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## ECO BARGE FOCUSES ON THE PREVENTION OF LOCAL MARINE DEBRIS

**Thanks to Reef Catchments, land-based litter will again be removed through the Clean Streets and Creeks Program that targets rubbish on the streets, creeks and foreshore areas of Airlie Beach.**

After many requests from the community, and through the support of Reef Catchments, Eco Barge has re-launched the Clean Streets and Creeks Program to remove land-based litter before it washes or blows into the marine environment.

Libby Edge, Founding Chair of Eco Barge Clean Seas said “marine debris has so many horrible impacts for marine life, including ingestion and entanglement, and while Eco Barge and our volunteers are committed to removing marine debris through the Whitsunday Marine Debris Removal Program, the most effective way to reduce the impacts of marine debris is to prevent it ever entering the marine environment. The Clean Streets and Creeks clean-ups are therefore an important program to ensure that our precious marine life is not being impacted by local rubbish.”

Each of the Clean Streets and Creeks clean-ups will focus on removing land-based litter from pre-determined streets, creeks and foreshore areas for a maximum of two hours. The Program was launched earlier this month, with 75 community volunteers participating to date, and all expectations being exceeded with 916 kilograms of litter being collected in only six clean-ups.

Kerri Woodcock, Reef Catchments Coastal Systems Program Leader said “this is an unbelievable amount of rubbish, that could otherwise have ended up in our ocean and marine ecosystem. It is estimated that up to 80 percent of all marine debris has actually originated from land-based sources. Prevention activities such as the Clean Streets and Creeks Program are vital to promote an understanding of how our actions on land can impact the marine environment.”

Two clean-ups will be undertaken on the following dates in March – Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March and Sunday 15<sup>th</sup>. Following this, clean-ups will occur on the first Wednesday and the third Sunday of every month until November.

These clean-ups are a great way for time-restricted volunteers to get involved as this activity requires only a few hours of time. It is also a great opportunity to have children of any ages involved in the proactive prevention of marine debris.

This project is supported by Reef Catchments, through funding from the Australian Government Reef Programme.

To find out more about the Clean Streets and Creeks clean-ups or the other programs and activities of Eco Barge Clean Seas visit [www.ecobargecleanseas.org.au](http://www.ecobargecleanseas.org.au)

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