



HEALTHY RIVERS TO
REEF PARTNERSHIP
MACKAY-WHITSUNDAY



THE MACKAY – WHITSUNDAY – ISAAC 2018 REPORT CARD

Reporting on waterway health data collected
between July 2017 and June 2018

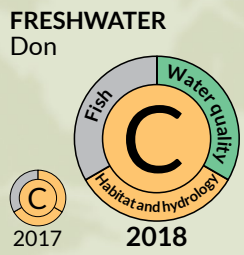
WATERWAY GRADES FOR 2018

Waterway condition is graded from A to E. Final grades are determined by a combination of water quality (sediment, nutrients and pesticides), habitat and fish community indicators. This report card assesses the condition of freshwater, estuarine and marine waters in the region based on data collected between the 1st of July 2017 and 30th of June 2018.

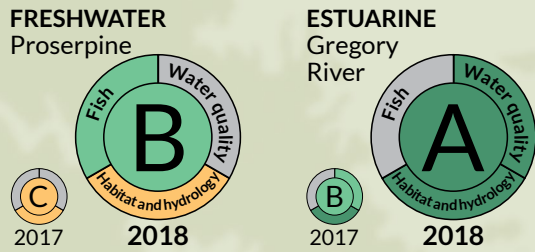
KEY MESSAGES

- The 2018 report card is the most comprehensive report card that has been released by the Partnership.
- Freshwater fish community grades were good to very good for the four basins that were assessed, including the Proserpine, which was assessed for the first time. To maintain good grades it is critical to prevent and manage the spread of pest fish entering Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac waterways.
- The waterway story for the Don basin is starting to be told: water quality was in good condition in 2018.
- For the first time, up to 13 additional pesticides have been captured in reporting in freshwater basins and inshore marine zones. This is the most comprehensive understanding of the region's pesticide challenge yet, with up to 22 pesticides now assessed.
- Pesticides remain a key issue in the region's waterways, with three out of five basins in very poor condition for pesticides (Proserpine, Pioneer and Plane basins). Pesticide grades for estuaries were not available this year, but will be included in future report cards.
- Water quality data was available in all marine zones for the first time. Offshore water quality remained in very good condition for the fifth consecutive year.
- Indigenous cultural heritage assessments were undertaken at 23 sites associated with waterways, including sites at Cape Palmerston for the first time.
- The region's community showed a positive view towards the values and wellbeing delivered from the Great Barrier Reef, despite the negative perception of condition and management of the Reef and its connected waterways.

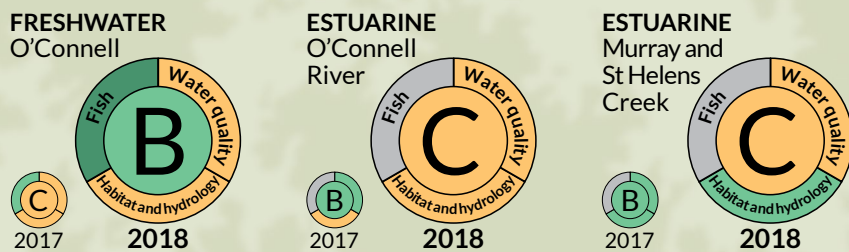
DON BASIN



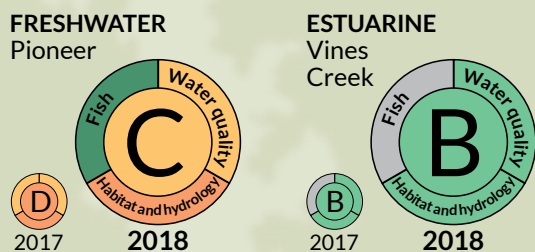
PROSERPINE BASIN



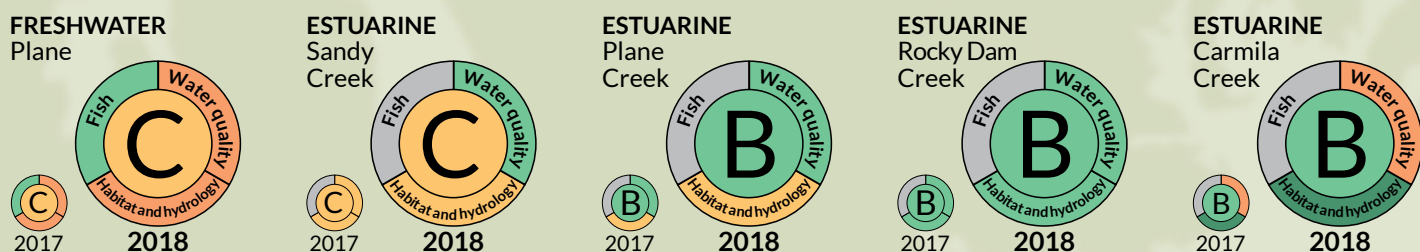
O'CONNELL BASIN



PIONEER BASIN



PLANE BASIN



SCORES

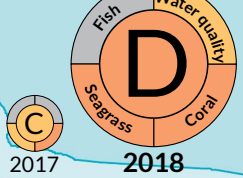
A VERY GOOD B GOOD C MODERATE D POOR E VERY POOR NO DATA/ INSUFFICIENT DATA Indigenous cultural heritage sites assessed

Visit our interactive website for more detail.
healthyriverstoreef.org.au/report-card-results

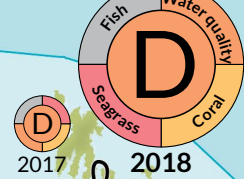
Below average rainfall was received across the region. Rainfall and climate can impact water quality indicators.

No cyclones crossed the region's coast, however the impacts of Cyclone Debbie (28th March 2017) can still be seen in seagrass and coral habitats.

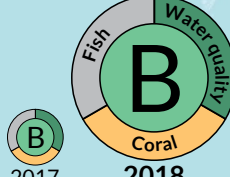
NORTHERN INSHORE



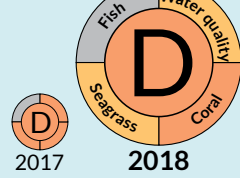
WHITSUNDAYS INSHORE



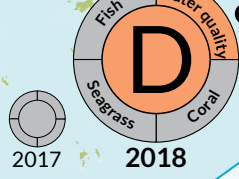
OFFSHORE



CENTRAL INSHORE

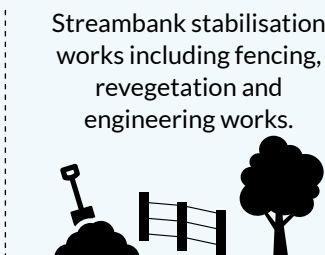


SOUTHERN INSHORE



HOW ARE WE RESPONDING?

Our Partners undertake a range of activities to help improve all aspects of waterway health.

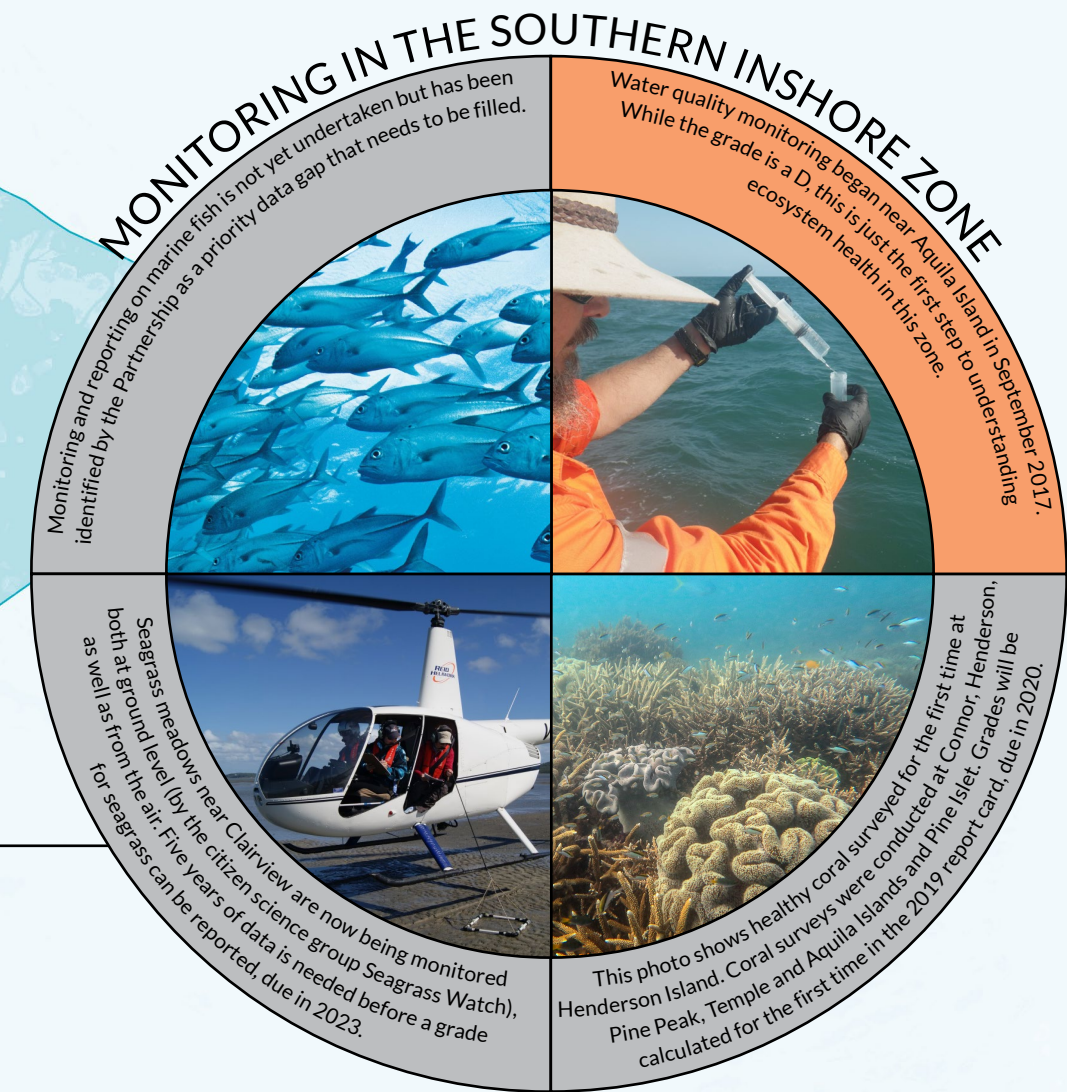


Look out for more information on how the region is responding and what you can do to improve waterway health, to be released later in 2019.

DATA CONFIDENCE

Data confidence is scored, from low to high, for each grade. Visit our interactive website for more detail.

healthyriverstoreef.org.au/report-card-results



See report cards for the Wet Tropics, Townsville Dry Tropics, Fitzroy and Gladstone Harbour to find out how waterways in other regions have fared.

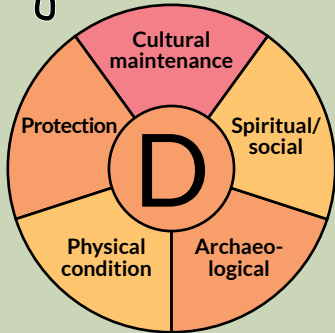
INDIGENOUS CULTURAL HERITAGE



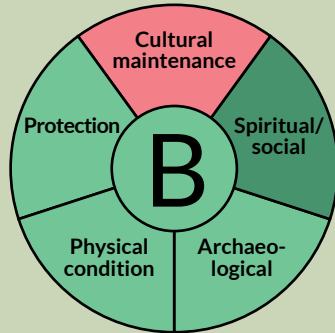
This is the second time the value and condition of Indigenous cultural heritage sites associated with waterways in the Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac region have been assessed. Twenty-three sites were assessed across four zones, which included St Helens, islands of the Whitsundays, Cape Hillsborough and, for the first time, Cape Palmerston.

This work was conducted by the TORG in conjunction with Reef Catchments and external consultant Markwell and Associates.

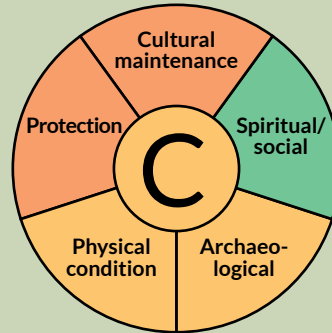
Look for this icon on the map to see where these zones are located.



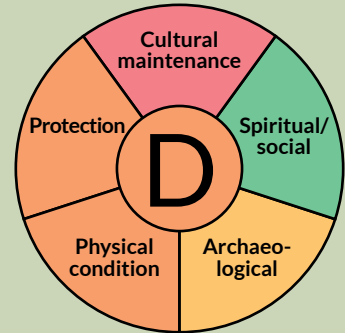
ST HELENS



ISLANDS OF THE WHITSUNDAYS



CAPE HILLSBOROUGH



CAPE PALMERSTON

Shell midden at St Helens Beach.

Rock art in a rock shelter on Hook Island.

Rock shelter and shell midden at Cape Hillsborough.

Stone artefacts at Cape Palmerston.



SOCIAL

Community perceptions in relation to our region's waterways and the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) were assessed based on data from 283 surveys of Mackay and Whitsunday residents, conducted in 2017 as part of the Social and Economic Long-Term Monitoring Program (SELTMP) for the GBR.

- E** Perception of condition of the region's waterways
- C** Perception of management of the region's waterways
- B** Perception of the non-monetary values derived from the GBR
- B** Perception of wellbeing derived from the GBR
- D** Perception of individual capacity to act
- A** Perception of economic opportunities delivered by the GBR

ECONOMIC

Our diverse industries are valuable to the region's economy.

Total value of the region's sugarcane crop in 2017/18 was

\$426.1 MILLION



151.4 MILLION TONNES of commodities shipped through the region's three ports in 2017/18



Tourism expenditure in the Mackay-Whitsunday region at the end of 2017/18 was

\$1.2 BILLION



Total catch landed by the region's commercial fishing industry in 2017/18 was

885 TONNES



ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

The Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac report card is developed by the Mackay-Whitsunday Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership. The Partnership recognises that more can be achieved by working together than as individuals. The shared vision is for healthy rivers and Reef contributing to a prosperous and iconic region where people visit, live, work and play.

JOIN US

Interested in becoming a Partner? Contact us to find out how your organisation can join a leading group of organisations helping build and shape our community's understanding of waterway health and how we respond.

Contact information

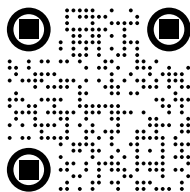
info@healthyriverstoreef.org

www.healthyriverstoreef.org.au

Want to hear more about waterway health?

Sign up for our newsletter at:

www.healthyriverstoreef.org.au/contact



MWHR2RP



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ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

The Partnership acknowledges the continuing land and sea country management of the Traditional Owner tribal groups within the Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac Region and Great Barrier Reef whose rich cultures, heritage values, enduring connections and shared efforts protect the land and Reef for future generations.



OUR PARTNERS



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Partnership acknowledges the work of the Regional Report Card Technical Working Group and the Reef 2050 Plan Independent Science Panel along with the following organisations for their extensive in-kind input into the science behind the report card: Australian Institute of Marine Science, Catchment Solutions, CSIRO, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, James Cook University, Queensland Alliance for Environmental Health Sciences, Queensland Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy, Queensland Department of Environment and Science and the University of Queensland.

Photo credits: A. Lee, Dr N Waltham (TropWATER, JCU), T. Ayling, Seagrass Ecology Group (TropWATER, JCU), Converge.

The Partnership is hosted by Reef Catchments. This report card is printed on recycled paper. Published July 2019. Design and layout: Kate Hodge (Hodge Environmental)