

FY2026 Impact Report

40

active projects

\$11.3m

invested in the region

124

community events

264

volunteered hours by
community members

62

landholders with active
projects in region

4822

tonnes of sediment
diverted from GBR

62.3

kilometres of fencing
installed

14.2

kilometres of streambank
protected

43,349

native trees and shrubs
planted

184

local students
participated in Healthy
River to Reef STEMS
Program

220

marine water samples
collected through Project
Blueprint

FY2026 at a Glance

CEO Message

When I reflect on the past year, what stands out most is the real and lasting impact of our work, improving environments, supporting communities and creating benefits that will be felt across our region for years to come.

This year marks a new approach for Reef Catchments. Rather than producing a traditional Annual Report focused on activities and outputs, we have chosen to publish our first Impact Report. The reason is simple: we believe the most important story is what changed because of our work. This Report looks beyond project numbers to explore the environmental, community and regional benefits created through collective action.

From the paddocks and wetlands of the valleys to the rivers, coastline and Great Barrier Reef, local people have come together to create positive change. Landholders have adopted new practices, communities have volunteered their time, students have explored environmental science, and partners have invested in shared solutions.

The impact captured in this Report belongs to many hands. It can be seen in protected waterways, restored landscapes, stronger connections between people and place, and a growing commitment to caring for the natural assets that sustain our communities and industries.

Thank you for being part of that journey. This Report shows what is possible when communities, partners and organisations work together towards a shared vision for the future.

Kind regards

Katrina Dent



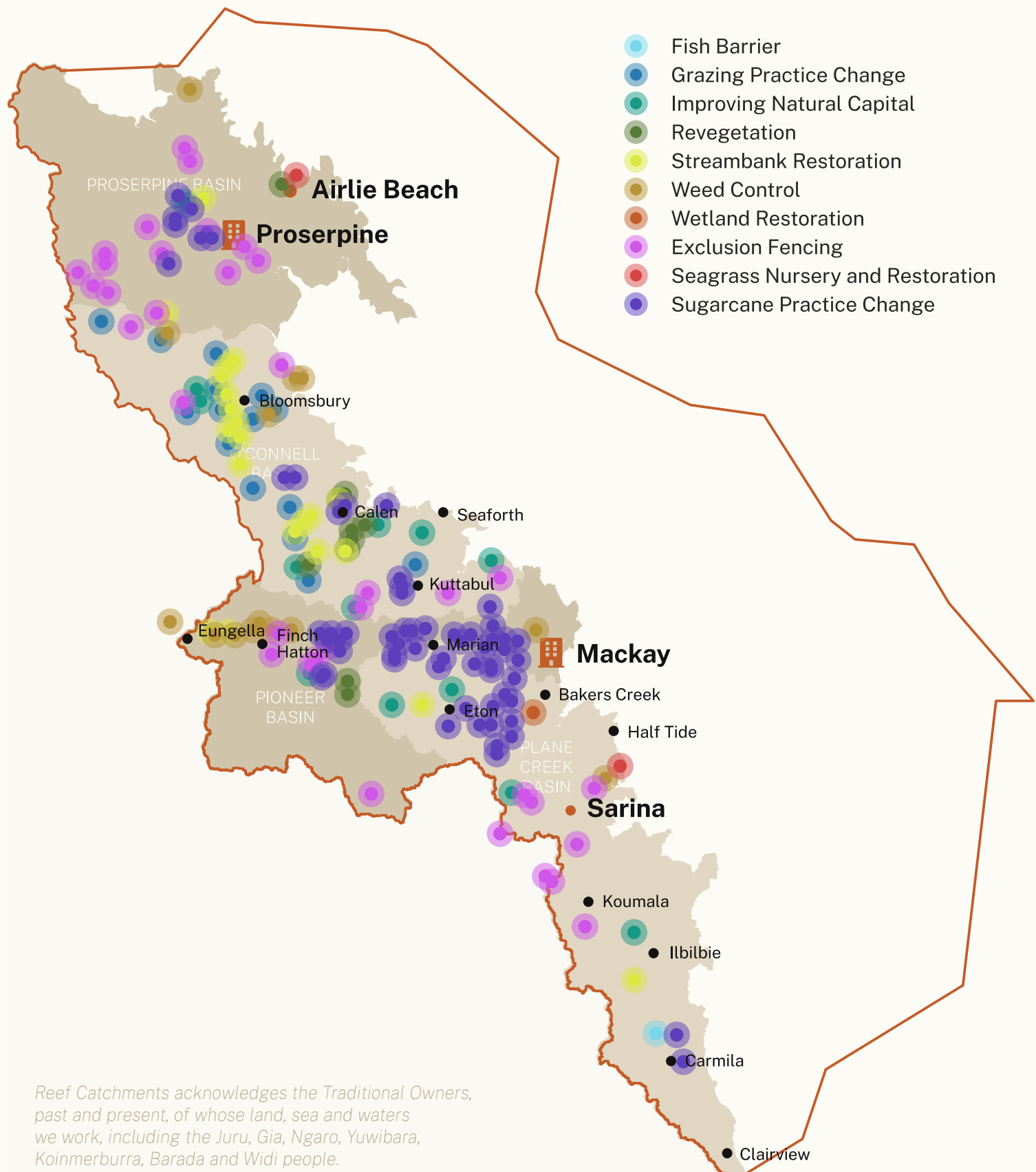
"Since stepping into the Chair role this year, I've seen first-hand the calibre of work reflected in this report. I am grateful to former Chair Julie Boyd for her outstanding leadership and unwavering commitment to Reef Catchments, leaving a legacy that continues to shape the organisation and guide its future direction. Reef Catchments' impact is built on genuine partnerships with landholders, communities and industry, and I'm proud to help carry that legacy forward."

-Craig Doyle, Reef Catchments Chair



Regional Impact Map

Key project locations across the Mackay Whitsunday Isaac region.



Reef Catchments acknowledges the Traditional Owners, past and present, of whose land, sea and waters we work, including the Juru, Gia, Ngaro, Yuwibara, Koinmerburra, Barada and Widi people.

Environmental Impact

Protecting land, creek and rainforest

For third generation Mt Ossa farmers Peter and Nancy Baretta, erosion of their Murray Creek property had become an increasingly concerning problem since 2015. Each wet season and subsequent flood was putting more pressure on sections of the creek bank, threatening productive farmland and an endangered rainforest area on their property.

Through the O'Connell Streambank Remediation Program and Landscape Repair Program, Reef Catchments worked with Peter and Nancy to tackle some of the worst affected areas. The work included installing timber pile fields and rootball logs to slow water and help stabilise the creek bank, along with revegetation, streambank fencing and off-stream watering points.

While making it easier for Peter and Nancy to manage their property, most importantly these improvements reduce erosion and sediment loss, protect productive land and remove stock access to vulnerable areas along Murray Creek.

For Peter and Nancy, having Reef Catchments involved ensured significant works were completed that otherwise would have been difficult to undertake themselves, while ensuring the solutions worked for both the farm and the environment.

Most importantly, the works did their job when tested during several floods in the 2025-26 wet season, showing they are making a real difference.



"Since the works on our property were completed in August 2025, we've had three reasonable floods and two good floods. We've got six to seven kilometres of creek, and you get a lot of water flow quickly against your banks. Sometimes it just gets away from you. You're losing ground, you're losing pastures, and you're losing production. What they've done here, the amount it's saved is phenomenal."

"This area is home to so much wildlife - quolls, platypus, turtles, Ulysses butterflies - and you don't want to lose that. Protecting the banks means protecting that habitat."

"Working with Reef Catchments isn't about them telling us what we can and can't do. We see them as a partner who helps us make positive changes on the farm. We all bring different skills and knowledge to the table, and we work through practical solutions together." - Peter Baretta.

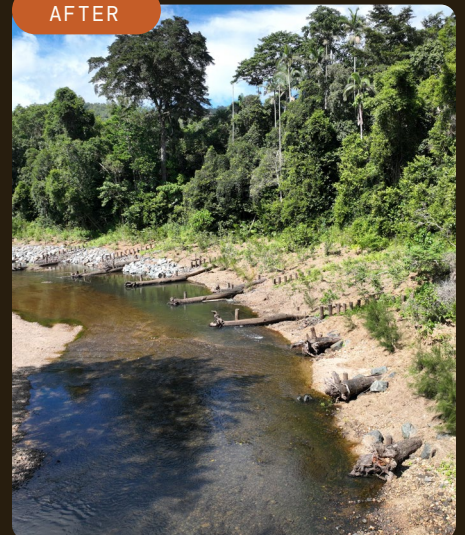
BEFORE



DURING



AFTER





Partnerships and looking ahead

Women building skills, confidence and capability

Reef Catchment's Women in Agriculture peer-to-peer group began with a simple idea: create meaningful connections between women involved in agriculture and provide opportunities to share knowledge, learn from one another and collaborate.

The bovine pregnancy testing workshop held in Ilbilbie was a practical example of that idea in action.

In November 2025, 12 women from across the region came together to strengthen their cattle management skills through two days of theory, hands-on learning and knowledge sharing. Participants learned how to assess pregnancy status and body condition across more than 100 cows, under the guidance of local veterinarian Dr Joanne Connolly of Impact Veterinary Services.

Pregnancy testing is an important part of herd management, helping graziers identify which cattle are in-calf and make timely decisions about feeding, joining, culling and herd composition. Building this capability within the farm team can also reduce reliance on external services for routine testing, helping producers make better use of their time and investment.

"It was great to learn a skill that I can take back to the farm and actually use. Being able to learn alongside other women, share experiences and build our confidence together made the workshop even more valuable." - Nicole Brownlow, Yalboroo and Women in Agriculture workshop participant

For the ladies involved, the workshop was about more than learning a new technical skill. It was about building confidence, creating connections and strengthening their role in farm decision-making alongside other women working in agriculture.

Participants also explored body condition scoring and in-paddock soil testing, including a demonstration of the pH textura Spoon by Reef Catchments Sustainable Agriculture Project Officer Kimberley Bland. Together, these skills support a more informed approach to herd, soil and pasture management.

The workshop demonstrated what can happen when women in agriculture come together to learn from experts, share their experiences and build practical skills that can be taken back to their own properties.



Restoring seagrass and building a blueprint for the future

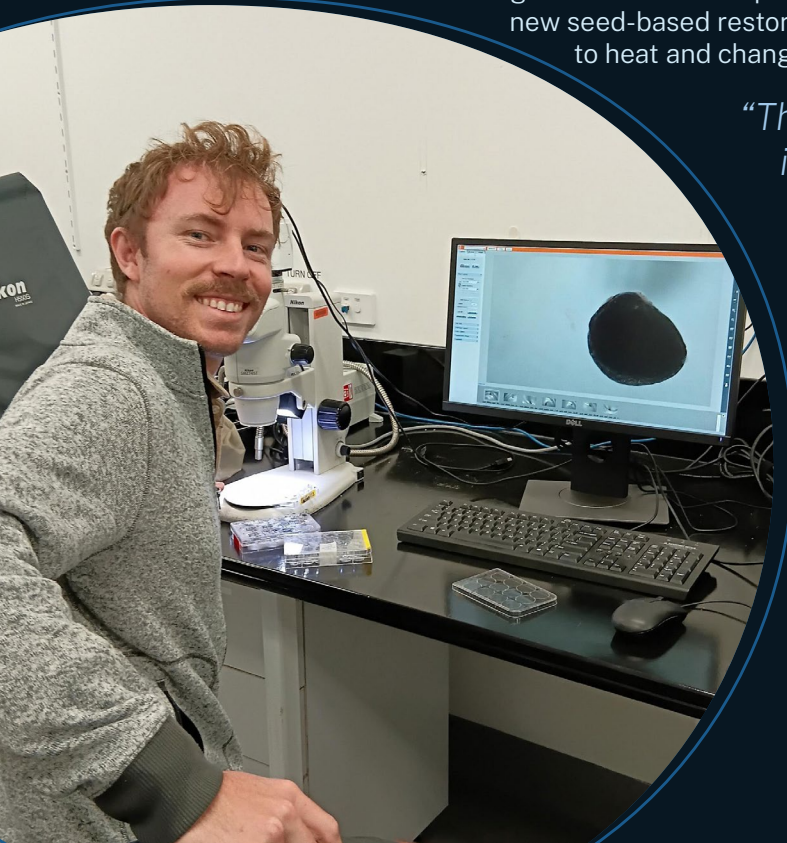
Seagrass restoration is still an emerging field, with much of the work across the Great Barrier Reef focused on research and small-scale trials.

In FY2026, Reef Catchments took an important step forward from research to on-ground action by securing the first aquaculture permit for seagrass restoration within the Marine Park area at Sarina Inlet, creating a genuine pathway for others to follow to restore seagrass ecosystems at scale.

Working alongside CQUniversity through the (Sea)Grassroots project, the team is advancing restoration science. In early 2026, 26 *Halodule uninervis* seeds were identified in Reef Catchments' Airlie Beach seagrass nursery, including 15 viable seeds capable of germination. The discovery has opened the door to new seed-based restoration research for a species thought to be more resilient to heat and changing climate conditions.

"The discovery of 15 potentially viable seeds is quite exciting toward fulfilling the goals of the project, as the seeds and flowers of Halodule plants are often difficult to locate."

-Dr Conor MacDonnell, Senior Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Coastal Marine Ecosystems Research Centre



Did you know?

The world's largest living organism is a seagrass meadow covering approximately 200km² in Shark Bay, Western Australia.

Learning from two landscapes

For Judy and Brian Pownall, learning never stops.

The couple run cattle operations across two very different Queensland landscapes. One of those properties is a 105-hectare block at Habana, north-west of Mackay, while the other is the much larger Leichardt Station near Dysart. Managing cattle in both coastal and inland environments has given them a unique opportunity to compare what works, adapt management approaches and continually improve the way they care for their land.

Through Reef Catchments' Climate Smart Agriculture Project, the Pownalls have been exploring the links between grazing management, soil health and natural capital. The program has helped them better understand the different soils and grass they will now be managing in a coastal environment.

"No two properties are the same, and there are ideas and management practices you can take from one place and adapt in another. Being involved in the project has reinforced the importance of understanding what is happening in our coastal soils so we can make better decisions for the future."

-Brian Pownall

By embracing new knowledge and sharing lessons across their grazing enterprises, the Pownalls are helping demonstrate how management practices can support productive and resilient grazing businesses in varying climates.

Did you know?

Soil health assessments do not always require lab testing. Reef Catchments is developing a practical field assessment method that helps landholders identify soil constraints and understand how their soil is functioning using simple, repeatable observations in the paddock.



Beyond Barriers: Reconnecting waterways, reviving fish habitat

For more than 50 years, the Carmila Creek Gauging Weir blocked native fish from reaching important upstream habitat. Through the Beyond Barriers project, Reef Catchments helped restore this connection by installing Australia's first Nursery Step fishway, reopening access to waterways that had been cut off for decades.

The results were immediate. Before construction, only three fish were recorded moving upstream. After the fishway was installed, more than 1,100 fish from 11 native species were recorded passing the barrier, including barramundi, sea mullet, tarpon and long-finned eels. Barramundi were also found upstream of the weir for the first time.

At Slade Point, 32 hectares of wetland were restored and reconnected to natural tidal flows. Within just 54 days, more than 1,000 fish were recorded using the rehabilitated habitat, while native wetland vegetation flourished and invasive Olive Hymenachne disappeared.

Together, these projects show how restoring natural water flows can quickly bring waterways back to life, strengthening fish populations and improving the health of ecosystems that flow to the Great Barrier Reef.

"One of the most rewarding outcomes was seeing barramundi return to habitats upstream of Carmila Weir that had effectively been cut off for decades. It shows how quickly ecosystems can recover when connectivity is restored."

-Carlos Bueno, Senior Project Officer (Biodiversity)



Did you know?

After the Carmila fishway was installed, fish moving upstream increased from just three to more than 1,100, reconnecting native species with habitat they had been unable to access for decades.

FY26 Funder Recognition



DELIVERING
FOR QUEENSLAND



GLENCORE



Great Barrier
Reef Foundation

Funded by
Natural Resources
Recovery Program



Australian Government
National Recovery and
Resilience Agency

Looking ahead to the future

In FY2027, Reef Catchments will continue working with partners to deliver lasting environmental outcomes across the Mackay Whitsunday Isaac region. Guided by our Strategic Plan, we will focus on strengthening reef resilience, supporting sustainable agriculture, restoring landscapes and habitats, and inspiring community stewardship of our region's natural resources. Together, these priorities will help create resilient ecosystems and engaged communities for generations to come.

“Together with
our partners and
communities, Reef
Catchments is
delivering practical
environmental
outcomes from the
mountains to the sea.”



Visit our website
reefcatchments.com.au

