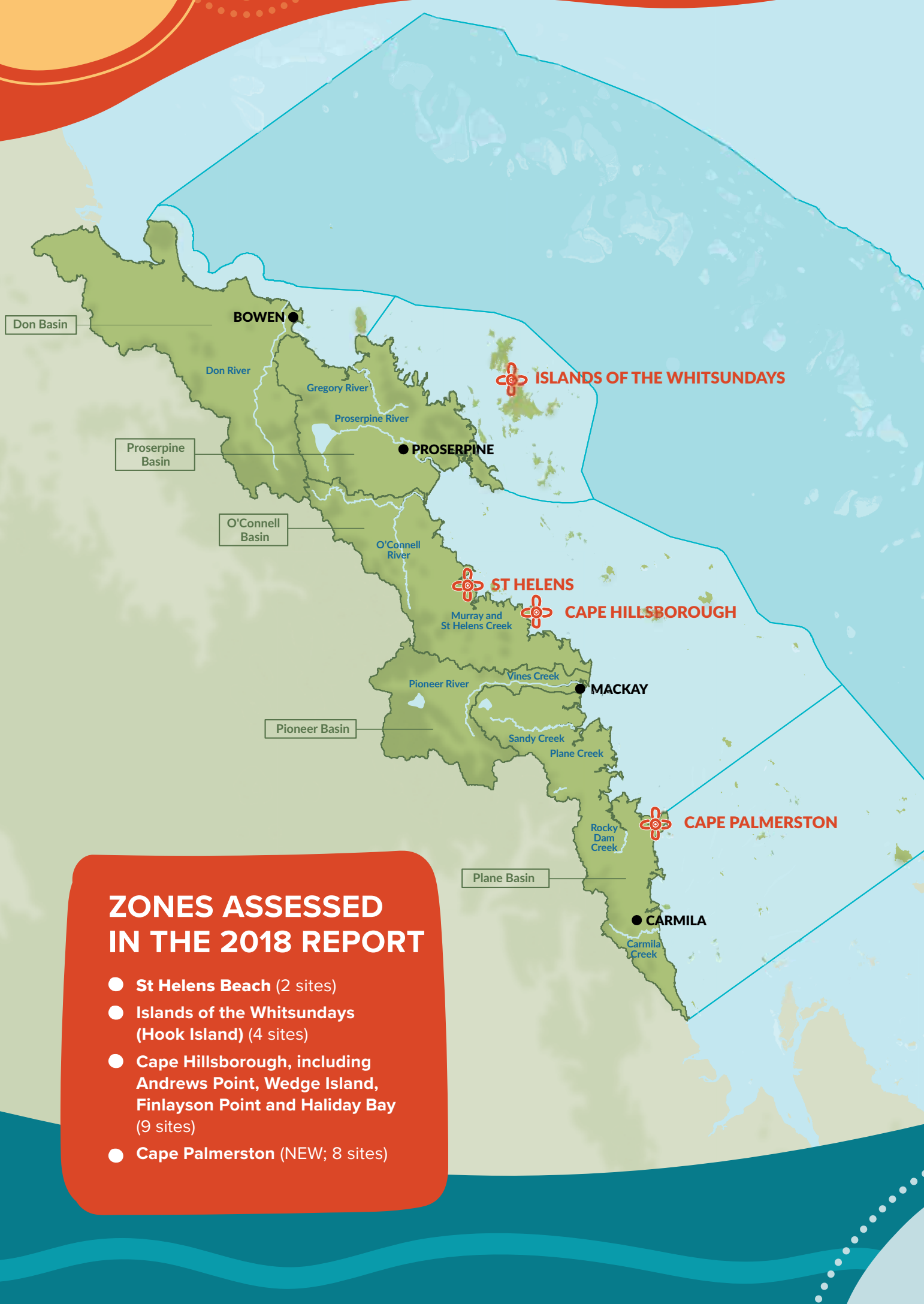
Indicators and what was measured

INDICATOR	MEASURE
Spiritual/Social Value	Traditional Owner knowledge about the site and zone
	Importance of site to Traditional Owners
Archaeological Value	Representativeness – how well sites represent or support the story of traditional land use
	Uniqueness – how rare or distinct identified sites are
	Potential to answer research questions for Traditional Owners and archaeologists
Physical Condition	Visible impact of threats from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment e.g. Storm surges; inundation and erosion; for art sites - fading of motifs, insect nests, water flow across art, mineral staining etc. • Animals e.g. Burrowing, trampling, animal waste • Humans e.g. Tracks, vehicles, paths, trampling, boating activities
	Impact of threats on cultural values – stability or deterioration as a result of visible impact of threats from environment, animals and humans
Protection of Sites	Registration of sites with the Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP)
	Management of threats to sites
	Control of access to sites (e.g. through boardwalks, information signage and fencing)
	No obvious threats (physical protection not needed)
Cultural Maintenance	Documented on-going management arrangements (e.g. Management Plans, Council MOUs, QPWS MOUs etc.)
	Engaging and collaborating with stakeholders to fulfil joint cultural values aims (e.g. regular meetings, committees etc).

Figure 1.
The team at
Cape Hillsborough



Left to right: Jon Ah-Wang, Uncle George Tonga, Aunty Veronica Ah-Wang, Phil Habgood, Natalie Franklin, Aunty Carol Prior, Antwinette Vanderwolf, Lynette (Chickie) Pryor, Toni Pryor, Cass Hayward, Ken Markwell. TORG members absent: Sam Dallachy, Aunty Sue West, Marissa Deshong.



ZONES ASSESSED IN THE 2018 REPORT

- **St Helens Beach** (2 sites)
- **Islands of the Whitsundays** (Hook Island) (4 sites)
- **Cape Hillsborough, including Andrews Point, Wedge Island, Finlayson Point and Haliday Bay** (9 sites)
- **Cape Palmerston (NEW; 8 sites)**

WHAT WAS THE OVERALL SCORE FOR THE 2018 REPORT CARD?

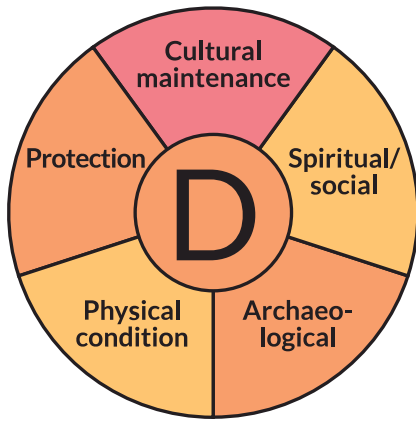
Data was recorded for 23 sites from four zones, using custom-designed recording forms. The Cape Palmerston zone was assessed for the first time, and eight new sites were assessed in this zone.

The final report card score for the Indigenous cultural heritage assessment of the Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac region for 2018 was a C. There was some improvement to scores for the St Helens zone in 2018, compared to the 2015 report card. However, this improvement was primarily due to changes to methods for assessing sites rather than improvements in physical condition.

Future report cards were recommended to include Indigenous cultural heritage assessments of sites around the Mackay city region, where this assessment has not occurred to date.

ZONE		2018	2015	What has contributed to changes?
St Helens	Average score	2.5	1.1	Changes seen between 2018 and 2015 are primarily due to changes in methods, rather than changes to <i>in-situ</i> site condition.
	Grade	D	E	
Islands of Whitsundays	Average score	3.6	3.7	In the recent 2018 assessment, a greater weight was given to the Traditional Owner significance of sites by including the direct measure 'Importance of site to Traditional Owners' as part of the spiritual/social values indicator.
	Grade	B	B	
Cape Hillsborough	Average score	2.7	2.6	In most zones, erosion was identified as a potential threat to the condition of sites.
	Grade	C	C	
Cape Palmerston	Average score	2.5	-	
	Grade	D	-	
Average score for Region		2.8	2.5	
Overall grade for Region		C	D	

A (4.6 to 5)
 B (3.6 to 4.5)
 C (2.6 to 3.5)
 D (1.6 to 2.5)
 E (0 to 1.5)



ST HELENS

- Sites in this zone fall in the boundary of Yuwi peoples
- Four DATSIP sites are registered in this zone
- Two sites were located and assessed, including a shell midden
- The greatest threat to the sites was erosion
- Stabilisation of erosion was recommended



Figure 2. Shell midden at St Helens Beach.



Figure 3. Stone artefact at St Helens Beach.

ISLANDS OF THE WHITSUNDAYS

- Sites in this zone fall in the boundary of Ngaro peoples
- Sixteen DATSIP sites are registered in this zone
- Four sites were located and assessed, including a rock shelter, rock paintings, engravings and shell midden
- Threats to the sites include high visitation leading to potential damage or vandalism
- A management plan which includes targeted education for visitor behaviour for the sites was recommended

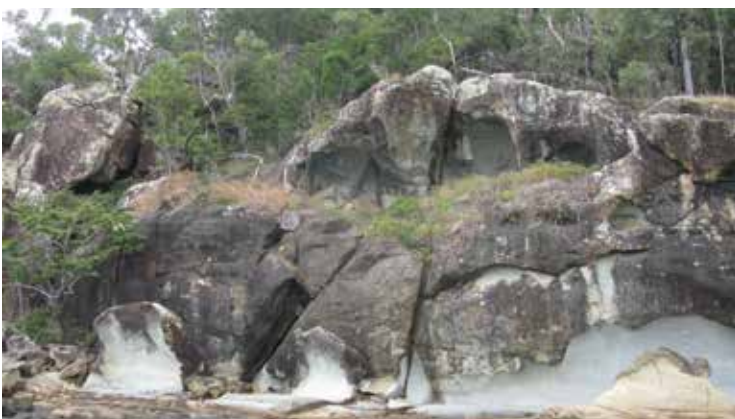
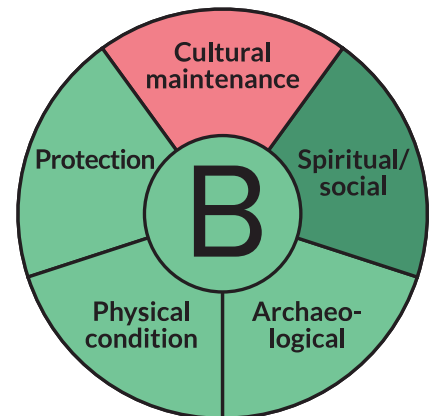


Figure 4. Rock shelter on Hook Island where rock art is found.



Figure 5. Close up of rock art in a rock shelter on Hook Island.

CAPE HILLSBOROUGH

- Sites in this zone fall in the boundary of Yuwi peoples
- Thirty-one DATSIP sites are registered in this zone
- Nine sites were located and assessed, including a rock shelter, shell midden, fish trap, quarry and shell scatters
- Threats to the sites include erosion, vandalism and weed invasion
- Stabilisation of erosion was recommended, along with involvement of Traditional Owners in other site maintenance and interpretive activities

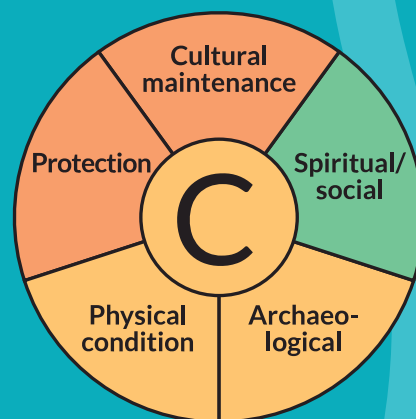


Figure 6. Rock shelter and shell midden at Cape Hillsborough.



Figure 7. Fish trap at Cape Hillsborough.



Figure 8. Erosion of shell midden at Cape Hillsborough.



CAPE PALMERSTON

- Sites in this zone are shared country between Yuwi, Barada and Koinmerburra peoples
- Twenty DATSIP sites are registered in this zone
- Nine sites were located and assessed, including a scar tree, shell midden, stone resource and shell and artefact scatters
- Threats to the sites include erosion due to tracks and vehicle traffic
- Stabilisation of sites was recommended including via re-routing tracks or low-level fencing



Figure 9. Artefact scatter at Cape Palmerston.



Figure 10. Stone artefacts at Cape Palmerston.



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This summary was based on:

Markwell and Associates (2018).
*Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Indicators
Assessment, Mackay-Whitsunday Region.*
Beenleigh, Queensland.

For enquiries regarding the full report
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PHOTO CREDITS

Converge and Reef Catchments.