

NATURAL STATE

MACKAY WHITSUNDAY ISAAC



The Natural State newsletter articulates how we and our partners and stakeholders team-up across communities, commodities and agencies to deliver to this challenge.

Welcome to the quarterly Natural State newsletter.

Stakeholders and clients will note that this newsletter has changed in focus and actions and will now be released quarterly, providing a higher level of detail relating to the key Reef Catchments natural resource management (NRM) projects being undertaken. Running parallel to this newsletter are a series of other communication vehicles and platforms including the monthly e-newsletter and specific project communication strategies and actions.

Reef Catchments has undergone a significant level of growth in terms of budget and aligned resources and services over the past 4 years. This growth realising an increase in engagement with a broader cross section of the regional community and in the process allowing Reef Catchments to offer a more balanced portfolio of works and actions which are seeking to meet a range of regional community NRM priorities.

Despite this growth the Reef Catchments challenge has not changed – it is about defining, implementing and monitoring more sustainable and innovative use of the regions natural resources. Our challenge lies in how we effectively and efficiently foster community leadership to make changes to more profitable and sustainable practices. Very much our task is about continuous improvement through partnerships and empowerment of the community with which we work.

I hope you find this edition of the Quarterly Natural State newsletter informative and would encourage readers to make contact with our staff should you seek further information.

Rob Cocco

Reef Catchments Chief Executive Officer

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MEET THE TEAM STAFF

Biodiversity, Coasts, Marine and Indigenous

The BCM & I team works on projects to improve biodiversity in the Mackay Whitsunday Isaac region and beyond. Projects include Island Rescue, Bushfire Consortium, Engaging Indigenous Culture and Coasts and Communities.



The people behind Biodiversity, Coasts, Marine and Indigenous:

Left to right:

- Derek Ball, Operations Manager-Biodiversity
- Andrew Houley, Biodiversity Manager
- Kerri Woodcock, Coastal Coordinator
- Noni Zahmel, Project Officer-Coasts

Corporate Services

The Corporate Services team are the cogs in the Reef Catchments machine. Projects include administration, communications, finances, policy and procedure development, governance, and legal services.



The people behind Corporate Services:

First row, left to right:

- Rob Cocco, CEO
- Rod Hall, Corporate Services Manager
- Royce Bishop, Chair-Reef Catchments
- Rachel Clancy, Finance Officer

Second row, left to right:

- Joanne Gibbs, Admin Officer/WH & S Coordinator
- Julie Dews, Receptionist
- Katie Fedosenko, Communications Officer
- Robyn Bell, Special Projects Manager

Land, Water, Waterways and Climate Change

The LWW & C team make up the bulk of Reef Catchments staff. They're committed to sustainable agriculture, healthy waterways, improved water quality and pest and weed management.



The people behind Land, Water, Waterways and Climate Change:

First row, left to right:

- Will Higham, Operations Manager-Land and Water
- Amanda Bland, Grazing Field Officer
- Michael Boyd, Grazing Leadership Officer
- Scott Underdown, Grazing Key Contact Officer

Second row, left to right:

- Sal Gray, Land and Water Coordinator-Healthy Waterways
- Melanie McSwiney, Land and Water Coordinator
- Michelle Field, Land and Water Coordinator-Pests
- Phil Trendell, Sustainable Agriculture Manager

Third row, left to right:

- Chris Dench, Land and Water Coordinator-Agriculture
- Belinda Billing, Paddock To Reef and Reef Rescue-Communications Coordinator
- Milena Gongora, Paddock To Reef GBR-Wide Coordinator
- Christine Peterson, Regional Landcare Facilitator-Whitsunday

Fourth row, left to right:

- Claire Bartron, Regional Landcare Facilitator-Pioneer
- Saskia von Fahland, Regional Landcare Facilitator-Sarina

On 1 July 2011, the long standing Reef Catchments Mackay Whitsunday Inc., an Association, changed to become Reef Catchments (Mackay Whitsunday Isaac) Limited ("Reef Catchments"), a Company, to continue the growth and good works of Reef Catchments in the Mackay Whitsunday Isaac region.

With this change came the transfer of responsibility from the previous Management Committee to a newly formed Board of Directors, being made up of an independent Chair, Royce Bishop, and four sector Directors being Frank Perna (Agriculture), Jennifer Whitney (Local Government), Pierre Viljoen (Community) and Joy Deguara (Business).

The new Board has been initially focused on the transfer of governance and policy from the Association to the Company, reviewing all associated documentation, including the new logo, and filing for ongoing Company records.

Because of the importance of governance under the new company structure, the Directors have also been involved in training, covering regulatory, team building and personal dynamics, so that they can deliver the best professional results for Reef Catchments (Mackay Whitsunday Isaac) Limited.

As Government funding is currently only contractually available to 30 June 2013, the Board is also looking at other mechanisms for continuance of business in general for Reef Catchments (Mackay Whitsunday Isaac) Limited, with less reliance on Government funds. As part of this work, the Board will develop a risk management plan and a continuity plan.

Current Board Members:

First row, left to right:

- **Royce Bishop**, Chair
- **Frank Perna**, Agriculture Director
- **Joy Deguara**, Business Director

Second row, left to right:

- **Dr Pierre Viljoen**, Community Director
- **Jennifer Whitney**, Local Government Director
- **Robert Cocco**, CEO
- **Rod Hall**, Secretary





BUSHFIRE CONSORTIUM

UPDATE FROM ANDREW HOULEY, BIODIVERSITY MANAGER

PROJECT UPDATES

The bushfire project is progressing well, working with 30 Rural Fire Brigades to exceed original targets. Recent achievements include six new brigades introduced to the project and updates of the fire history maps for the eight brigades from 2011 to reflect the 2010 fire season.

Engagement with the previous 16 brigades continues and the project has matured to the point where Brigade Officers or major landowners will call into the Reef Catchments Office to update our data sets for smaller fires or new fire breaks.

Recently, the project team released the Cape York Peninsula Fire Management Guidelines

which contain 15 landscape schedules. The guidelines were developed in consultation with Cape York-based scientists and land managers across a range of land tenures. Reef Catchments staff conducted a 10 day promotion and extension trip across Cape York in October 2011 to deliver the guidelines and engage with a range of grazing and Indigenous communities for feedback on the guidelines.

Thematic tools for controlling Lantana (*Lantana camara*) and Rubber Vine (*Cryptostegia grandiflora*) with fire have also just been released. These guides have created strong interest and discussion amongst fire practitioners and landholders. Development of these tools has extended the Bushfire Consortium networks to include a range of scientists and researchers from Biosecurity Queensland. A guideline has also been

developed for using fire in an appropriate way for the EPBC listed species, Northern Quoll (*Dasyurus hallucatus*) habitats. This guideline has been developed in partnership with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service as part of a monitoring program of fire management and the impacts of fire on Northern Quolls in protected lands in the Clarke-Connors range.

The Bushfire Consortium is currently reviewing the existing Clarke-Connors Range fire guidelines for the Mackay area for a second edition. We will incorporate the Regional Ecosystem numbering in each landscape, and rearrange the format so the photo and text are together. If you have any additions or ideas for version two please call [Andy Houley](#) on 4968 4206, 0400 256 803 or an email: andrew.houley@reefcatchments.com.au



COASTS AND COMMUNITIES

UPDATE FROM KERRI WOODCOCK, COASTAL COORDINATOR

The Mackay Coasts and Communities program continues to deliver significant outcomes for improved coastal management in the region. The 2012 program of Coastal Community Activities has already seen over 40 coastal volunteers attend events at Ball Bay, Halliday Bay, Shoal Point and Bucasia. Through these events hundreds of native seedlings have been planted and many more weeded, fertilised and watered by these dedicated volunteers. The work being done will stabilise the sand dunes, replace invasive weeds, and help to protect critically endangered coastal vegetation.



These activities compliment the suite of high priority on-ground coastal projects that are currently being implemented across the region in partnership with Mackay Regional Council. In order to select which activities will be implemented, management activities recommended in the local beach plans are prioritised using existing scientific data sets. Prioritisation includes a multitude of factors such as current and potential natural environment values of an area, the cost-effectiveness of proposed activities, biodiversity status of existing vegetation, and current threats to the coastal area.

Examples of priority projects currently underway in early 2012 include weed control along the Shoal Point and northern Bucasia dunes, fencing and rehabilitation of coastal vegetation at Ball Bay, and weed control in the Slade Point coastal wetlands and Blacks Beach Reserve. These projects are largely being undertaken by specialist weed and revegetation contractors and Council staff.

The development of local beach management plans which recommend and prioritise on-ground activities has been a key factor in mobilising resources and community volunteers to improve coastal management in the region. Monitoring the on-ground changes and outcomes at these sites will play an important role in directing future coastal projects.



The Mackay Coasts and Communities program is a joint initiative of Reef Catchments and Mackay Regional Council with funding through the Australian Government's Caring for Our Country program and the Mackay Regional Councils Natural Environment Levy.



ISLAND RESCUE

UPDATE FROM DEREK BALL, OPERATIONS MANAGER-BIODIVERSITY

Australia has custodianship of arguably the most diverse island landscapes of any country. Of its 8600 islands, most support Matters of National Environmental Significance and protect almost one third of Australia's threatened animals.

Without islands, Australia's already deplorable extinction record would be much worse. Importantly interventions such as eradications of invasive animals are possible on islands, and thus further extinctions can be avoided. Islands support over \$13 billion dollars of eco-tourism revenue annually. Despite their critical conservation, economic and thus social values, there is no nationally focused investment efforts on islands.

The Alliance for the conservation of biological diversity on Australian Islands is a large and growing coalition of Government and non-Government organisations, investors and individuals. The Alliance was formalised in 2012 during a summit meeting subsequent to the Island Arks Symposium II, Australia's only national island management meeting. The alliance was created to improve collaboration and co-ordination amongst island managers, enhance the conservation of biodiversity on Australian islands, and to develop 'Island Rescue' – "A plan for the conservation and sustainable use of Australia's islands."

ENGAGING INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

UPDATE FROM DEREK BALL, OPERATIONS MANAGER-BIODIVERSITY

The central Queensland coast Indigenous Protected Areas program aims to support Traditional Owners to be involved in management decisions made for coastal and island National Parks within the region. Indigenous Australians have managed their country for tens of thousands of years. An Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) is an area of land or sea over which Traditional Owners have entered into an agreement with the Governments to promote biodiversity and cultural resource conservation.

The central Queensland coast initiative provides support for Traditional owners to develop cooperative management arrangements with State or Territory conservation agencies over National Parks or other protected areas.

This assists Indigenous parties in identifying management issues and negotiating a decision-making framework to enable co-management arrangements. These arrangements allow for; decision making and governance structures, identifying management issues requiring special attention and building a process for appropriately interpreting features of a protected area.



REEF RESCUE

UPDATE FROM CHRIS DENCH, LAND AND WATER COORDINATOR-AGRICULTURE AND MICHAEL BOYD, GRAZING LEADERSHIP OFFICER

After nearly four years of Reef Rescue funding, adoption across the eligible industries for the region has been high. Graziers together with cane and horticultural producers have been keen to get on board and receive funding for projects that will improve the environmental sustainability of their business.

Reef Rescue is the Federal Governments \$200M Caring for our Country project which aims to improve the water quality leaving agricultural land along the Great Barrier Reef catchments.

All eligible projects have been offered an incentive which can be up to 50% of the total project cost. To date over 640 cane farmers have accessed Reef Rescue funding in the Mackay Whitsunday region with many developing a second or third project. Over 170 graziers and 16 horticultural producers have also been involved, again with many developing a second or third project.

Eligible activities fall into four categories: soil, chemical, nutrient and irrigation/stormwater management. Common activities for cane include fitting double disk openers to an existing stool splitter to apply fertiliser sub

surface and fitting shielded spray hoods to reduce the use of residual chemicals. While in grazing, fencing is a common activity to prevent stock from entering water ways.

With the fifth and final year about to start in July, Reef Catchments is looking to work with 150 new cane growers, 75 new graziers and another 5 horticulturalists.



PADDOCK TO REEF

UPDATE FROM BELINDA BILLING, PADDOCK TO REEF AND REEF RESCUE COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR, AND MILENA GONGORA, PADDOCK TO REEF GBR-WIDE COORDINATOR

For three years Reef Catchments has been exploring the benefits of best management farming practices through the Paddock To Reef program.

The program involves local cane farmers, DERM, Mackay Area Productivity Services, DEEDI and, CSIRO to validate the water quality, productivity and profitability benefits of a range of improved ways to grow sugarcane.

What is Paddock To Reef?

The Paddock To Reef program monitors individual farm trial sites as well as agricultural catchments to determine the effectiveness of various management practices for sugarcane, grazing and horticulture. The program is funded by the Federal and State Governments with the overall aim of enabling measurement of progress towards the Government's Reef Plan targets. Paddock To Reef is being run in the Wet Tropics, Burdekin, Fitzroy, Burnett Mary and Mackay Whitsunday regions.

Reef Catchments' role in the program focuses on sugarcane. We test runoff at farm and stream level. This water quality data is combined with



productivity and economic information collected over the duration of the trial such as the costs of inputs which are compared with the resulting yield. This helps to determine which management practices are most practical for farmers both economically and environmentally.

The program also runs a modelling component, which takes advantage of decades worth of research and data to model the water quality and productivity of different levels of various farm management practices for the Mackay Whitsunday region.

Synthesising our data

The Paddock To Reef program recently ran a synthesis process, bringing together the data accumulated from our paddock monitoring sites with the regionally specific modelled outcomes of A B C and D management practices. The process involved inviting local sugarcane experts to review and ground truth the modelling and monitoring data. The group then came up with a series of statements that represent the agreed water quality and productivity benefits

of moving from D through to A management practices.

These statements will be taken to the Regional Cane Working group to gain a deeper level of industry approval and will then form the basis of a range of information/education products that will be developed in conjunction with extension staff.

The process has been undertaken across the Great Barrier Reef region for sugarcane, horticulture and grazing. The results will be brought together in a Reef-wide synthesis process.

A GBR-wide analysis will soon be conducted to gain insights into the impact of management practices for this industry on water quality at a GBR-wide scale, and conversely, to identify attributes that are region-specific. Recent findings from rainfall simulation of the Paddock To Reef program will also add to this knowledge. The GBR-wide analysis will also be an opportunity for regional bodies and industry

experts to discuss the best ways of using this data for their regional investment priorities.

ABCD Framework

- A – Innovative/cutting edge
- B – Best management practices
- C – Current/conventional
- D – Out dated



PROJECT CATALYST

UPDATE FROM PHIL TRENDELL, SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE MANAGER

It has continued to be a busy time for everyone involved in the delivery of Project Catalyst, an initiative focused on innovation in cane farming to support improved water quality for the Great Barrier Reef. Our fellow NRM groups from the north, NQ Dry Tropics and Terrain, are supporting 20 new growers to become involved in the project. With this addition, the number of growers involved in Project Catalyst has grown to 73, which includes 33 from the Mackay Whitsunday and Isaac region. These growers combined manage over 18000 hectares of cane. The management practices they are implementing are helping to improve the water quality reaching the reef.

In December 2011, Gerry Deguara, a Project Catalyst grower from the North Eton near Mackay, was lucky enough to be able to represent Project Catalyst in the development of a video and TV commercial with the support of Rob Cairns from WWF and Michelle Allen from Coca-Cola South Pacific. Gerry survived the week with the film crew and it culminated in the crew joining us at a field trip to visit Scott Simpson's skip row trials near Bloomsbury and a group BBQ and discussion afterwards.

In late Feb 2012, the third Project Catalyst Grower Forum was held in Townsville. The forum kicked off with a great welcome function at Reef HQ where everyone could catch up and meet all of the new people involved in the Project. The Forum included presentations from plenty of growers their innovation focus activities as well as presentations from a range of project partners such as DEEDI, Farmacist and the Paddock To Reef team. It was great to see plenty of the wives, sons and brothers of the Project Catalyst growers attend as well to find out what it is all about and they are definitely a

big part of the project and support the growers we work with.

A field trip to visit farms in the Burdekin was included as part of the Forum and the photo shows all who attended standing in front of and on top of David Cox's 3-row controlled traffic minimum till planter. As they say, it is bigger in the Burdekin! I would like to thank Coca-Cola South Pacific, Bayer Science and Netafim for sponsoring the Forum and contributing to the success of the 3 days.





PEST AND WEED MANAGEMENT

UPDATE FROM MICHELLE FIELD, LAND AND WATER COORDINATOR-PESTS

Pest Management has been quite eventful over the last few months with successes occurring across our major projects.

In January, the Regional Pest Management Strategy (Isaac Mackay Whitsunday) 2011-2014 was printed and handed out to a number of key stakeholders involved with the Mackay Regional Pest Management Group.

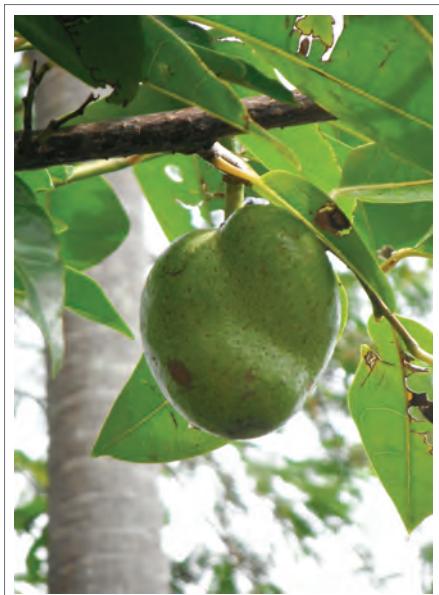
This strategy has been designed to assist with the identification of priority pests found within the landuses of grazing, intensive agriculture, urban transport corridors and disturbed verges. The Strategy also helps Mackay Regional Pest Management with the prioritisation of key pest management projects.

One of the key pest management projects is the eradication of Pond Apple (pictured) from the Reliance Creek catchment. To date this project has been a huge success with all known trees, except one controlled. During our third round of monitoring in March 2012 only two stumps out of the 80 mature trees controlled were partially alive which is a significant decrease compared to the 15 found alive and reshooting during the first round of monitoring in mid-2011.

One issue and ongoing problem was thought to be the large number of seedlings present within the lower part of the infestation. These seedlings were controlled by hand pulling and chemicals. Results from ongoing monitoring have shown a significant decrease in the number of seedlings present from 50-100 late last year to 1 found in March this year.

Extensive surveys have been carried out to ensure that Pond Apple has not impacted the Reliance Creek Mangrove System and surrounding areas. There is one other infestation that has been found at Andergrove and we will be assessing this site and controlling Pond Apple there later this year.

Reef Catchments was awarded \$150,000 over two years through the Caring for our Country Program to continue the eradication of *Mimosa pigra* from Central Queensland. As a result *Mimosa pigra* surveys at the Peter Faust Dam (Lake Proserpine) have continued, with no *Mimosa pigra* found. Surveys have also been carried out below the dam wall along the Proserpine River to the salt water landing to ensure that no seed escaped the impoundment during the period when the dam overflowed.



As a result of this project surveys are expected to be carried out at other water impoundments in Central Queensland to ensure that this weed has not spread.

In terms of feral pigs, a landholder workshop was held in Koumala on 4 April during which landholders discussed and mapped the best placement for traps throughout the Rocky Dam Creek Catchment. We will also go through tips for trapping and baiting. A framework for a best practice manual for landholders involved with this program will also be discussed.



HEALTHY WATERWAYS

UPDATE FROM SAL GRAY, LAND AND WATER COORDINATOR-HEALTHY WATERWAYS

River Restoration

O'Connell River – Streambank Stability Demonstration Reach

An innovative partnership program, the O'Connell River project is bringing together a diverse network of stakeholders that includes Queensland Government, Caring for our Country, Rio Tinto's Hail Creek Mine Community Development Fund, Pioneer River Improvement Trust, Griffith University and community land managers. Ultimately the project will determine the structural effectiveness and cost benefit of Engineered Log Jams (ELJ's) as a solution to streambank instability and their contribution to ecology of high velocity tropical streams.

DERM biologists have started the second round of larval fish community monitoring that



includes bed and bank surveying. First round monitoring was completed in December 2011. This information will provide the baseline data for the research project around ELJ's.

Reef Catchments and DERM together with the O'Connell River community have almost completed sourcing the large timbers needed to construct the four ELJ structures in the demonstration reach. Recycled timbers will be transported to the site from the local area after the wet season.

Community engagement continues throughout the catchment. Reef Catchments will be connecting with all property owners with land adjoining the river to extend an invitation to participate in the 'Collaborating Across Boundaries' project. The project identifies landholder's expectations, willingness to participate in natural resource management objectives, land use type and condition to assist in the prioritisation conservation planning, and landscape restoration.

Gregory River Restoration

Reef Catchments 'weed and healthy waterways' teams, Whitsunday Regional Council, and Gregory River land managers are working on weed mapping and weed control prioritisation in the catchment.

Whitsunday Regional Council has everything in place to remove the final barrier to fish migration in the lower reach of the Gregory River. Reef Catchments and DEEDI/DPI removed the upper reach barrier on Patullo Road. Plans are underway to survey the fish species in the river after the final barrier removal.

Waterhole monitoring packages have been distributed to the five landholders who have volunteered to take part in this innovative project. Landholders will record waterhole levels that are under the influence of extraction for irrigation. By recording the changes to habitat and refugia, the project aims to develop community knowledge about water use and waterhole persistence.

Healthy Waterways Symposium

13-15 June | CQ University | Mackay



The Healthy Waterways Symposium brings together regional community, industry and government to celebrate achievements and work towards protecting the Mackay Whitsunday Isaac catchments.

Key presentations include breaking news on blue green algae research, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Monitoring Program, cutting edge water quality practices for sustainable agriculture and Landcare successes in taking water quality programs to the community. Dr Siwan Lovett, the featured keynote speaker, will share her expertise in science communication for river and waterway management.

A major highlight will be the announcement

of the inaugural Mackay Whitsunday Isaac Healthy Waterways Alliance Award winner at the symposium celebration dinner. Four award categories; Community, Business, Urban and Rural Industry give everyone the opportunity to enter for \$500 cash prize in each category.

The Mackay Whitsunday Isaac Healthy Waterways Symposium is open to everyone to participate; \$110 for full delegate or \$95 for non-profits and includes the Symposium and Awards Dinner at the Central Queensland Conservatorium of Music.

Water Quality Improvement Plan

As part of the process toward the review of the regional Water Quality Improvement Plan, Reef



Catchments and DERM facilitated the Mackay Technical Workshop for Queensland Ground Water Dependent Ecosystem (GDE) Mapping Project (pictured above). Mackay Whitsunday is the first Queensland region to begin the process of mapping high environmental value GDE's.

The Queensland Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDE) Mapping Project will deliver a mapping method as well as digital GDE maps over priority areas in Queensland. The project is an initiative of Australian Government Water Commission and Queensland Government.

New Staff

Melanie McSwiney came on board as the Healthy Waterways Project Officer. Melanie will be supporting the delivery of on ground river restoration and water quality programs, community consultation as well as the coordination of the Healthy Waterways Alliance activities.



CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE PLAN

UPDATE FROM ROBYN BELL, SPECIAL PROJECT MANAGER

The Federal Government has committed \$1.7 billion over the next six years to a number of land sector initiatives as a part of the Clean Energy Future Plan aiming to increase the amount of carbon stored in the landscape and reducing greenhouse emissions. Programs that provide opportunities for protecting biodiversity, reducing emissions and improving agricultural productivity are:

Biodiversity Fund

The first round of this program closed in early February 2012. Investment areas are focussing on the expansion of native habitat on private land and restoring connectivity in the landscape, management activities that enhance the functional integrity of native vegetation adjacent to key assets such as World Heritage Areas and controlling invasive weed and pest species.

Regional NRM Planning for Climate Change Fund

Funding is in place for regional NRM groups to review and update existing NRM plans, incorporating the potential impacts of climate change. The revised Plan will be required to determine where biosequestration projects should be located within the landscape to maximise outcomes for biodiversity, water and agricultural production. Work already undertaken by Reef Catchments has shown different climatic zones exist within the region. Further modelling of climate change scenarios will need to be refined to determine impacts on natural assets for each of these zones.

Carbon Farming Initiative

This program allows farmers and land managers to participate in carbon markets by earning carbon credits for storing carbon or by reducing emissions on the land. Current eligible activities relevant to the region include projects that avoid emissions of methane from livestock, methane or nitrous oxide from burning of cane residues and soils and projects that remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere (eg tree plantings). The majority of the other funding

programs in the land sector initiatives are geared towards enabling land managers to participate in the CFI.

Carbon Farming Futures

This program includes a number of measures to test the applicability of emission reduction techniques and technologies in real farming situations and land manager's access to information. The first round of [Filling the Research Gap](#) and [Action on the Ground](#) closed early February 2012 with priorities respectively for research into new technologies for reducing agricultural emissions and storing soil carbon and testing of research findings. [Extension and Outreach](#) aims to ensure technical and up-to-date information is provided to those land managers about the Carbon Farming Futures Program and participation in the Carbon Farming Initiative with funding rounds yet to be announced.

Reef Catchments is working on a range of projects for our region to take advantage of these initiatives, improve the resilience of our natural assets and be better prepared to meet the challenge of increased climate variability.

REEF CATCHMENTS PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

Established in 2011, the Reef Catchments Partnership Committee (RCPC) will support Reef Catchments in the identification and implementation of initiatives, which increases community capacity to accelerate enhanced management of the landscape. The RCPC strives for the delivery of functional natural systems which offer ecosystem benefit, scenic amenity value, resource use sustainability, and viable communities.

"The RCPC is the community's conduit into the Reef Catchments Board," said Chairman Royce Bishop. "Through the Partnership Committee, Reef Catchments can stay abreast with the natural resource management needs of the community."

In the coming months, the Partnership Committee will make recommendations on the Regional NRM Plan that is being updated by Reef Catchments. In the meantime, the RCPC is seeking new members and having their first meeting in the next eight weeks.

The Partnership Committee operates as a sub-committee which reports to the Reef Catchments Board. They meet four times per year.

Vision:

To found a key regional strategic stakeholder partnership that facilitates enhanced landscape health by bringing together the community, with science, policy, data, and actionable knowledge to achieve best practice stewardship of the natural environment.

Current Members:

- Caitlin Davies, Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA)
- Dave Hunter, Pioneer Catchment and Landcare (PCL)
- David George, Central Queensland Forestry Assoc (CQFA)
- Diane Clarke, Mackay & District Turtle Watch Assoc Inc
- John Grimes, DEEDI
- Joy Deguara, Regional Development Australia (RDA)
- Judith Wake, CQ University Australia (CQU)
- Katrina Clarke, Dept of Local Government and Planning
- Nick Kenyon, Sarina Landcare Catchment Management Assoc (SLCMA)
- Rod Sercombe, Mackay Sand and Gravel Sales
- Ross Walker, Mackay Regional Council
- Tony Hinschen, Whitsunday Catchment Landcare Inc (WCL)
- Tony Jeppesen, O'Connell Catchment Precision Services Pty Ltd (OCPS)



ECONOMIC REVIEW OF REEF CATCHMENTS 2007-2012

UPDATE FROM ROD HALL, CORPORATE SERVICES MANAGER

FIGURES AND NUMBERS

On 1 July 2011 Reef Catchments Mackay Whitsunday Inc., which had been operating under this name since 2007, became Reef Catchments (Mackay Whitsunday Isaac) Limited ("Reef Catchments") a Limited Company, being limited by Guarantee.

From 2007 until present day, Reef Catchments has been delivering continued and highly acclaimed Natural Resource Management (NRM) outcomes for the Mackay, Whitsunday, and Isaac Regions.

The table below shows actual income figures for the years 2007/8 to 2010/11 and budget projections for 2011/12 to 2012/13, which illustrates the enormous growth that has occurred for Reef Catchments over the last six years.

The money which Reef Catchments receives is distributed via "back to back" contracts, to stakeholders, landowners, and other NRM partners to perform the required "on ground" activities. This distribution system allows Reef Catchments to provide the desired outcomes to the funding bodies.

Reef Catchments has developed a work model that includes a small, dedicated team of direct staff and engaged NRM stakeholders, partners, and businesses to deliver the desired outcomes indicated by funding bodies. Reef Catchments staff work closely with stakeholders, partners, and businesses to provide support and guidance. This model ensures the most cost effective and efficient method of delivering the outcomes as required by the various Government and Commercial funding bodies.

Commercial operations have recognised the Intellectual Property (IP) and skills that Reef Catchments has to offer, not only within its region but also globally. As such, it has been decided that by 1 July 2013 a commercially focused company fully owned by Reef Catchments will be established, allowing members to see the direct income streams from both continued Government funds and also Commercial partnerships.

Actual and Budget Income Projections – Reef Catchments

Financial KPIs	2007/08 (Actual)	2008/09 (Actual)	2009/10 (Actual)	2010/11 (Actual)	2011/12 (Budget)	2012/13 (Budget)
Revenue						
Regional Investment Strategy (State and Commonwealth)	\$1,838,043	\$1,805,000	\$2,308,719	\$1,798,082	\$2,347,620	\$2,582,382
Commonwealth Grants	\$1,354,795	\$5,824,370	\$8,560,911	\$7,663,687	\$10,378,000	\$11,415,800
Commercial Service Delivery	\$803,440	\$817,582	\$1,181,755	\$833,364	\$1,513,000	\$1,664,300
Financial Management/Provisions	\$763,852	\$295,938	\$1,136,889	\$164,629	\$301,000	\$331,100
TOTAL	\$4,760,130	\$8,742,890	\$13,188,274	\$10,459,762	\$14,539,620	\$15,993,582

GET INVOLVED

REEF CATCHMENTS PUBLIC FUND

Reef Catchments Public Fund invites individuals and organisations to donate to our Public Fund and support its continued success in the Mackay Whitsunday Isaac region.

Reef Catchments (Mackay Whitsunday Isaac) Limited is funded by Government and Commercial partnership arrangements to deliver on major environment and natural asset protection projects, however these larger funded projects mean that the small grants initiatives are often overlooked.

The Reef Catchments Public Fund was established in 2008 to provide a key community service role in relation to sustaining natural assets and for general engagement of

the local and wider community in these smaller grants initiatives.

Fully tax deductible donations to the fund can start at \$2, with all donations going directly to supporting local community projects, with examples being:

- a. Rehabilitation of areas of high environmental value, and
- b. cleaning up beaches and wetlands within our region

Reef Catchments is committed to supporting the Mackay Whitsunday Isaac region and encourages everyone to consider the opportunities that their Public Fund provides.

Each year applicant projects are selected on the value of environmental benefits they will

provide and their alignment with the Reef Catchments (Mackay Whitsunday Isaac) Limited Management Plan.

The Public Fund has provided support to projects that do not attract government funding, but are identified as important issues for the region, and which are also projects that provide a valuable educational resource for the community.

You are invited to contact **Reef Catchments Public Fund** either by telephoning 4968 4200, email to rod.hall@reefcatchments.com.au or via the website www.reefcatchmentspublicfund.com.au

COASTAL COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

More than twenty volunteers from Shoal Point and Bucasia attended Coastal Community Activities on March 24 to improve the condition of their local beach.

Over one hundred native seedlings were planted and the surrounding area weeded during the two working bees. This was a great effort on behalf of the community and will stabilise the dunes, replace invasive weeds, and help to protect the critically endangered coastal vegetation.

Coastal Community Activities are designed to help the local community learn about coastal processes and make a meaningful contribution

to coastal management initiatives. They are also a great way to meet your neighbours and the staff that work on our beaches, and have some fun. A free sausage sizzle was enjoyed by the volunteers at Shoal Point following the working bee.

The Coasts and Communities program is working towards reducing the major threats to coastal ecosystems, such as inappropriate recreational use, weed invasions, and vegetation clearing; to improve the condition and build the resilience of these natural systems into the future.

Download a copy of the [March to May 2012](#)

calendar on Mackay Regional Council website. Alternatively, contact **Noni Zahmel** at noni.zahmel@reefcatchments.com.au or 4968 4215.

Join us on the Reef Catchments Facebook page to receive regular updates on coastal activities.

Mackay Coastal Community Activities are an initiative under The Coasts and Communities Project, which is supported by Mackay Regional Council and Reef Catchments through the Natural Environment Levy and Australian Government's Caring for our Country program.

HEALTHY WATERWAYS SYMPOSIUM

13-15 JUNE, CQ UNIVERSITY, MACKAY.

The Healthy Waterways Symposium brings together regional community members, industry professionals, and government to share ideas and work towards protecting the Mackay Whitsunday catchments. Collaborative learning workshops, presentations and field trips are included in the Symposium.

The Symposium celebrates initiatives that

have already helped create resilient waterways and ecosystems for the Mackay Whitsunday region. A major program highlight will be the announcement of the first Mackay Whitsunday Isaac Healthy Waterways Alliance Award winners at the Symposium celebration dinner.

To register for one or more days of the Symposium or submit a nomination form for the Awards, please contact [Sal Gray](mailto:sally.gray@reefcatchments.com.au) at sally.gray@reefcatchments.com.au.

KEEP IN TOUCH

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