

Protecting the Great Barrier Reef



Welcome

Season's greetings and best wishes from the Office of the Great Barrier Reef and World Heritage within the new Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI).

We also welcome Patricia (Trish) O'Callaghan, Director-General for DETSI and the Hon. Andrew Powell MP, Minister for the Environment and Tourism and Minister for Science and Innovation.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter which features the work the Queensland Government is doing alongside our partners to protect the Reef and encourage you to share it with your friends and colleagues who can subscribe [here](#).

What's new



TEQ showcases tourism operators training in coral IVF

As part of Tourism and Events Queensland's (TEQ) ongoing promotion of the Great Barrier Reef and the positive outcomes the tourism industry delivers for the Reef, TEQ covered the 2024 coral spawning phenomenon in November.

They partnered with the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, which was delivering the innovative [Coral IVF initiative](#), and with [Tourism Tropical North Queensland](#) to showcase the work by scientists to train Cairns and Port Douglas tourism operators, including [Quicksilver](#) and [GBR Biology](#), on the coral IVF process. The overnight mission witnessed millions of coral eggs and sperm placed in specially designed floating larval pools to support the Reef's natural regeneration process.

The story was covered nationally and in New Zealand with more than 200 pieces of media.



Fitzroy and Gladstone release their annual report cards

[Fitzroy Partnership for River Health](#) and [Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership](#) (GHHP) released their annual report cards in October and November respectively, with GHHP celebrating 10 years of reporting.

The [Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership](#) also released their [2024 Above and Beyond](#) stewardship magazine.

The [regional report cards](#) report on local waterway condition using the best available data, with partners working together to improve the health of their waterways and ultimately the Reef.

The Queensland Government invests \$1.25 million annually across the five regional report card partnerships that operate in the Great Barrier Reef catchment.



AIMS releases their latest in-water survey results

The Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) Long-Term Monitoring Program released initial results from their routine in-water surveys of 19 reefs between Lizard Island and Cardwell in the Great Barrier Reef.

The surveys, conducted during August and October, are the first results following a 2024 summer period which featured a serious and extensive mass bleaching event, two cyclones and flooding. The results provide a first look at impacts from these disturbances and found that coral cover has declined on 12 of the 19 reefs surveyed. Visit the AIMS [Reef Dashboard](#) or read more [here](#).

Image: Linnet Reef, Cooktown/Lizard sector, courtesy of AIMS.



Great Barrier Reef Point Source Information Portal

A new [Point Source Information Portal](#) is now publicly available online providing data and information for point source facilities, wastewater management practices and release water for the Great Barrier Reef catchment area. The portal includes detailed information on sewage treatment plants and aquaculture farms and links to project reports that can be downloaded.

Funded through the [Queensland Reef Water Quality Program](#), and developed in collaboration with Griffith University, the portal is a useful tool for understanding and managing point source activities that contribute to nutrient pollution in the Reef catchment.



New animation highlights Traditional Owner aspirations for the Reef

A [new animation](#) has been released by the Reef Traditional Owner Taskforce (ReefTO) and highlights Traditional Owner aspirations and priorities for the Great Barrier Reef under the [Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan](#) (the Implementation Plan).

Released in 2022, the Implementation Plan was developed by Traditional Owners and outlines actions to achieve Traditional Owner aspirations aligning to the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan.

It honours the more than 70 Traditional Owners groups along the Reef coastline who have cared for and continue to care for their Sea Country. You can read more [here](#).

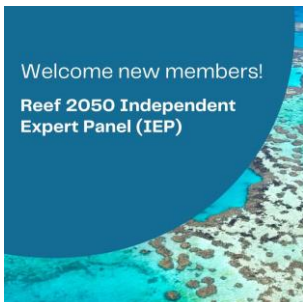


Expressions of Interest sought for Reef 2050 Advisory Committee

Expressions of interest are sought for a Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner (Male) to join the Reef 2050 Advisory Committee. The Reef 2050 Advisory Committee provides advice to the Australian and Queensland Government on strategic policy matters relating to the Great Barrier Reef.

The role will have a particular focus on implementation and ongoing review of the Reef 2050 Plan and the Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan. The position will also provide advice on government and stakeholder partnerships for the delivery of actions in the Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan.

The closing date for applications is **Friday 31 January 2025**. For more information on the role and to apply, visit [EOI for Reef 2050 Advisory Committee](#).



New Reef 2050 Independent Expert Panel members

New members have been appointed to the [Reef 2050 Plan Independent Expert Panel](#) (IEP).

The IEP provides government with scientific and expert advice relating to the Great Barrier Reef. This includes implementation of the Reef 2050 Plan, managing key threats and research needs. The new panel members will advise government on key challenges and opportunities for the Reef over the next five years.

The IEP is chaired by Professor Margaret Sheil AO, who is a highly experienced scientist and adviser. The new members are:

Dr. Katharina Fabricius
Dr. Beth Fulton
Dr. Melissa Walsh
Prof. Karen Vella
Dr. Nathan Waltham

Dr. Cass Hunter
Dr. Tracy Ainsworth
Dr. Christina Howley
Prof. John Rolfe

Producer updates

New grazing program provides tailored support

Six organisations have received funding through the \$6 million Grazing Practice Change Program to support graziers improve their land management practices and build their business resilience, while also reducing soil loss to waterways that flow to the Reef.



Expert advisers will provide graziers with the best available information on soils, climate, pasture and cattle management and work with them to identify activities that help ensure their production base, pasture and soil health is maintained and sustained.

The six organisations are:

- Reef Catchments (Mackay Whitsunday region)
- Burnett Mary Regional Group (Burnett Mary region)
- NQ Dry Tropics (Burdekin region)
- Farmacist (Mackay Whitsunday, Burdekin and Fitzroy regions)
- Resource Consulting Services (Fitzroy region)
- Dawson Catchment Coordinating Association (Fitzroy region).

The Grazing Practice Change Program is funded through the Queensland Government's [Queensland Reef Water Quality Program](#).

Timely fine scale water quality data for landholders

Three new projects, to be delivered by Terrain NRM, James Cook University (Centre for Tropical Water and Aquatic Research) and Farmacist will provide local and timely fine scale water quality data across parts of the Wet Tropics, Lower Herbert and Mackay Whitsunday regions.



The projects are part of the new \$3.24 million [Fine Scale Water Quality Monitoring Program](#) funded through the [Queensland Reef Water Quality Program](#). The program aims to increase understanding among landholders and the community of the link between land management practices and local water quality.

Erosion solution helps grain growers and the Reef

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) recently installed an innovative erosion solution as part of the [Sustainable Grains Practice project](#) funded through the Queensland Government's Queensland Reef Water Quality Program. The solution is trialling two different strategies to address eroding contour bank outlets with a grain farmer near Capella.



Many growers lack suitable rock on their farms to stabilise eroding areas and are seeking alternative materials to use. DPI trialled Texcel® R geofabric sheeting to stabilise a two metres deep incised gully as an alternative to rock. Instead of needing an estimated 50 tonnes, only 15 tonnes of rock was required when the sheeting was used. The installation took four hours with a team of two labourers, one machinery operator, and a soil conservation expert.

Rock chutes are a proven erosion solution, and one was installed at a second site, with a one metre sloping gully head. This site required 20 tonnes of rock and was installed in an hour and a half.

Both methods will be evaluated after the first significant rainfall to assess their effectiveness in controlling erosion.

Image: Deeply incised gully inspected by the farmer and DPI Extension officer, courtesy of DPI.

Project updates

New integrated projects build on 'place-based' legacy

Three new integrated projects in the Wet Tropics, Mackay Whitsunday and Burnett Mary regions will build on the place-based approach of the Wet Tropics and Burdekin Major Integrated Projects.



The new round of projects will be delivered by Terrain NRM, Reef Catchments and the Mary River Catchment Coordination Association respectively in partnership with the private sector and academia. They will include multiple initiatives and will be co-designed by the community and address local needs while improving water quality and delivering other benefits and opportunities for the community and local economy.

The projects are funded through the [Queensland Reef Water Quality Program](#). You can read more [here](#).

Image: Courtesy of Terrain NRM.

Reef Assist projects wrap-up

Three [Reef Assist](#) projects concluded in November after two years of on-ground work:

- Cape York NRM led project: Cape York Remediation and Creation of Indigenous Employment Pathways (\$1.34 million)
- NQ Dry Tropics led project: Healing Country 2.0: Burdekin Water Quality Outcomes through Indigenous Partnerships (\$1.37 million)
- Greening Australia led project: Woorabinda Healing Country and Gully Remediation (\$1.39 million)



All three projects delivered significant results including reduction of sediment run-off, employment of more than 55 individuals, both part-time and casual, and the delivery of 73 training courses ranging from heavy machinery accreditation to vegetation management. The training and hands-on experience these projects provide to participants increases their skills and confidence, boosting their employment prospects.

The \$33.5 million Reef Assist program is funded through the [Queensland Reef Water Quality Program](#).

Best practice treatment systems brings people together

[Treatment systems](#) are increasingly becoming a joint focus to improve Reef health with the recent gathering of a Community of Practice (CoP) bringing people together to discuss best ways to implement treatment systems to improve catchment water quality.



Organised by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI), with field visits hosted by Terrain NRM, it was a great opportunity for CoP members from throughout Queensland and northern New South Wales to meet up.

There were great discussions, and participants particularly enjoyed learning about wetland and bioreactor projects in the wet tropics and networking with people from different regions and organisations while learning about successful nitrogen reduction techniques.

Image: Visiting the new DETSI wetland monitoring site, courtesy of DPI.

Grants and funding

Farmer Group Support funding

Round 3 of DPI's Integrated Engagement and Capacity Building project's farmer peer-to-peer group support funding is now open.

Funding is available from **\$5,000 to \$20,000 (Ex-GST)** to support projects that contribute to:



- **Adoption of Improved Farming Practices:** Encouraging on-farm changes that reduce soil, nutrient, and pesticide run-off, enhance land condition, and maintain farm productivity, profitability, and sustainability.
- **Improved Water Quality:** Supporting efforts to improve the quality of water flowing into the Great Barrier Reef.
- **Building Capacity:** Strengthening the skills, knowledge, and capabilities within the farming community.

Eligible farmer groups can also submit a brief Expression of Interest (EOI) for hosting a Regional Event.

For a copy of the funding guidelines, application form or EOI, email AdminRP84@daf.qld.gov.au

Get involved



Big thanks for your valuable Reef WQIP Review feedback

On behalf of the Reef 2050 WQIP review team we would like to wish you a great finish to 2024 and we look forward to seeing you in 2025.

If you participated in one (or many) of our engagement activities, we would like to say a big thank you for your time and input. We received valuable feedback during our listening phase and we're using this to inform the review of the plan. We've heard a lot of support for revising the plan so that it tells a more integrated and holistic story that recognises the interconnectedness of managing catchments, and supporting communities for a healthy Reef.

The next phase will include a series of activities such as seminars and workshops, to inform everyone on the outcomes of critical inputs, and work through the details of the next plan. Keep an eye out [online](#) and through this enews for more information and registration details.

[Can you guess what's happening on the Reef at the moment? | Facebook](#)

[Shell-ebrating the arrival of the first nesting marine turtles of the season | LinkedIn](#)

Contact us

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



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