



Waterway health prompts action from community and industry

Details of how individuals and groups are taking action in response to this year's Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac Healthy Rivers to Reef Report Card will be made public at an upcoming event.

A launch is being held at Airlie Beach on Wednesday, October 23, for the Stewardship Report 2018, which is a report centred on community and industry response to local waterway health. The event will start at 2pm and will be held on the Jetty at the Coral Sea Marina Resort.

The report includes information about how various industries are addressing the issue of waterway health in the region, including sugar growers, graziers, the tourism sector and the horticulture industry. There is also information on projects led by ports and heavy industry.

Healthy Rivers to Reef Executive Officer Charlie Morgan said: "The 2018 Stewardship Report represents the first time the Partnership has released a stand-alone feature on what both our Partners and local communities are doing to improve waterway health. It is a critical part of what the Mackay-Whitsunday Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership do and is vitally important to communicate alongside the results of the waterway health report card.

"We can see from the report that our local communities value our iconic waterways and are actively involved in maintaining or improving them. This can be seen from marine debris clean-up activities, volunteer work to re-vegetate creek sites and the development of a voluntary recreational fishing code of practice. It is fantastic to see that sense of community stewardship for our region.

"The region's industries work hard to maintain or improve waterway health. This is shown across sectors by employing best environmental management practices, and by working with government and/or research Partners to conduct research and monitoring. An example of this are the cane farmers of the Sandy Creek catchment who have been collecting their own water quality data in collaboration with industry and State Government representatives in order to better understand pesticide losses."

Julie Boyd, Chair of the Mackay-Whitsunday Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership, said: "One important highlight of the 2018 Stewardship report is an update on pledges made by our Partners to celebrate 2018's International Year of the Reef Initiative. It is really encouraging to see updates from Partners, including impressive statistics of some of the actions pledged such as large commitments to reduce single-use plastics across whole companies or Departments, beach clean-up activities, installation of Gross Pollutant Traps, tree planting activities and funding of new environmental programs. These actions create ongoing positive impacts to our iconic waterways here in the Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac region.



“The 2018 Stewardship report highlights the achievements of the Partnership to date in the context of improving both our knowledge of waterway health, and encouraging collaboration between Partners to improve waterway health in the Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac region. Looking forward, there exists a critical need to secure long-term funding for existing monitoring, along with a need to provide finer-scale information to inform management activities. The Partnership would like to see the regional Water Quality Improvement Plan get an update to help provide this finer-scale information to direct Partners' management activities.”

To view full regional waterway health scores, and for more detail, visit the Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership website at www.healthyriverstoreef.org.au

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