



HEALTHY RIVERS TO
REEF PARTNERSHIP
MACKAY-WHITSUNDAY-ISAAC

ANNUAL REPORT

..... 2020-21

OUR VISION

Healthy rivers and Reef contributing to a prosperous region where people visit, live, work, and play.

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Mackay Whitsunday and Isaac partnership has been very fortunate to have not been overly impacted by Covid 19. Whilst there were occasions when meetings were held electronically, the finalisation and launch of both the 2019 Report Card and the Above and Beyond Stewardship, report were able to take place with minimal fuss. Both of these reports have been well received by both the members of the Partnership and the broader community.

All three of our local Councils participated in the Urban Water Stewardship Framework workshops which was pleasing to see. This is a first for our region, and the results will be released in the next Stewardship report.

The Partnership was without an Executive Officer for seven weeks. It was a credit to the Technical Officers that the team's work did not miss a beat. Well done to Elly Pratt and Talen Rimmer for stepping up and ensuring that the Partnership milestones could be met, including adding new report card indicators.

We welcomed Bonny Stutsel to the role of Executive Officer in November 2020 and Melissa Nixon as the Communications Officer in January 2021. It was pleasing to have the full complement of staff as we worked towards the release of the 2020 report card.

This year there was a focus on Citizen Science with funding being provided from the Great Barrier Reef Foundation and the results will be available in future report cards. The Partnership in conjunction with Whitsunday Regional Council, was also successful in securing funding to place Gross Pollutant Traps in the urban areas of the Whitsunday Council.

The Partnership expanded to 31 partners and it is a credit to all the Partners for their ongoing commitment to waterway health in our region. The information that is provided in the Report Card is assessed by the Technical Working Group to ensure it is scientifically rigorous and can stand up to scrutiny. The Independent Science Panel provides final oversight before the details are provided to the report.

I'd like to thank the Management Committee for their oversight and advice and to the Partnership for their willingness to embrace the data and information and use it wisely within their organisations.



Julie Boyd

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

The Partnership acknowledges the continuing Land and Sea Country management of the Traditional Owner 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.



ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

Launched in 2014, the Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership (the Partnership) is a collaboration between the community, Traditional Owners, farmers and fishers, industry, science, tourism, and government, who recognise that more can be achieved by working together. The Partnership's primary purpose is to develop an annual waterway health report card for the region. In addition, the Partnership produces a yearly stewardship report (magazine), a compendium of Partner projects that outlines how our region's sectors are going 'above and beyond' to maintain or improve waterway health.

OUR LINKAGES & NETWORK

The Partnership has linkages with a range of monitoring, reporting and planning programs across the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) catchments, notably:

Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan and Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan 2017-2022

Regional Report Card partnerships are foundational programs of the [Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan](#) (Reef 2050), the Australian and Queensland governments overarching strategy for protecting and managing the GBR. The Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan 2017-2022 is a nested plan under Reef 2050. The partnerships facilitate collaborative regional strategies and actions to improve waterway health by bringing together governments, industries, research institutes, community-based organisations, and other key stakeholders. They also communicate regionally relevant information for management decisions and local communities.



Queensland Regional Report Card Network

Our Partnership works closely with Great Barrier Reef Regional Report Card Network members to share knowledge and improve our processes.

International Report Card Network

We contribute to this network of practitioners to drive innovation in waterway health report cards.



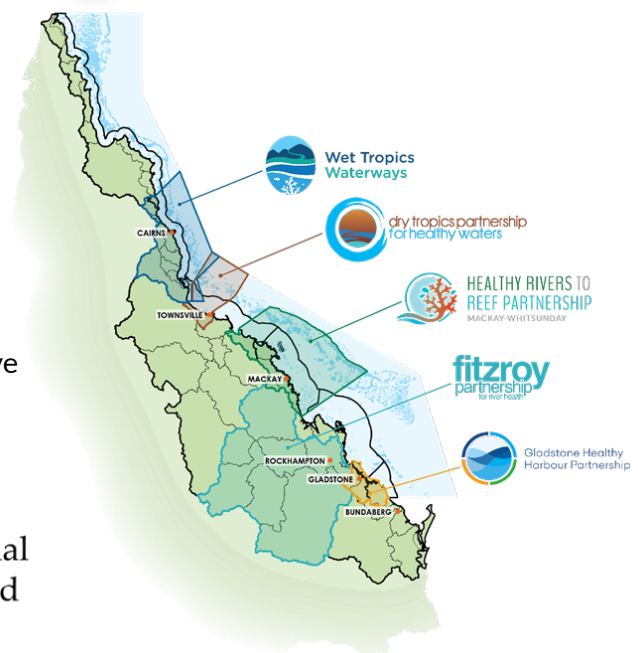
International
Report Card
Network

Membership of

31
Partner
organisations
in 2021 Financial Year.

Statement of Income and Expenditure:

The Partnership total income (ex GST) for the 2021 FY was \$1,408,396 including \$377,428 funds carried forward from the 2020 FY. Total expenditure was \$723,551 (ex GST), some of our program cost allocated to the 2021 FY were invoiced in the 2022 FY.



OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

2020 Report Card Highlights

The [2020 Report Card](#) (reporting on data from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020) was released on 15 July 2021. This was the Partnership's seventh Report Card, and contained more citizen science data than ever before with three new additions:

- Litter data were reported in the region for the first time from the Australian Marine Debris Initiative Database.
- Coral cover data from Reef Check Australia were reported for the Whitsunday and Offshore Zones.
- Seagrass Watch data were included in the Northern Zone from sites at Bowen.

'Above and Beyond' Stewardship Report

The Partnership's second annual stewardship Stewardship report, [Above and Beyond](#), was released on 3 December 2020. The magazine-style report shares stories on initiatives being undertaken by our Partners to improve our region's waterway health.



MONITORING AND PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Southern Inshore Monitoring Program Update

The Southern Inshore Monitoring Program was renewed for three years (FY21-23), with Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal Pty Ltd and Dalrymple Bay Infrastructure committing \$383,000 to fund the program jointly. The program is improving knowledge of seagrass, coral and water quality condition in the Southern Inshore Marine Zone.



DBCT Sustainability
**Handling
with care.**



Urban Water Stewardship Framework

Urban Water Stewardship Framework, a mechanism to assess how councils manage urban water, was developed through the Queensland Government's Queensland Reef Water Quality Program collaboratively working with regional report card partnerships and councils across the GBR catchments. Summary reports were created for Mackay, Whitsunday, and Isaac regional councils. An overall grade for our area will be presented in the 2020-21 'Above and Beyond' stewardship magazine.

Great Barrier Reef Foundation Citizen Science Funding

The Reef Regional Report Card Network received funding from the Great Barrier Reef Foundation to investigate citizen science options for enhancing report card data. The network decided to focus this funding on understanding citizen science programs and data for estuarine and marine fish. The Regional Report Card Network developed a scope of works for this project to commence in in the 2022 FY.

Human dimension- Waterway Social Surveys

In collaboration with other regional report card Partnerships, the Department of Environment and Science and CSIRO, the Partnership participated in a number of meetings to discuss the development and co-design of a waterway social survey. The survey aims to collect regional data to better understand community perceptions of waterway health and management. The survey will be piloted across the 2022 FY.

Cultural Heritage assessments

Cultural heritage assessments were undertaken on country in October 2020 with the Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac Traditional Owner Reference Group (TORG). This assessment was the third conducted with the Partnership, and will be included in the 2021 Report Card.



Whitsunday Gross Pollutant Trap Project

The Partnership was awarded \$50,000 of funding support from the Queensland Government's Community Sustainability Action grant program for the two-year Whitsunday Gross Pollutant Trap (GPT) project. Fifteen GPTs will be installed in the Whitsunday region. In collaboration with the local community, these GPTs will be audited so that data can inform future report cards and source reduction plans.



COMMUNICATION HIGHLIGHTS

The beginning of the 2021 FY saw no community events due to COVID-19 restrictions. As restrictions eased after October 2020, the Partnership team focused on increasing our attendance and engagement at events. This included participating in Isaac Regional Council's annual environmental event, the St Lawrence Wetland Weekend, which had record attendance.

'Joe'- The Marine Debris Parrotfish

In late 2020, the Partnership commissioned a local artist to construct 'Joe', an art piece in the form of a parrotfish made up of marine debris collected in the Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac Region. Following Joe's unveiling at the 2020 'Above and Beyond' report launch, the art piece travelled around our region to promote reducing plastic pollution, including stops at the Whitsunday Airport and Cape Palmerston Holiday Park. Kids were encouraged to participate in a 'Joe' parrotfish colouring-in competition and identify the various marine debris that make up his body, with the aim of highlighting the variety of items that contribute to plastic pollution in our region.



2020 Report Card Cover Photography Competition

The Partnership launched an inaugural photography competition, with the Partnership offering contestants the chance to be featured on the cover of the 2020 Report Card. Community members were encouraged to submit photographs capturing the beauty of our region's waterways. One hundred and seventy entries were received, increasing awareness and engagement with the Partnership. Mackay photographer Rebecca Hammer was announced as the winner of our competition with her photograph of Dumbleton Weir.



10

Community events attended

500

Report Cards distributed

500

Stewardship Reports distributed

11

Mainstream media coverage

Social media

170

new page followers and

164

new page likes

4

Radio interviews

Community Education

A 'what is a catchment' educational activity was run by Partnership staff at community events such as the Kids Coastcare School Holiday Events in Mackay and Cannonvale. A simple catchment model was created with a tarp. Kids were invited to tip water on the 'catchment' and observe the water's path. The kids also placed everyday litter items, such as straws and balloons, at different locations and watched as the water moved it downstream to the lower part of the catchment. This was a fun and interactive activity that engages a variety of age groups to demonstrate how litter makes its way from land to creeks, rivers, dams, estuaries and out to the ocean.



BHP's 'Think Big' campaign

The Partnership received the opportunity to participate in BHP 'Think Big' campaign, providing the Partnership with marketing through TV, radio, print and social media posts.



All Queenslanders around Mackay, Whitsunday and Isaac regions rely on the same water, so users from all of these regions are getting involved to manage the quality of their waterways. 31 local groups from ports, traditional owners, farmers and fishers are all working together under the Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership. Find out more at [BHP.com/community/programs](https://bhp.com/community/programs)

BHP

BMA

The BHP Mitsubishi Alliance (BMA) is a 50-50 joint venture formed in 2001 between BHP Limited and Mitsubishi Development Pty Ltd.

Talking Water at the Pub

The Partnership hosted an event for growers in the Proserpine area in April at Hotel Metropole. The event gave growers a chance to hear from a water quality expert while also learning about practical solutions to improving on-farm retention via irrigation management.



OUR FUTURE AND BECOMING INVOLVED

Across the last seven years, the Partnership has worked to address regional data gaps and establish as a source of accessible regional waterway health information. With a strong foundation, we now look to the 2022 FY to be another year full of collaborative actions to improve waterway health in the Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac Region.



Get in touch

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Some highlights to look forward to across the 2022 FY include:

- Pilot Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac waterway social survey.
- Urban Water Stewardship Framework regional grade released.
- Update of Cultural Heritage assessments.
- Pesticide risk in the Northern Inshore Zone using data from North Queensland Bulk Ports water quality monitoring program.
- Seagrass condition report in the Southern Inshore Zone from Southern Inshore Monitoring Program.
- Carmila water quality project, in collaboration with Central Queensland University and Catchment Solutions.

If your organisation would like to join us to shape our communities' understanding of waterway health, please get in touch.

OUR PARTNERS

