



Australian Government
Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority



Reef Guardian Councils program highlights 2014–15

Local councils committed to Reef protection

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Reef Guardian program recognises the good environmental work of communities and industries that protect the Great Barrier Reef.

Sixteen councils are actively involved in the Reef Guardian program. They cover a 300,000 square kilometre area and a population of a million people stretching from northern Cape York to Bundaberg along the north-east coast of Australia.

Each council undertakes a range of activities to improve the health of the Reef and educate residents about sustainability.

From upgrading wastewater treatment plants, improving stormwater management and modifying planning schemes; to developing engaging anti-littering campaigns, hosting eco-events and investigating innovative technology; Reef Guardian Councils are committed to continuous environmental improvement and have a crucial role to play.

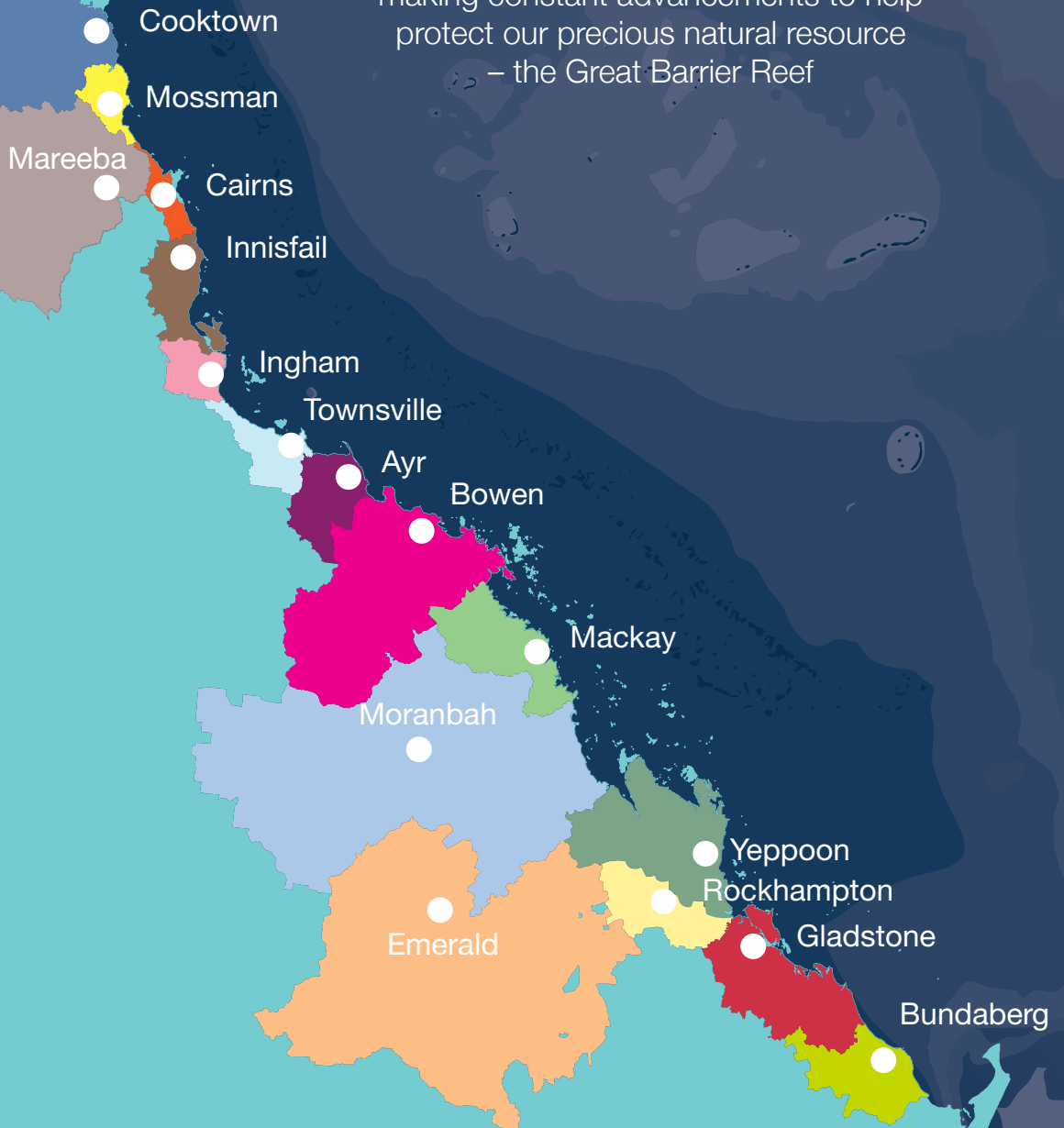
Discover just some of their work that is helping safeguard the future of the Great Barrier Reef.



*Working together today
for a healthier Reef tomorrow*

How Reef Guardian Councils are making a difference...

Whether Reef Guardian Councils and their communities are large or small, they are all making constant advancements to help protect our precious natural resource – the Great Barrier Reef



Bundaberg Regional Council

A new gas flaring facility at landfill is eliminating large amounts of harmful methane gas and a \$92 million wastewater treatment plant is on its way. Council has cracked down on litterers, adopting the motto 'See it, report it, stop it', and made life easier for turtles thanks to low-confusion LED lighting.

Burdekin Shire Council

Thousands of tonnes of weed was removed from Plantation Creek, creating higher oxygen levels for plants and animals, plus a new opportunity for water-based activities like fishing and skiing. Burdekin businesses are now better recyclers, Plantation Park has 1000 more trees and Alva Beach has 570 kilograms less marine debris.

Cairns Regional Council

More than 8000 people got a healthy dose of eco-inspiration at the inaugural ECOfiesta, while ECOweek — the largest community-focused environmental collaboration in North Queensland — saw 55 events hosted around the region, from sustainability festivals and discounted reef and rainforest trips, to community tree planting days and beach clean-ups.

Cassowary Coast Regional Council

A new planning scheme delivered on council's mission to protect the ecological values of the area, cigarette butts were collected at ETTY Bay with the help of local school students, and a new sustainability working group is driving projects that save energy, reduce waste and create financial gains.

Central Highlands Regional Council

Pests and their ability to degrade the Reef and water quality are targeted via a new management plan; four planning schemes were merged to create better financial and environmental outcomes, and a new approach to flood management will reduce the impact of disasters and enhance recovery.

Cook Shire Council

Kids collected 1.6 tonnes of recyclables before the waste became marine debris or landfill; a new biosecurity team is managing weeds and feral animals, and Rossville–Bloomfield Road is now sealed; reducing dust, sediment and erosion along the route before it degrades the water quality of the Great Barrier Reef.

Douglas Shire Council

The Banabilla causeways project provided flood mitigation and the opportunity for marine life to access parts of the river system that were off-limits due to previous human activity. Council is promoting a culture of zero tolerance to illegal dumping and completed a series of improvements to its wastewater treatment system.

Gladstone Regional Council

Council pumps up to three megalitres of recycled wastewater a day into Queensland Alumina for reuse within the refinery. The 'Don't Dump in My Backyard' campaign is raising awareness about illegal dumping and littering, and a gas extraction and flaring system is reducing the methane gas emissions at landfill.

Hinchinbrook Shire Council

Council is partnering to promote improved land management practices to reduce nutrient, pesticide and sediment losses. A weeding taskforce focused on one of the last remaining stands of pond apple, while residents are continuing to take advantage of virtual vouchers for domestic and green waste.

Isaac Regional Council

Reef Out the Rubbish events focused on enhancing public knowledge about waste management and waterway health, including clean-ups. Weeds are in the spotlight with declared infestations being mapped along state and local government roads for better control, and a separate project is helping to minimise catchment infestations of prickly acacia.

Livingstone Shire Council

A new planning scheme will ensure better environmental outcomes for the Reef. A business plan has been developed to introduce bio-recyclable bags, the ecologically-valuable Kinka Wetlands was further rehabilitated, and several clean-up events collected data to be able to track the debris to the source.

Mackay Regional Council

The Mackay Natural Environment Centre opened and will supply 90,000 plants annually for revegetation projects and giveaways to local residents and community groups; studies found gross pollutant traps stopped 17,565 pieces of rubbish from entering natural waterways in two years, and Far Beach was revegetated with nearly 3000 local native plants.

Mareeba Shire Council

Desilting works improved the water quality and visual appeal of Bicentennial Lakes, while local creeks were protected by pump station upgrades. In-house energy audits found \$138,000 in savings, and staff were trained in weed seed identification and vehicle and equipment wash-down to halt the spread between properties.

Rockhampton Regional Council

Post tropical cyclone Marcia creek clean-ups boosted overall water flow and reduced the risks to neighbouring properties in future floods. Significant investments are being made to upgrade treatment plants, water and sewer mains to improve water quality and energy efficiency.

Townsville City Council

Partnership projects are investigating improving stormwater run-off from urban Townsville and assessing the viability of 'polishing' wastewater treatment plant effluent by growing macro algae. All erosion and sediment control processes, procedures and enforcement levels are being reviewed, and environmentally-sensitive Magnetic Island no longer has landfill.

Whitsunday Regional Council

Cannonvale Botanic Gardens introduced gross pollutant traps to minimise nasties from entering the Great Barrier Reef, and developers are being educated about erosion and sediment control through workshops. Cannonvale's new \$32 million wastewater treatment facility is offering big environmental benefits.



Australian Government

Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority



We all have a role in protecting the Great Barrier Reef. Every day individuals, communities and organisations who use and enjoy the Reef are taking practical steps to help safeguard its future, just like Reef Guardian Councils. You can love the Reef by:

- disposing of your rubbish properly and picking up debris from beaches and waterways
- reducing fertiliser use — too many nutrients from fertilisers cause algae to grow, blocking sunlight
- anchoring on a sandy bottom when you visit the Reef so anchors and chains aren't dragged across corals
- following zoning rules — don't fish in green (no-take) zones that help protect the Reef's rich biodiversity
- look, but don't touch when snorkelling — enjoy the corals and marine life but keep your distance
- protect coastal ecosystems — places like mangroves and seagrasses are where many marine animals feed and breed
- be energy efficient — switch to LEDs or compact fluorescent light bulbs, take public transport, and dry your clothes on a line rather than using your dryer.

Find out more about how you can look after the Reef or get involved in the Reef Guardians program.



www.gbrmpa.gov.au