



HEALTHY RIVERS TO
REEF PARTNERSHIP
MACKAY-WHITSUNDAY-ISAAC

2024-25 ANNUAL REPORT

July 2024 - June 2025



Working together for healthy rivers and Reef
in the Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac Region

A message from **CHARLIE MORGAN**

Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership Chair

In 2024-25, the Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership proudly celebrated ten years of action, collaboration and impact. For a decade, we've been at the heart of our region's journey toward healthier waterways – turning data into decisions and partnerships into progress.

Through science-based insights and locally driven collaboration, we've helped shape how our community understands, protects and values the rivers, estuaries and reef systems that sustain us. Together with our dedicated partners, we continue to champion a shared vision for thriving waterways and a resilient future



for our environment, our people and our region.

The strength of this Partnership lies in its people — the expertise, commitment, and collaboration of our partners makes these programs possible.



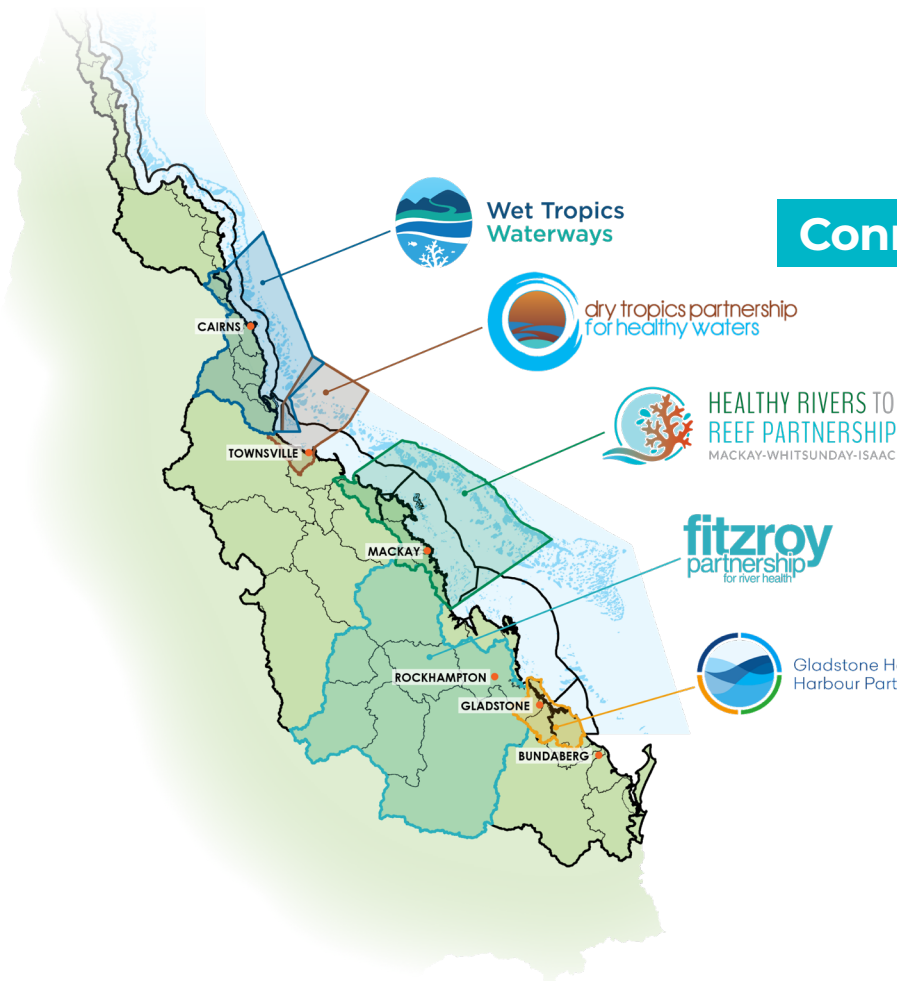
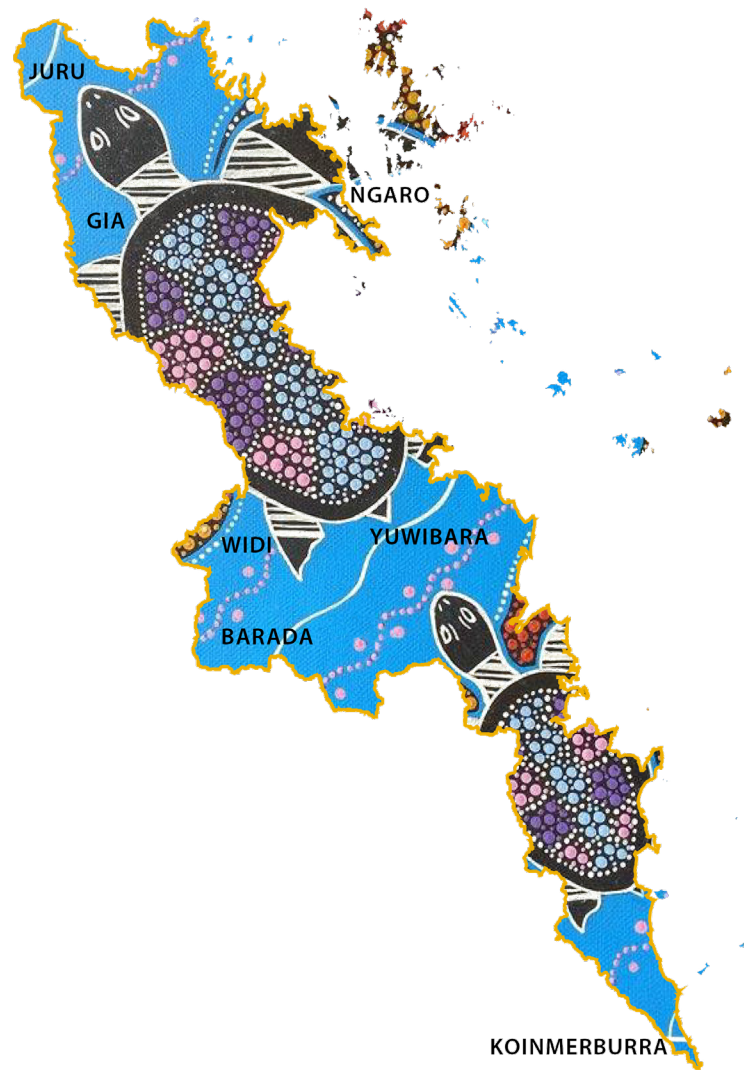
**10 Years of regionally specific
environmental condition reporting**

Working with

Mackay, Whitsunday, Isaac region's First Nations people

Acknowledgement 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. We are committed to working together with our Traditional Owners when it comes to waterway health.



Connecting Queensland

We are proud to be one of five Regional Report Card Partnerships (RRCPs) working across Queensland to provide an annual snapshot of ecosystem health and local waterway health.

RRCPs are one of a number of activities under the **Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan** and are a vital part of a nested approach to wider Reef planning, part of the framework that also includes the wider **Reef Water Quality Report Card** which focuses on tracking towards **Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan** targets.

2024-25 Achievements

PARTNERSHIP



38

dedicated partners working together to improve waterway health, representing key sectors in the MWI region including resources, agriculture, science, ports, community, conservation, tourism, traditional owners, and all tiers of government.

\$1m

contributed by our partners and investors in waterway health.

Statement of Expenditure

Income: \$1,917,839

Expenditure: \$1,044,071

Carry forward funds: \$873,769

2

new organisations, Earthwatch Australia, and Broadstrokes Sustainability joined as partners.



Science, culture and community

- Expanded Project Blueprint in partnership with Traditional Owners, tourism operators, and industry, gathering unique water quality data for high-priority marine sites.

- Supported the development of the Koinjmal People Plan for Healthy Country 2025-2035 and integration into the Yuwi Healthy Country Plan 2023-2032.



2024-25 *Achievements*

COLLABORATION & CONNECTION



43

community events
attended including
workshops, forums
and field trips

24

meetings
with external
stakeholders

4

management
committee
meetings

4

partnership
meetings



Partners came together for a Theory of Change Workshop to inform our new Strategic Plan



Facilitated Round 3 of the Urban Water Stewardship Framework program with 3 council partners

2024-25 *Achievements*

COMMUNITY

Submerged in Our Region



Our 10th Report Card release was celebrated through a community focused event, Submerged in Our Region Art Exhibition, opened by Mackay Mayor Greg Williamson.



200

plus guests attended the exhibition launch.



2024-25 Achievements

128

competition entries showcasing the beauty and value of waterways in the Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac region, and our connection to them, from rivers to Reef.



Artworks included:

77

mixed media

35

photography

8

sculptures

6

short films

4

writing

3

installations



2024-25 Achievements

COMMUNITY

STEM Schools Program

Commencing in July 2024, Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership teamed up with expert educators STEM Punks Education to inspire and engage students in science-related fields, using the Waterway Health Report Card to provide local context and real-world connection.

During full-day workshops, students learn about different waterway pressures and hear from local STEM professionals about their career journey. Students learn coding skills to collect data in real-time, and develop skills in design-thinking, prototyping, problem solving and teamwork to help solve a water quality challenge.



PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Mackay North State High School
Mackay State High School
Mirani State School
Whitsunday Anglican School
Bowen State High School
Carlisle Christian College
Mackay West State School
Proserpine State High School
Sarina State High School
Catherine McAuley College



PARTNER VOLUNTEERS

Mackay CANEGROWERS
BMA
Pioneer Catchment Landcare
Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal
Reef Check Australia
Ark Energy
Sarina Landcare Catchment
Management Association
Reef Catchments

The Healthy Rivers to Reef STEM Innovator Schools Program 2024 was supported by funding from the Queensland Government Engaging Science Grants.

2024-25 Achievements



HEALTHY RIVERS TO REEF STEM SCHOOLS PROGRAM 2024-25 IMPACT

10

workshops
held across 10
schools

9

STEM
professionals
volunteered
their time

19

school staff
involved

356

students attended workshops
across the Mackay and
Whitsunday region

Student feedback survey results:

75%

said the workshops
changed the way
they thought about
STEM

77%

would like to attend
the workshop again

85%

said it was a good
way to learn about
STEM



2024-25 Achievements

RESULTS & PUBLICATIONS



10th
MWI Waterway
Health Report Card
and technical reports
(released July 2024)

800
Report Cards printed
and distributed

PARTNERSHIP REACH

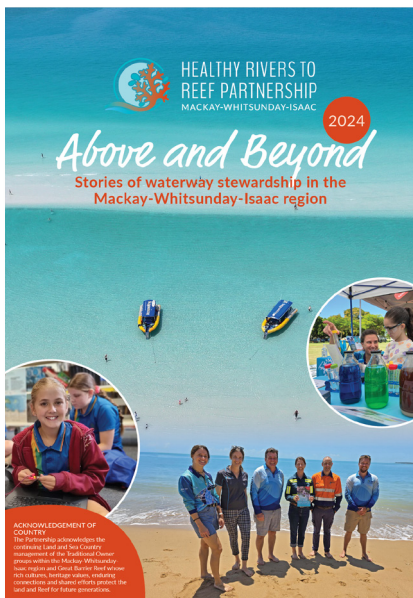
117,000+
people reached through social media

34
LinkedIn posts

54
Facebook
posts

3
online news
articles

6
media releases



Make a difference with MACKAY MANGROVE WATCH

Yrthwath Australia has launched a new
stewardship program in Mackay to collect
baseline science data on mangrove and
fishpond condition and raise awareness
of the important ecosystems.

In order programs successfully implemented in
Australia and Cairns, the Mackay MangroveWatch
program started survey in 2024, collecting information on
ecosystem health, biodiversity, values and threats.

Information collected over time, the Mackay
MangroveWatch program will help improve our
understanding of the local ecosystem and help
with carbon storage, and how we can make these
ecosystems more resilient. The data will be shared with reef
managers, local Natural Resource Management groups,
land and water users. Healthy Rivers to Reef is
a local management actions and conservation
plans.

Information will also provide guidance for Traditional
Owners and community members in creating local action
plans to protect coastal ecosystems, combining their
own traditional knowledge to guide better
decisions for protecting these areas.

Not just about the data though, Mackay
MangroveWatch offers volunteers the chance for
hands-on practical engagement and building a
sense of connection to the community. Through monitoring and
education, volunteers and stakeholders can develop
local responsibility for their local area and build on
community efforts.

Get Involved
No matter what your skills, abilities and time,
Follow Earthwatch and Mackay MangroveWatch on
social media:
@earthwatchaustralia @earthwatch_australia
Contact Local Program Coordinator
David Cameron:
cameron@earthwatch.org.au or
0487 630 022 or 08 9554 7390



The Mackay MangroveWatch program is part of
Earthwatch Australia's Coastal Resilience Champions
Program, funded by the Queensland Government and
supported by the partnership between the Australian
Government's Reef Trust, Great Barrier Reef Foundation
and the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the
Environment and Water.

**Why is monitoring mangroves and
fishponds important?**
These important ecosystems are incredibly vulnerable
to environmental changes. They serve as natural
barriers for coastal protection, improve water quality,
and provide vital habitats for young marine life, making
them essential for sustainable, regular monitoring
allow us to assess the health of these ecosystems,
understand the threats they face, and identify
management actions.

In addition to environmental values, mangroves and
fishponds hold significant economic, and cultural
importance. By assessing and monitoring these
ecosystems, we can better protect their benefits,
which in turn ensure the future of our coastal
communities.

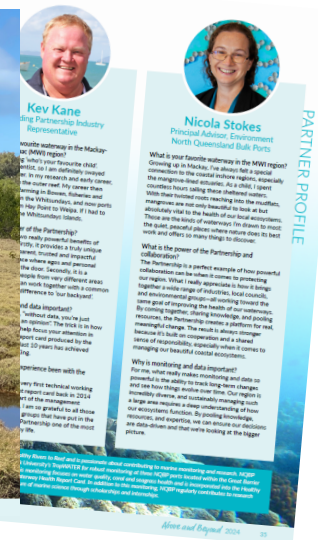
By working together, sharing knowledge, and pooling
resources, the Partnership creates a platform for real,
measurable change. The result is a more resilient
coastline, better water quality, and a shared sense of
responsibility for the future of our coastal communities.

**What is the power of the Partnership and
collaboration?**
The Partnership is a perfect example of how powerful
collaboration can be when it comes to protecting
our coastline. With a variety of expertise, local knowledge,
and resources, the Partnership creates a platform for real,
measurable change. The result is a more resilient
coastline, better water quality, and a shared sense of
responsibility for the future of our coastal communities.

**Without data, you're just
guessing.** The first step in having
any impact is to know
what you're dealing with.
That's why we've been
collecting data for the
last 10 years, and it's
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7th

Above and
Beyond
Stewardship
Report released
online

400

Stewardship Reports
printed and distributed

21

stories of work
being done to
monitor, maintain
and improve
waterways

23

partner profiles
included
alongside
Stewardship
stories

2024-25 Achievements



Conducted Human Dimension social surveys with CSIRO to find out local perceptions of waterways in the MWI region.

Have your say
on our local
waterways

&
WIN!

Complete our survey
and go in the draw to
win a new **iPhone 15**
valued at over \$1,500.

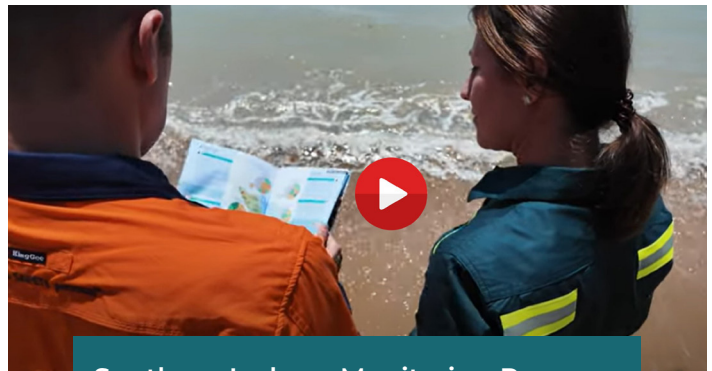


2

project videos released
featuring interviews
with Partnership staff,
researchers, Traditional
Owners and partners

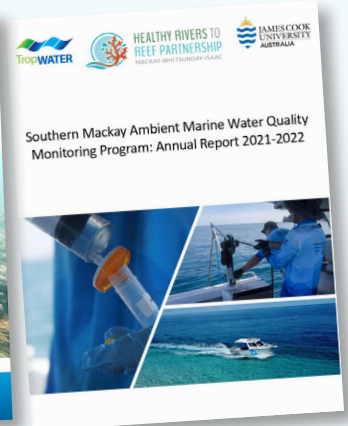
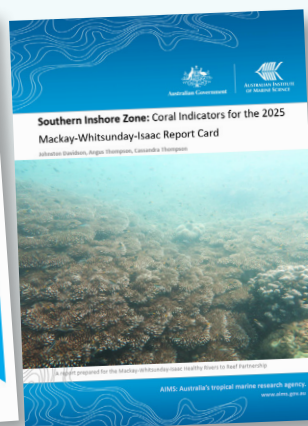
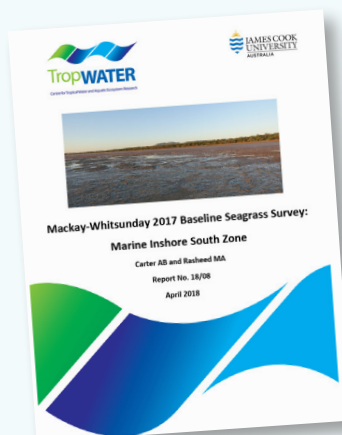


Project Blueprint



Southern Inshore Monitoring Program

Shared the only publicly available marine data for the Southern Inshore Zone through the leading **Southern Inshore Monitoring Program**, funded by Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal Pty Ltd (DBCT Pty Ltd) and Dalrymple Bay Infrastructure (DBI).



2024-25 *Our People*

Partners

Ark Energy	Isaac Regional Council	Queensland Water and Land Carers
Australian Government	Mackay and District Turtle Watch	Reef Catchments
BHP Mitsubishi Alliance (BMA)	Mackay Conservation Group	Reef Check Australia
Broadstrokes Sustainability	Mackay Isaac Tourism	Regional Development Australia (Greater Whitsundays)
CANEGROWERS Mackay Catchment Solutions	Mackay Recreational Fishers Alliance	Sarina Landcare Catchment Management Association
Central Queensland Soil Health Systems	Mackay Regional Council	Sugar Research Australia
Conservation Volunteers Australia	Earthwatch Australia	Tangaroa Blue Foundation
CQUniversity	North Queensland Bulk Ports	Tourism Whitsundays
CSIRO	NQ Dry Tropics	Traditional Owner Reference Group (Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac)
Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal Pty Ltd	Queensland Government	Whitsunday Catchment Landcare Ltd
Eco Barge Clean Seas	Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Inc	Whitsunday Charter Boat Industry Association
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority	Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA)	Whitsunday Regional Council
	Queensland Resources Council	

Management Committee

Charlie Morgan
Chair

Alisha Stewart
Deputy Chair
Reef Catchments

Donna Jackson
Pioneer Catchment
Landcare

Jeff Stewart-Harris
Mackay Isaac Tourism

Kirili Lamb
CANEGROWERS Mackay

Nicola Stokes
North Queensland Bulk Ports

Rachel D'Arcy
Office of the Great Barrier Reef and World Heritage,
Department of Environment and Science

Robyn Birkett
Mackay Regional Council

Staff

Jaime Newborn
Executive Officer

Brie Sherow
Senior Technical Officer

Cinzia Cattaneo
Project Officer

Rebekah Smith
Communications Officer



*Thank you to our
host organisation
Reef Catchments*



2024-25 *Our People*

Technical Working Group

Di Tarte
Chair

Carlos Bueno
Reef Catchments

Dr Alex Carter
*James Cook University's
Centre for Tropical Water
and Aquatic Ecosystem
Research (JCU TropWATER)*

Dr Paula Cartwright
*James Cook University's
Centre for Tropical Water
and Aquatic Ecosystem
Research (JCU TropWATER)*

Dr Jamie Corfield
*Office of the Great Barrier
Reef and World Heritage,
Department of the
Environment, Tourism,
Science and Innovation*

Dr Nicole Flint
CQUniversity

Dr Katie Hillyer
*Department of the
Environment, Tourism, Science
and Innovation*

Dr Paulina Kaniewska
*Office of the Great Barrier
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Department of the
Environment, Tourism, Science
and Innovation*

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*Department of the
Environment, Tourism, Science
and Innovation*

David Moffatt
*Department of the
Environment, Tourism, Science
and Innovation*

Dr Andrew Moss
*Department of the
Environment, Tourism, Science
and Innovation*

Glynis Orr
*Department of the
Environment, Tourism, Science
and Innovation*

Trent Power
Catchment Solutions

Dr Michael Rasheed
*James Cook University's Centre
for Tropical Water and Aquatic
Ecosystem Research (JCU
TropWATER)*

Ken Rhode
*Department of the
Environment, Tourism, Science
and Innovation*

Nicola Stokes
North Queensland Bulk Ports

Angus Thompson
*Australian Institute of Marine
Science*

Phil Trendell
*Department of Agriculture and
Fisheries*

Independent Science Panel

Dr John Rolfe
*A/Independent Chair,
CQ University*
expertise: resource
economics

Dr Peter Doherty
*formerly Australian Institute
of Marine Science*
expertise: marine, ecology
and modelling

Dr Eva Abal
*International
RiverFoundation*
expertise: water quality and
ecosystem health target
setting and monitoring,
information integration,
synthesis, reporting and
communication

Dr Graham Bonnett
*CSIRO, expertise: sugarcane
production*

Dr Andrew Ash
formerly CSIRO
expertise: grazing land
ecology, climate impacts and
adaptation

Mr Hugh Yorkston
*formerly Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority*
expertise: marine monitoring,
coastal ecosystems

Dr Jenny Stauber
*CSIRO, expertise: ecotoxicology,
environmental risk assessment,
contaminants, water and
sediment quality guidelines*

Dr Bill Venables
*formerly CSIRO, expertise:
mathematics and statistics*



Our Partners



CONTACT

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