



Protecting the Great Barrier Reef

Welcome to the Protecting the Great Barrier Reef e-newsletter which features work the Queensland Government is doing alongside our partners to protect the Reef.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter and encourage you to share it with your friends and colleagues who can subscribe [here](#).

What's new



Reef Water Quality Report Card 2023-2025 released

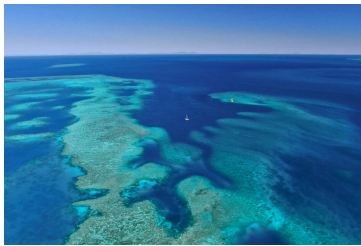
The three-year Reef Water Quality Report Card 2023–2025 was released by the Australian and Queensland governments on 13 August 2026.

It shows progress against all water quality improvement targets, with the greatest progress for particulate phosphorus, particulate nitrogen and sediment.

The report card provides the final update on progress against the 2025 water quality targets under the Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan, now superseded by the Reef 2050 Catchment Water Quality Strategy. View the [results](#).

Great Barrier Reef remains off the UNESCO 'in danger' list

On 24 July 2026, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee confirmed that it would not list the Great Barrier Reef as 'in danger'.



The final decision was confirmed at the World Heritage Committee's 48th session in Busan, Republic of Korea from 19–29 July.

The Australian Government will submit a progress report in 2028, with the next Great Barrier Reef State of Conservation report due to UNESCO by December 2029. Read more [here](#).

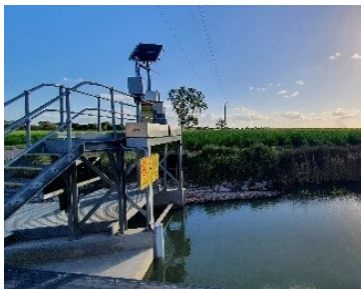


Reef 2050 Catchment Water Quality Strategy

The Australian and Queensland governments [released](#) the [Reef 2050 Catchment Water Quality Strategy](#) in May.

The strategy replaces the previous Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan and was developed in close consultation with communities, industry, landholders, Traditional Owners, and experts.

It is a modernised, evidence-based strategy that empowers local communities to address key pollutants and tailor actions to their unique catchments, ensuring healthier waterways, stronger communities, and a more resilient Reef for future generations.



New Queensland Reef and Catchment Water Quality Program

In June 2026, the Queensland Government announced the \$330.5 million [Queensland Reef and Catchment Water Quality Program](#).

The five-year program aligns to the joint Reef 2050 Catchment Water Quality Strategy and builds on the significant progress made working in partnership with industry, landholders, communities and Traditional Owners.

The program supports industry-led initiatives, innovative solutions, and on-ground action to improve water quality for a resilient Great Barrier Reef. The new program provides new possibilities and new funding opportunities.

Would you like to know more?

A briefing session will be held in the coming weeks. You can register your interest now by emailing OfficeoftheGBR@detsi.qld.gov.au with the subject heading 'Register for Program briefing'.

Research highlights water quality wins

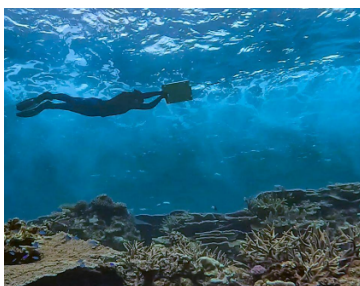
Two papers recently published by TropWATER, James Cook University and CSIRO have shown that changes in farming practices have likely contributed to improved water quality in catchments flowing into the Great Barrier Reef.



The [comprehensive studies](#) funded by the Australian Government looked at water quality data from the last 40 years and fertiliser usage since 1910. These studies found marked reductions in synthetic nitrogen fertiliser usage across many Great Barrier Reef basins over the past two decades, as well as improved water quality in key basins. Importantly, the study also found reductions in fertiliser usage didn't affect sugarcane productivity, and crop yields have not declined despite lower nitrogen application.

The research highlights that the Queensland Government's work with producers and the agricultural sector is reaping rewards.

[Read more](#) about how landholders are helping to protect the Reef.

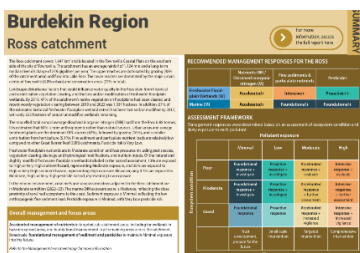


AIMS Summary Report Coral Reef Condition 2025-2026 released

The Australia Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) [released](#) its 2025–2026 Great Barrier Reef Annual Summary Report Coral Reef Condition in August.

The report found that coral cover had increased slightly or remained at similar levels to that recorded last year, indicating limited impacts from 2025's mass bleaching event, and the regional bleaching event in the Northern and Central regions recorded earlier in 2026.

A late summer monsoon in 2026 brought a reprieve from unfolding coral bleaching, aiding the Reef's initial recovery from recent climate-induced disturbances. You can read more [here](#).



Updated catchment profiles now online

There are 35 major catchments across the six Reef regions. Each catchment is unique. You can now find updated [catchment profiles online](#) detailing information such as the size, average rainfall, main land uses, sources of water pollutants and priorities for improving water quality.

They are part of the [Spatial Management Prioritisation framework](#) which is a decision-support tool that provides practical guidance for targeted management options to improve Reef water quality, aligned to each major catchment and water quality target.

The catchment profiles were prepared by C₂O Consulting, TropWATER James Cook University, Star Economics and the Queensland Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation.

If you're looking to undertake on-ground work, preparing a project proposal or simply want to find out more about your local catchment, view the profiles under each [Reef region](#).



Reef Advisory Committee gets firsthand look at Reef restoration

The [Reef 2050 Advisory Committee \(RAC\)](#), which consists of key Reef stakeholders across various sectors held its 2026 regional meeting in Yeppoon. RAC plays an important role in facilitating engagement with industry and the broader community to achieve outcomes for the Reef.

The Committee was given a firsthand look at key Reef restoration programs and management activities during a field trip to Woppa (Great Keppel Island). This field trip, hosted by the Reef Authority, provided valuable insights around monitoring and compliance activities, marine park management plans, crown-of-thorns starfish control, Traditional Owner use and co-design and restoration activities.

The Committee then held its formal meeting in Yeppoon, discussing the state of the Reef, providing advice on the Reef 2050 Plan and other policy and implementation issues for the Reef.

Image: Owen Witt, Assistant Director, Field Management Operations with RAC members. © Commonwealth of Australia (Reef Authority) Lincoln Bertoli



New toolkit to help Reef tourism operators

Tourism and Events Queensland has produced a new [Great Barrier Reef Content Toolkit](#) to assist the Queensland tourism industry in promoting the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

Tourism operators are invited to utilise the content in their marketing, including brochures, websites and social media. The toolkit is part of a [suite of toolkits for Queensland's five World Heritage Areas](#).

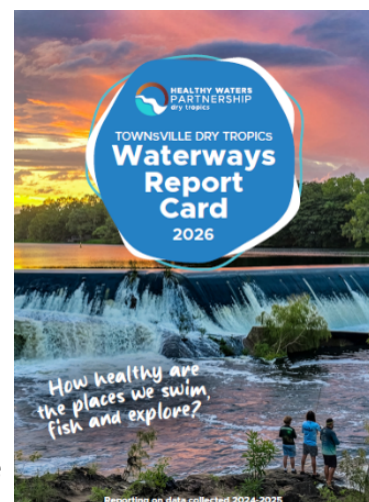
Project updates

Wet Tropics and Dry Tropics release their annual waterway report cards

The [Wet Tropics Partnership](#) and [Healthy Waters Partnership for the Dry Tropics](#) both released their annual waterway report cards in July 2026.

For the Wet Tropics, this marks a decade of reporting on the health of local waterways, and for the Dry Tropics, the report card reflects the impacts of a record-breaking wet season last year.

Both report cards report on data collected from July 2024 to June 2025.



There are [five regional waterway partnerships](#) operating across the Great Barrier Reef catchment, jointly funded by the Queensland and Australian governments.

Deploying restoration solutions on the Reef at scale

Australia's Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program (RRAP) has delivered world-leading solutions to help reefs adapt, recover and be more resilient. These solutions are now transitioning to the next phase. This involves testing real-world deployment on the Reef at scale through the RRAP Pilot Deployments Program (PDP).

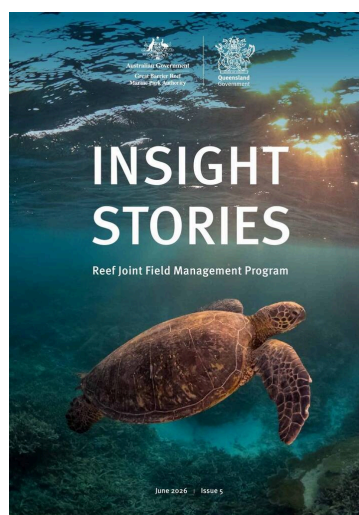
In the May Budget, the Australian Government announced \$30 million to support the PDP. This funding will ensure the RRAP mission continues to progress and accelerate through the PDP. Learn more at [From Reef research to real-world deployment - DCCEEW](#)



Insight into the Reef Joint Field Management Program

The fifth issue of '[Insight Stories](#)', the Reef Joint Field Management Program magazine is now out. Read about the groundbreaking turtle egg relocation program, find about rat eradication on a remote Reef island, discover what a vessel refit has to do with Reef protection, and learn what's being done to protect the hidden treasures of the Reef.

The Reef Joint Field Management Program is an enduring partnership of more than 45 years between the Australian Government's Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the Queensland Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation's Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.



Prosper 2050: Delivering action for primary industries

The next phase of the ambitious *Primary Industries Prosper 2050* blueprint has been unveiled, introducing actions to drive growth across the state's agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors over the next 5 years.

More than 230 actions have been identified in collaboration with more than 4300 industry, government and stakeholder representatives, ensuring we deliver targeted local solutions and initiatives.



Protecting the Great Barrier Reef is a key focus with action underway to develop peer-to-peer

mentoring to enhance agriculture and improve practices in the reef catchments.

These actions are already shifting the dial to help grow primary production output to \$30 billion by 2030.

[Check out the actions being delivered now.](#)

Science working for the Reef

Science is a critical part of our work to help protect the Great Barrier Reef.

At Munro Plains near Tully in North Queensland, Queensland Government scientists are leading an intensive monitoring project working with Terrain NRM, Tully Sugar, James Cook University, QUT and other partners to better understand how natural wetlands can help filter sediment, nutrients, pesticides and carbon before they reach downstream waterways connected to the Reef.



Funded through the Australian and Queensland governments' [Paddock to Reef Integrated Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting Program](#), the project is measuring how effectively a melaleuca wetland removes pollutants. The results will provide important evidence and modelling data to inform water quality management across Reef catchments.

Contact us

For more information about any of these projects, to provide feedback or story ideas, email officeofthegbr@detsi.qld.gov.au.

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