

# 2025 ReefClean® Public Report



Tackling Marine Debris Pollution on  
the Great Barrier Reef



[reefclean.org](http://reefclean.org)

**Tangaroa Blue Foundation® acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the Great Barrier Reef and their strong and continuing connections to Land and Sea Country.**



**ReefClean® is funded by the Australian Government's Reef Trust and is delivered by Tangaroa Blue Foundation® in partnership with:**

AUSMAP, BehaviourWorks Australia, Clean Up Australia, Gunggandji-Mandingalbay Yidinji Peoples Prescribed Body Corporate Aboriginal Corporation (GMYPPBC), Pioneer Catchment Landcare, Reef Check Australia, South Cape York Catchments, Whitsunday Catchment Landcare, Woppaburra TUMRA, Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation





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*Pictured: Front Cover: Tangaroa Blue volunteers at the 2025 Five Beaches Loop Clean-up. Page 2: Indian Heads. Above: Ghost gear found on Low Wooded Island.*



# Executive Summary

**HEIDI TAIT**

*CEO and Founder  
Tangaroa Blue Foundation®*

**2025 has been a remarkable seventh year for ReefClean. Across the six Great Barrier Reef NRM regions and the Torres Strait NRM, our program has continued to deliver tangible outcomes in the fight against marine debris, supported by passionate communities, Traditional Custodians, partners and volunteers.**

This report summarises the activities undertaken. The outcomes represent far more than data points — they reflect ReefClean’s ongoing commitment to safeguarding our reefs, strengthening community engagement, and advancing innovative circular solutions to marine pollution. Each item collected, every volunteer hour contributed, and every monitoring site established plays a meaningful role in building healthier, more resilient reef ecosystems for generations to come.

As we look ahead, ReefClean will continue to scale its impact, combining science, community leadership, and innovation to tackle marine debris and safeguard one of Australia’s most treasured natural assets.

## 2025 Highlights

### **17.8 Tonnes Marine Debris Removed**

170m<sup>3</sup> of debris cleaned-up from the Great Barrier Reef

### **2025 Great Barrier Reef Clean-up**

with 153 events and volunteers removing 2.7 tonnes of debris

### **5.3 Tonnes of Recovered Plastic Turned into MDP®**

Turning debris into a world-first Marine Derived Plastics feedstock

### **141 Quarterly Marine Debris Monitoring Events**

removing 76,295 items (2.3 tonnes) and creating 5 new monitoring sites.

### **33 Community Clean-ups**

Over 600 volunteers, removing 12.7 tonnes (121 m<sup>3</sup>) of debris

### **103 GPS Buoys Recovered Through Project ReCon**

providing critical data on debris sources and movement

*Image: Heidi Tait. Credit: Chloe Sipeki, Esperance Weekender*

# About ReefClean®



## Tackling Marine Debris Pollution on the Great Barrier Reef

Since its launch in 2019, ReefClean has successfully partnered with communities and organisations to remove and prevent marine debris across the Great Barrier Reef region.

In 2023, Tangaroa Blue Foundation secured a \$3.5 million grant from the Australian Government's Reef Trust to extend the program beyond its initial five years. Running from January 2024 to March 2027, this funding will support the continued growth of ReefClean and engage even more communities in protecting the Reef.

*Pictured: Volunteers at the 2025 Capricorn Coast GBR Clean-up event. Image credit: Capricorn Coast Council.*

### Program Objectives

**REDUCE** marine debris in the Great Barrier Reef to protect threatened species like dugongs and turtles.

**EDUCATE** Reef catchment communities on marine debris prevention.

**PREVENT** marine debris through innovative source reduction plans.

**EMBRACE** circular economy principles to reduce end-of-life waste.

**CONNECT** stakeholders with scalable solutions and resources to improve Reef health.

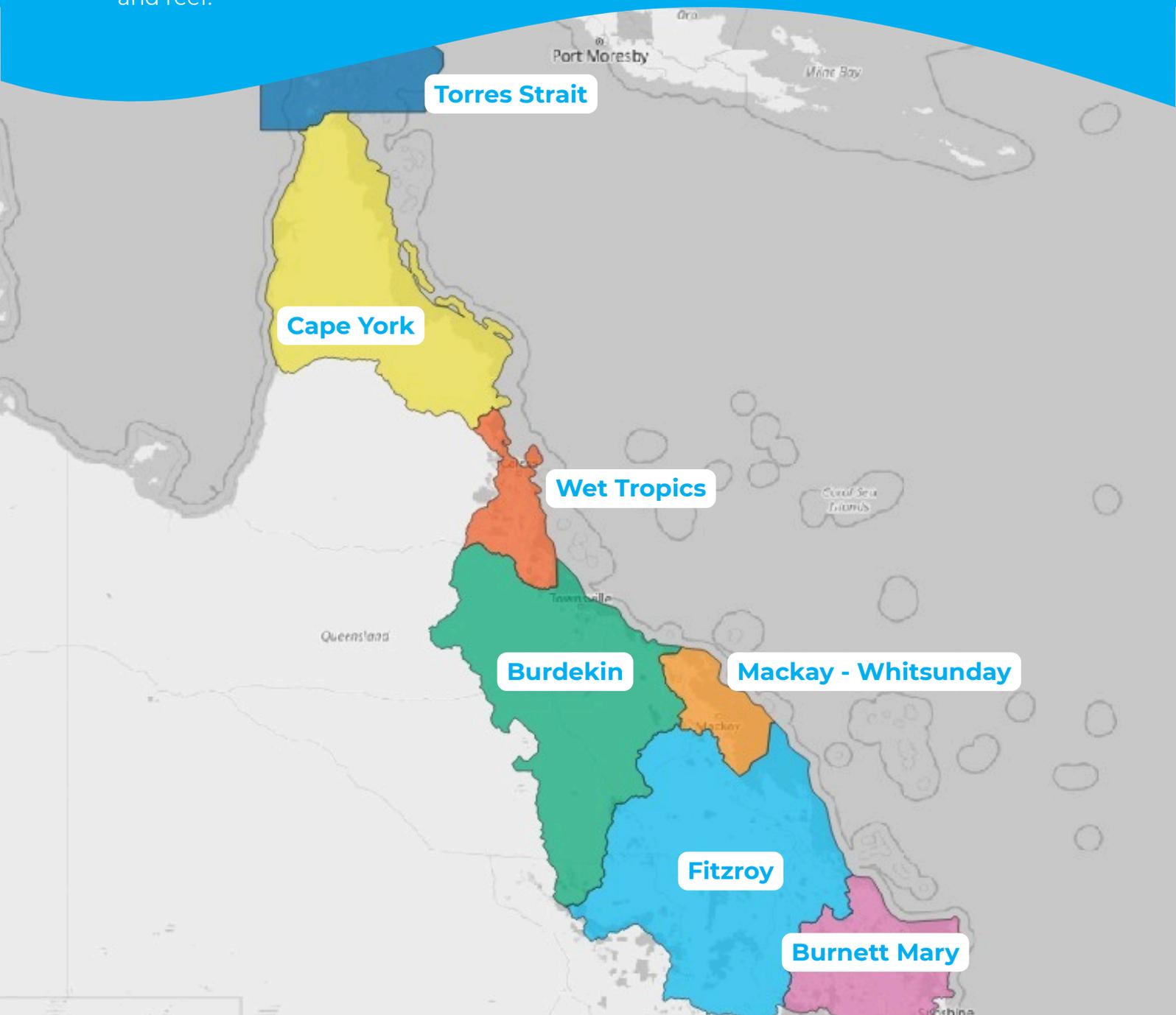


# NRM Region Breakdown

The Australian Government has divided the GBR region into 6 NRM regions known as Reef regions: Cape York, Wet Tropics, Burdekin, Mackay-Whitsunday, Fitzroy, and Burnett Mary. For this report, we have also included the Torres Strait as a reef region and further divided each region into northern, central and southern 'zones'. Run-off from these NRM regions, along with 35 catchments in the area, drains into the neighbouring ocean and reef.

Simultaneously, some regions receive offshore debris, as demonstrated by the LSSI analysis (more information on page 9). Understanding debris in these regions is important because data shows regional differences in the mass, number of items, and density of debris accumulating; analysing data at too large a scale can miss local differences in the marine debris signature.

We now have 38 ReefClean quarterly monitoring sites, having added 5 more in 2025. Our monitoring stretches from our most Northern site at Bayo Beach on Thursday Island to our most Southern site at Nielson Beach, Bargara



# 2025 REEFCLEAN® RESULTS

**17.8**

**TONNES  
REMOVED**

**260**

**CLEAN-UP  
EVENTS**

**277**

**KILOMETRES  
CLEANED-UP**

**2195**

**EVENT  
VOLUNTEERS**

**5**

**SOURCE  
REDUCTION  
PLANS**

**15**

**SCHOOLS**

**42**

**TRADITIONAL  
OWNER GROUPS  
PARTICIPATED**

**161**

**ORGANISATIONS  
PARTICIPATED**

**24**

**EDUCATION  
CAMPAIGNS**

# 2025 MARINE DEBRIS TOP 10

**1** **HARD PLASTIC REMNANTS**

**2** **PLASTIC LIDS/TOPS**

**3** **PLASTIC DRINK BOTTLES**

**4** **FOAM INSULATION & PACKAGING**

**5** **GLASS & CERAMICS (BROKEN)**

**6** **SOFT PLASTIC FILM REMNANTS**

**7** **SYNTHETIC ROPE & NET SCRAPS  
<1M**

**8** **RUBBER FOOTWEAR & THONGS**

**9** **PLASTIC FOOD PACKAGING**

**10** **FOIL WRAPPERS, PACKETS,  
BLADDERS & ALFOIL**

# TOP 5 MARINE DEBRIS ITEMS 2019 - 2025

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
1	Hard plastic remnants						
2	Plastic lids/tops						
3	Plastic drink bottles	Foam insulation & packaging	Plastic drink bottles	Plastic drink bottles	Foam insulation & packaging	Soft plastic film remnants	Foam insulation & packaging
4	Foam insulation & packaging	Plastic drink bottles	Foam insulation & packaging	Rubber footwear & thongs	Plastic drink bottles	Rope & net scraps (<1m)	Soft plastic film remnants
5	Glass, ceramics (broken)	Glass, ceramics (broken)	Soft plastic film remnants	Foam insulation & packaging	Rubber footwear & thongs	Foam insulation & packaging	Rope & net scraps (<1m)

\*Foam insulation & packaging (includes whole & remnants)

## What is the Land Sea Source Index (LSSI)?

Throughout this report, you will see LSSI ratios available for each region. The Land Sea Source Index (LSSI) is a tool used to estimate the proportion of marine debris originating from local (land-based) versus offshore sources, helping us understand the sources and pathways of marine debris.

# Spotlight on Torres Strait



*Pictured: Right: A ReefClean volunteer at the Thursday Island Clean-up. Below: Marine debris found at the clean-up.*

Year	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
<b>Events</b>	3	N/A	1	1	1	4	3
<b>Volunteers</b>	28	N/A	27	34	17	136	126
<b>Volunteer Hours</b>	37	N/A	216	136	51	342	252
<b>Weight (Kgs)</b>	67	N/A	939	70	101	375	251
<b>Debris Density* (item per m2)</b>	0.11	N/A	0.01	0.03	0.09	0.06	0.05
<b>Land Sea Source Index</b>	64:36	N/A	3:97	53:47	21:79	46:54	67:33

*\*Average across the whole NRM.*

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
<b>1</b>	Plastic lids/tops	N/A	Hard plastic remnants	Plastic drink bottles	Rubber footwear & thongs	Hard plastic remnants	Cigarette butts & filters
<b>2</b>	Plastic drink bottles	N/A	Plastic lids/tops	Fishing line (rec)	Plastic lids/tops	Glass, ceramics (broken)	Glass, ceramics (broken)
<b>3</b>	Foam insulation & packaging	N/A	Plastic drink bottles	Glass, ceramics (broken)	Hard plastic remnants	Soft plastic film remnants	Plastic food packaging



# Spotlight on Cape York



*Pictured: Right: Three Islands Group clean-up.*

*Below: Marine debris collected from Captain Billy Landing.*

Year	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
<b>Events</b>	24	23	25	26	34	48	37
<b>Volunteers</b>	227	267	320	275	319	430	362
<b>Volunteer Hours</b>	1697	1711	2182	3431	5026	2745	2844
<b>Weight (Kgs)</b>	10,524	6,631	15,434	10,231	10,313	9,413	10,598
<b>Debris Density* (item per m2)</b>	0.20	0.33	0.30	0.17	0.22	0.07	0.127
<b>Land Sea Source Index</b>	9:91	11:89	9:91	13:87	13:87	15:85	14:86

*\*Average across the whole NRM.*

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
<b>1</b>	Plastic lids/tops	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants
<b>2</b>	Plastic drink bottles	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops
<b>3</b>	Foam insulation & packaging	Plastic drink bottles	Plastic drink bottles	Rubber footwear & thongs	Rubber footwear & thongs	Synthetic rope & net remnants	Soft plastic film remnants



# Spotlight on Wet Tropics

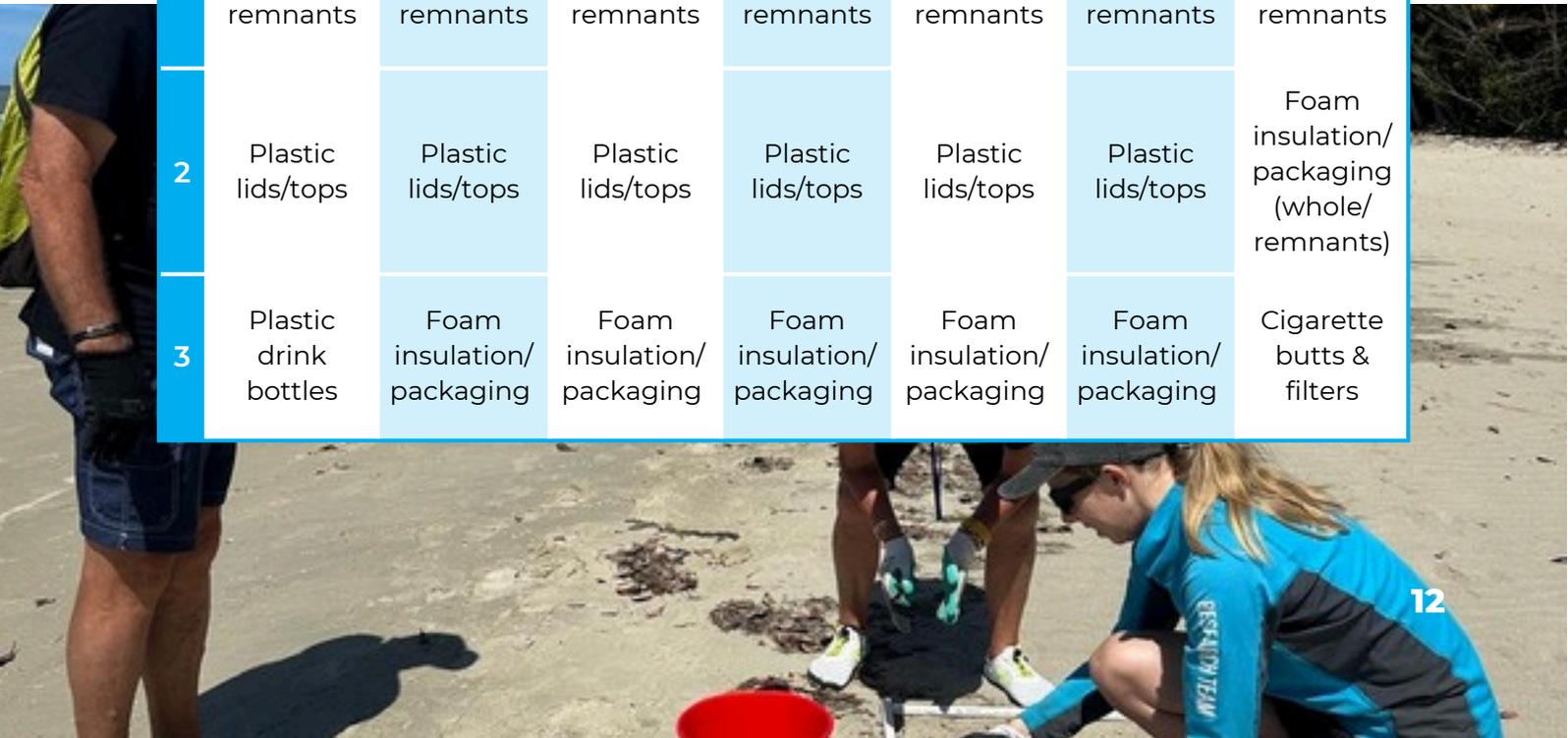


*Pictured: Right: Volunteers with their marine debris haul at Cape Kimberley. Below: Four Mile Beach Clean-up.*

Year	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
<b>Events</b>	39	44	44	64	80	70	43
<b>Volunteers</b>	222	286	548	4511	711	472	457
<b>Volunteer Hours</b>	692	1023	2803	3128	2564	1956	1394
<b>Weight (Kgs)</b>	1633	2344	1532	4127	5535	4368	3426
<b>Debris Density* (item per m2)</b>	0.08	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.03
<b>Land Sea Source Index</b>	27:73	28:72	25:75	24:76	27:73	25:75	27:73

*\*Average across the whole NRM.*

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
<b>1</b>	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants
<b>2</b>	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Foam insulation/packaging (whole/remnants)
<b>3</b>	Plastic drink bottles	Foam insulation/packaging	Cigarette butts & filters				



# Spotlight on Burdekin



*Pictured: Goolboddie (Orpheus Island) ATSIMS x Tangaroa Blue ReefClean Clean-up. Credit: ATSIMS*

Year	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
<b>Events</b>	27	43	64	44	58	34	35
<b>Volunteers</b>	177	248	523	694	443	342	795
<b>Volunteer Hours</b>	779	423	1532	2143	1339	1212	2149
<b>Weight (Kgs)</b>	245	367	320	1769	2381	1857	6937
<b>Debris Density* (item per m2)</b>	0.02	0.04	0.07	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.04
<b>Land Sea Source Index</b>	58:42	38:62	41:59	45:55	51:49	40:60	20:80

*\*Average across the whole NRM.*

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
<b>1</b>	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants
<b>2</b>	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops
<b>3</b>	Foam insulation/packaging	Soft plastic film remnants	Glass, ceramics (broken)	Plastic food packaging	Glass, ceramics (broken)	Glass, ceramics (broken)	Soft plastic film remnants



# Spotlight on Mackay-Whitsunday

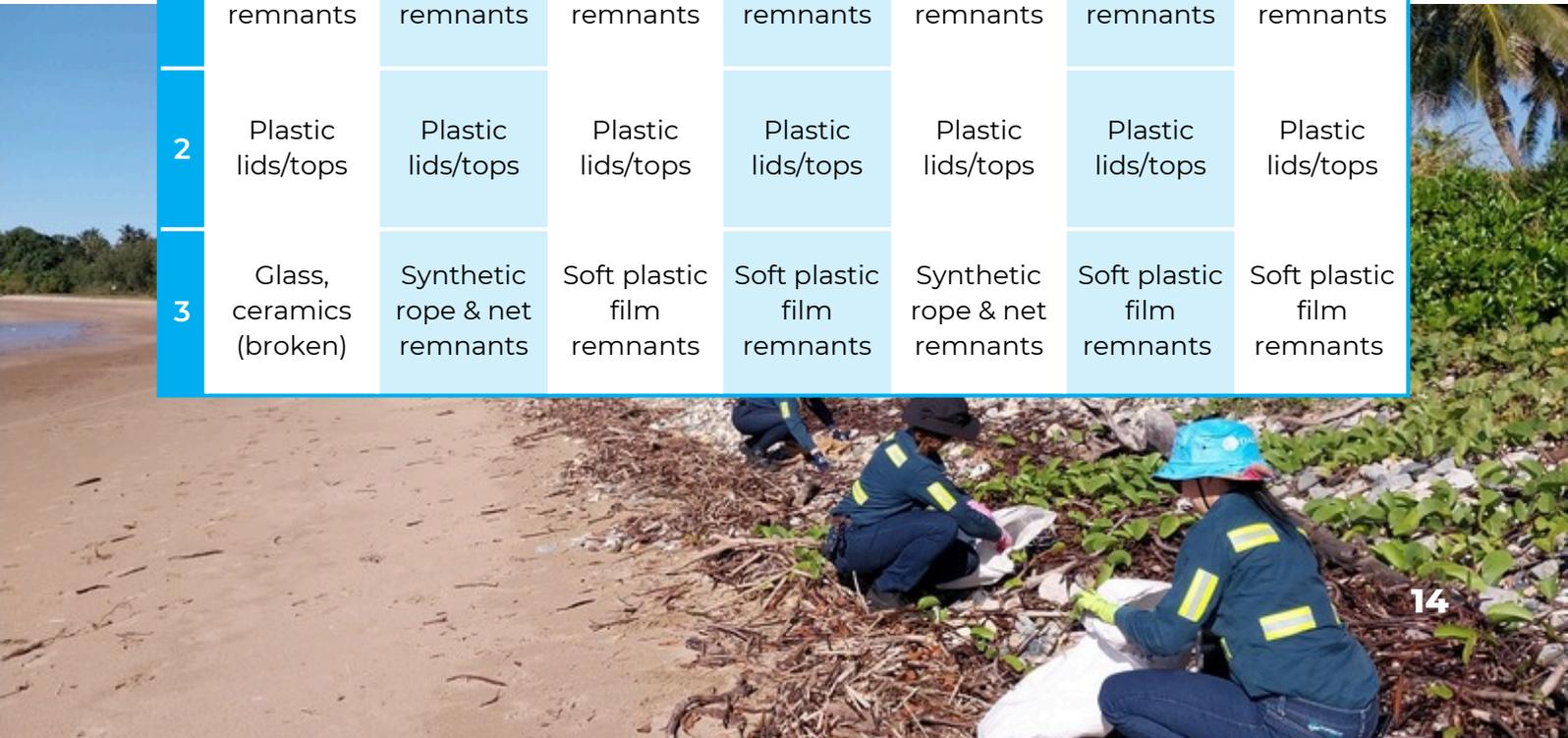


*Pictured: Right: Half Tide Beach monitoring in December. Below: Half Tide Beach with the Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal team.*

Year	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
<b>Events</b>	28	33	43	55	51	49	37
<b>Volunteers</b>	192	234	379	469	315	192	299
<b>Volunteer Hours</b>	478	506	1248	1607	1240	639	1258
<b>Weight (Kgs)</b>	499	921	939	3017	4805	1901	2367
<b>Debris Density* (item per m2)</b>	0.16	0.05	0.12	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.06
<b>Land Sea Source Index</b>	18:82	19:81	17:83	17:83	16:84	23:77	18:82

*\*Average across the whole NRM.*

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
<b>1</b>	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants
<b>2</b>	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops
<b>3</b>	Glass, ceramics (broken)	Synthetic rope & net remnants	Soft plastic film remnants	Soft plastic film remnants	Synthetic rope & net remnants	Soft plastic film remnants	Soft plastic film remnants



# Spotlight on Fitzroy



*Pictured: Right: Sorting marine debris for the AMDI Database on Facing Island. Below: Curtis Island Community Clean-up.*

Year	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
<b>Events</b>	35	46	47	55	48	51	54
<b>Volunteers</b>	347	240	530	1254	535	564	889
<b>Volunteer Hours</b>	1618	964	1684	2395	2372	1557	3536
<b>Weight (Kgs)</b>	1610	2009	2663	3719	3399	2225	4245
<b>Debris Density* (item per m2)</b>	0.04	0.06	0.07	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02
<b>Land Sea Source Index</b>	29:71	36:64	23:77	31:69	29:71	16:84	32:68

\*Average across the whole NRM.

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
<b>1</b>	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants
<b>2</b>	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops
<b>3</b>	Soft plastic remnants	Glass, ceramics (broken)	Synthetic rope & net remnants	Synthetic rope & net remnants	Plastic food packaging	Synthetic rope & net remnants	Cigarette butts & filters



# Spotlight on Burnett Mary



*Pictured: Right: Volunteers cleaning-up a ghost net at Bustard Bay. Below: Bustard Bay Clean-up with 1770 LARC.*

Year	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
<b>Events</b>	28	33	27	28	29	28	31
<b>Volunteers</b>	149	97	195	156	191	144	304
<b>Volunteer Hours</b>	439	196	440	549	493	299	898
<b>Weight (Kgs)</b>	542	431	373	779	819	258	579
<b>Debris Density* (item per m2)</b>	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02
<b>Land Sea Source Index</b>	29:71	33:67	44:56	55:45	54:46	56:44	51:49

\*Average across the whole NRM.

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
<b>1</b>	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants	Hard plastic remnants
<b>2</b>	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Plastic lids/tops	Cigarette butts & filters	Cigarette butts & filters	Soft plastic film remnants	Cigarette butts & filters
<b>3</b>	Glass, ceramics (broken)	Plastic drink bottles	Soft plastic film remnants	Soft plastic film remnants	Plastic lids/tops	Cigarette butts & filters	Glass, ceramics (broken)



# Microplastic Sampling

Australian Microplastic Assessment Project (AUSMAP) samples were taken during clean-up activities at coastal monitoring sites along the Great Barrier Reef as part of the ReefClean project.

We conducted 38 microplastic surveys across six NRM regions (Figure 1). Microplastics were detected at 29 of the 38 sites, demonstrating their widespread distribution in coastal areas. Despite this, the overall level of contamination remained low, with most surveys reporting <10 microplastics per square meter (Table 1).

More information on microplastics, AUSMAP national microplastic hotspots and sampling methodology can be found at [www.ausmap.org](http://www.ausmap.org).

*Pictured: Microplastic sampling at Canoe Point and Norval Park (pages 17/18).*

## Working with AUSMAP

By translating data into vivid maps of plastic pollution hotspots across Australia, with the help of citizen scientists, the Australian Microplastic Assessment Project makes it easy for everyone to see the scale and nature of the growing microplastic problem.



Figure 1: Map of microplastic monitoring sites.



Region (average measured in MPs/m <sup>2</sup> )	Site & Microplastic Level		Region (average measured in MPs/m <sup>2</sup> )	Site & Microplastic Level	
<b>Cape York:</b> 6 surveys 3 sites NRM average all surveys = <b>48</b>	Fly Point (March)	2	<b>Mackay - Whitsunday:</b> 6 surveys 3 sites NRM average all surveys = <b>7</b> Average from surveys where plastic was found = <b>8</b>	Conway Beach (March)	3
	Fly Point (Sept)	3		Conway Beach (Sept)	3
	Quintell Beach (March)	29		Harbour Beach (March)	0
	Quintell Beach (Sept)	26		Harbour Beach (Sept)	9
	Walker Bay (June)	1		Half Tide Beach (March)	24
	Walker Bay (Sept)	229		Half Tide Beach (Sept)	2
<b>Wet Tropics:</b> 6 surveys 3 sites NRM average all surveys = <b>3</b> Adjusted average from surveys where plastic was found = <b>5</b>	Four Mile Beach (March)	7	<b>Fitzroy:</b> 6 surveys 3 sites NRM average all surveys = <b>7</b> Average from surveys where plastic was found = <b>13</b>	Farnborough Beach (March)	24
	Four Mile Beach (Sept)	0		Farnborough Beach (Sept)	0
	Flying Fish Point (March)	4		Barney Point (March)	13
	Flying Fish Point (Sept)	0		Barney Point (Sept)	0
	Googarra Beach (March)	5		Canoe Point (June)	4
	Googarra Beach (Sept)	0		Canoe Point (Sept)	0
<b>Burdekin:</b> 6 surveys 3 sites NRM average all surveys = <b>1</b> Adjusted average from surveys where plastic was found = <b>1</b>	Shelly Cove (March)	5	<b>Burnett Mary:</b> 6 surveys 3 sites NRM average all surveys = <b>22</b> Average from surveys where plastic was found = <b>26</b>	Surf Beach (March)	0
	Shelly Cove (Sept)	1		Surf Beach (Sept)	0
	Alva Beach (March)	0		Norval Park Beach (March)	11
	Alva Beach (Sept)	1		Norval Park Beach (Sept)	1
	Queens Beach (March)	0		Nielson Beach (March)	115
	Queens Beach (Sept)	1		Nielson Beach (Sept)	2
<b>Torres Strait:</b> 1 opportunistic survey	Bayo Beach Thursday Is. (Sept)	3	Regional averages measured in MPs/m <sup>2</sup>		

Table 1. Summary of AUSMAP microplastic surveys completed in 2025 as part of ReefClean, and regional averages measured in MPs/m<sup>2</sup>. (Green = Very Low; Yellow = Low; Orange = Moderate).

# Source Reduction



## Rig Recycle

Collecting and diverting recreational fishing gear from landfill through an innovative Repair, Reuse and Recycle system.

**111 KM**

**FISHING LINE RECOVERED IN QUEENSLAND IN 2025**

**454 KM**

**FISHING LINE RECOVERED IN QUEENSLAND SINCE 2021**

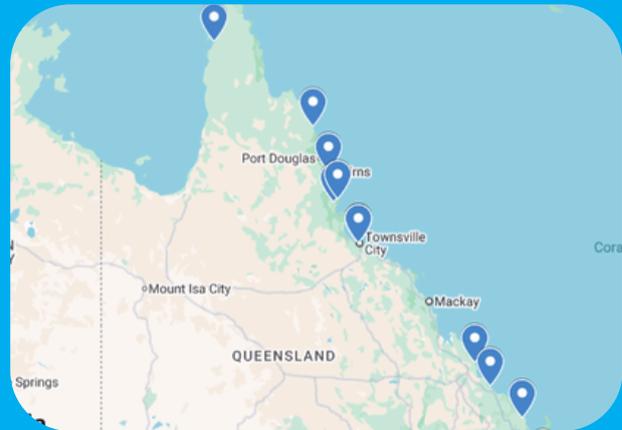
**6617**

**SPOOLS COLLECTED IN QUEENSLAND SINCE 2021**

The Rig Recycle program, which has been running since 2021, has now welcomed 10 participating tackle stores and fishing clubs across Queensland. Each store hosts a Rig Recycle station, where you can drop off your unwanted fishing gear.

### Turning Fishing Line into Premium Sunglasses Frames

After years of development, we're now transforming the monofilament line dropped into Rig Recycle stations into Premium Sunglasses engineered for Australian Conditions. We've teamed up with TONIC Eyewear to create this must-have bit of kit out of discarded fishing waste. 100% sales go back into the Rig Recycle program to develop more circular solutions.



*Pictured top: Fishing line. Pictured from left: Fishing line going into a Rig Recycle station, Rig Recycle Sunglasses Frames, a Rig Recycle Tackle Back. Above: Rig Recycle station map of participating stores in Queensland.*



# Source Reduction

## Project ReCon

**A world-first program that uses retrieved and repurposed satellite technology to track and recover deadly ghost gear.**

Project ReCon has gone from strength to strength this year, far exceeding its target of recovering 20 GPS buoys in the Great Barrier Reef region, with an impressive 103 units recovered. This success reflects not only the efforts of clean-up teams but also the ongoing contributions of AMDI Network partners and members of the public who continue to report GPS trackers to Tangaroa Blue Foundation.

**103**  
**BUOYS RECOVERED FOR PROJECT RECON IN 2025**

### The “Tracker Cracker” Enables New Circular Pathways

The project has also advanced significantly in its focus on circularity. Satlink buoys that cannot be reused through Project ReCon are now entering a dedicated recycling pathway. A key milestone in this process was the development of a specialised disassembly tool, the “Tracker Cracker,” which enables safe and efficient breakdown of units. Recycling pathways have also been identified for individual components, including supercapacitors and solar panels.

Further reuse opportunities are currently being explored, with trials underway to convert trackers into emergency phone chargers—an innovation with strong potential for use during power outages in remote areas.

### Two More Buoy Manufacturers Get Onboard

Another major achievement this year was the formalisation of agreements with two additional leading buoy manufacturers. Collaboration with Marine Instruments through their Blue Recovery Program and Zunibal through their Searchle program ensures that reuse and recycling pathways are now in place for the three primary buoy manufacturers encountered during clean-up events.

*Pictured above: A GPS buoy and ghost gear. Pictured from left: Buoy Host - Dive Spear & Sport 1770, Project Coordinator Aaron demonstrating the “Tracker Cracker”, the Cossack Pearl crew recovering GPS trackers in Far North Cape York.*



# Source Reduction



## FAD Watch

**An initiative to reduce the impact of abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) along the GBR. Utilising the AMDI Network and satellite technology to intercept stray dFADs (drifting Fish Aggregating Devices) as they enter the Australian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).**

FAD Watch utilises Satlink's database to track FADs in real time via the GPS buoys attached to them. By intercepting them at sea, we prevent environmental damage and remove navigational hazards.

### Retrieving FADs

FADs are used by fishers worldwide to attract pelagic fish and can come in all shapes and sizes. The FAD Watch program (developed through a pilot project with The Pacific Community (SPC)) creates a network of commercial vessels and operators that are notified when a buoy and associated FAD are being tracked near their route. Once the vessel is notified, if operationally possible, they may divert a short distance to retrieve the ALDFG so that the FAD can be disposed of appropriately and the buoy may enter Tangaroa Blue's Project ReCon or another of our circular reuse pathways.

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**FADS REMOVED FROM THE GBR REGION WITH THE HELP OF PARTNERS IN 2025**

### Success on Day One

Only days after the program initiated, FAD Watch had its first success as AMDI partner, the Cossack Pearl, intercepted a FAD/buoy that was stranded on a reef located North-East of Lizard Island.

This was followed closely by QPWS Rangers intercepting a FAD/buoy that was floating over Batt Reef between Cairns and Port Douglas, and the Cossack Pearl team being able to pick up another one that had stranded on a remote beach in Cape York.

The highest number of FADs found were in the NRM regions of Fitzroy (20) and Cape York (21). 17 FADs were found on Facing Island between April & June 2025.

### Building Our Network

We look forward to building our network of marine operators interested in helping us recover buoys/FADs that drift through their normal areas of operations. Find more information on our [Fact Sheet](#).

*Pictured above: A FAD in the water about to be recovered. Pictured from left: Some of the GPS buoys recovered by the Cossack Pearl, Marine Parks retrieving a FAD/buoy, ALDFG being removed by the Cossack Pearl.*



# Source Reduction

## ReefCycle

Recovering, processing and recycling marine debris.

The program had a significant year of innovation, scale, and collaboration. A major milestone was the successful development of Marine Derived Plastics (MDP©) pellets and processing methodology. During this reporting year, the program processed over 1,800 kilograms of previously recovered marine debris material, demonstrating both operational capability and growing impact. During 2025, more than 3.5 tonnes of collected marine debris was diverted from landfill and into our recycling pathways.

Targeted waste separation delivered strong results, with 119.69 kilograms of PET bottles sent to Containers for Change, and 182.15 kilograms of fishing spools and line collected through Rig Recycle for reuse streams.

### A New Processing Site in Townsville

To further improve efficiency and regional capability, a new processing site in Townsville was designed and established. This facility enables local shredding and washing of marine debris, significantly reducing transport inefficiencies and allowing material to be shipped to refining partners in a cleaner, more compact, and cost-effective form.

# 1,800

**KILOGRAMS OF MARINE DEBRIS PROCESSED TO BE MADE INTO MDP©**

Innovation remained a core focus throughout 2025. The team successfully designed and completed proof-of-concept prototypes for multiple products, including the Ponderer furniture range and fishing rod racks manufactured from marine debris and Rig Recycle materials.

In addition, monofilament fishing line was successfully deconstructed, refined, and repurposed into new sunglasses frames, demonstrating the potential for complex marine waste streams to be transformed into durable consumer products.

Strong collaboration with partners underpins the program's continued success, laying the foundation for scaling to full production in 2026 alongside continued product and material innovation.

*Pictured above: Marine debris being processed. Pictured from the left: Marine debris in Cape York, debris being sorted for AMDI, Ponderer furniture.*



# Source Reduction

## Ditch the Flick

### Addressing cigarette butt pollution in the Great Barrier Reef region through practical solutions.

Cigarette butts are consistently recorded in the AMDI Database as one of the most common litter items. In response, ReefClean developed the Ditch the Flick program in 2020 to address cigarette butt pollution at key hotspot locations and to curb 'flicking' of cigarette butts.

### Ditch the Flick in Action

In 2025, the program was expanded in Airlie Beach, Cairns and Port Douglas, with a focus on reducing cigarette butt litter in high-traffic areas. We delivered this phase of the program in collaboration with BehaviourWorks Australia.

ReefClean staff assessed cigarette butt hotspots through monitoring, investigated smoker behaviour and use of designated smoking areas, and reviewed existing bin designs. Bins with poor design that contributed to litter were replaced, and Ditch the Flick branding was added to the bins to highlight their location. Branding contained educational messaging to encourage long-term use.

*Pictured above: Repurposed mint tins. Pictured from left: A butt bin in situ in Airlie Beach. Ditch the Flick butt bins. Ditch the Flick sticker added to a bin in Port Douglas.*

### Repurposed Mint Tins

The mint tin project continued in Port Douglas, providing smokers with repurposed mint tins as personal butt bins to curb 'flicking' behaviour. Tangaroa Blue rebranded and distributed 511 tins as personal cigarette butt bins at the Crystalbrook Marina.

### Port Douglas

The two sites, Crystalbrook Superyacht Marina and Macrossan Street, saw 4% and 17% reductions in cigarette butts, respectively, after measures were implemented.

### Cairns

In 2025 baseline audits at the marina precinct helped identify cigarette butt litter hotspots and map out target locations for 2026.

### Airlie Beach

Four new cigarette bins were installed, bringing the total in the region to 50. Surveys at the new location were taken before and after installation. This project is still underway, but the preliminary results show a significant decrease in butts on the ground.

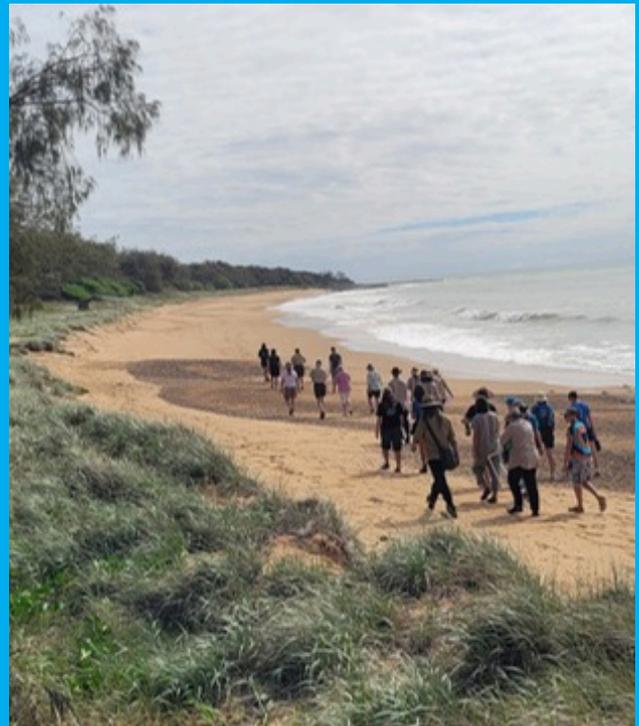


# Community Engagement

## Providing knowledge & tools to combat marine debris.

ReefClean raises awareness in Reef catchment communities about marine debris and equips people with practical actions to prevent litter from entering local waterways.

To support these efforts, ReefClean delivers educational presentations, school activities, and source reduction workshops, along with comprehensive training modules to enhance monitoring methods for community partners. In 2025, ReefClean delivered 45 community engagement events including 12 partner presentations, 15 school events, 4 Reef Guardian training workshops and 3 source reduction plan sessions.



Community engagement is at the heart of our program. Through our events, we've built strong connections with passionate community groups along the coastline, all dedicated to protecting their local environment.

*Pictured: 2025 AUSMAP Microplastic training workshop in Bundaberg.*



# Community Engagement Spotlight: Northern Australian Indigenous Ranger Biosecurity Forum

In September 2025, Tangaroa Blue Foundation was invited to present at the Northern Australian Indigenous Ranger Biosecurity Forum, held on Ganalidda Garawa Country in Mungibi (Burketown). The four-day event was hosted by the Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation in partnership with the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and featured a diverse range of presenters and participants.

With over 250 rangers from across northern Australia in attendance, the forum provided a vital platform to share knowledge, strengthen partnerships, and highlight the crucial role Indigenous Rangers play in protecting Land and Sea Country from biosecurity threats.

The ReefClean team delivered six presentations on the risks posed by abandoned, lost, and discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) to sensitive environments and ecosystems. We showcased how Project ReCon can help rangers mitigate biosecurity threats in remote regions. During the forum, we also provided rangers with nine Project ReCon buoys, ready for deployment on ghost nets or other fishing gear.



*Pictured: The Northern Australian Indigenous Ranger Biosecurity Forum attendees, showcasing Project ReCon, one of the many presentations at the forum. Image credits: Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation.*

# Community Engagement Spotlight: Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School Clean-up

In August 2025, Tangaroa Blue Foundation was joined by the year 4 class from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School, Waiben (Thursday Island) campus.

The team conducted a clean-up along the esplanade, removing 31.5 kg. Following a sorting session, the students learnt the importance of data recording and analysis in influencing policy change and legislative decisions regarding marine debris. The session involved entering findings into the Australian Marine Debris (AMDI) Database app and allowed us to continue building a reliable dataset for the Torres Strait region.

After this clean-up, the class was inspired to start collecting containers for change in the school to support responsible recycling and decided to donate the proceeds to Tangaroa Blue Foundation.

It was a privilege to be welcomed onto Kaurareg Country and develop this relationship with the students.

This was one of the 15 engagement events the ReefClean program delivered with school groups in 2025.

# 827

**STUDENTS JOINED REEFCLEAN ENGAGEMENT EVENTS IN 2025**

*Pictured: Students from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School learning about marine debris and conducting a clean-up.*



# Community Engagement Spotlight: ATSIMS

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in Marine Science (ATSIMS) Program is a powerful outreach initiative that offers First Nations Year 10 students from North Queensland hands-on experiences in marine science, marine management, citizen science, and the stewardship of Sea Country.

Taking place at James Cook University (JCU), Tangaroa Blue Foundation partnered with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (Reef Authority) to deliver an informative session on marine debris and its impacts on sea turtles. The presentation by our project coordinator, Matt, explored Tangaroa Blue's role, the problem of marine debris, and its impact on turtle health.

*Pictured: Students from the ATSIMS program at the workshop and conducting their beach clean-up.*



Alongside the presentation, students participated in a turtle identification activity. Working in groups, they used ID charts, carapace measurements, and dietary information (including potential ingestion of marine debris) to identify 6 turtle species accurately. It was great to see the students get so involved and interact with one another in this unique learning program.





# GREAT BARRIER REEF CLEAN-UP 2025

In October 2025, more than 2,600 volunteers came together across the Great Barrier Reef region to clean-up as much marine debris as possible before the wet season washed it from catchments to the Reef.

**2706**

**KILOGRAMS  
CLEANED-UP**

**153**

**REGISTERED  
CLEAN-UPS**

**20.74**

**VOLUME (M3) OF  
MARINE DEBRIS**

**101**

**LOCATIONS**

**75**

**PARTNERS**

**2646**

**VOLUNTEER  
OPPORTUNITIES**

**307K**

**SOCIAL MEDIA  
REACH**

**10**

**MILLION ESTIMATED  
NEWS REACH**

**73**

**AMDI  
SUBMISSIONS**

*Pictured below and on the back page:  
GBRCU 2025 Pallarenda Clean-up.*



# Contributing Organisations

## Organisations and Community Groups

- AUSMAP
- Australian Native Bee Association
- Australian Native Plants
- Bat Conservation and Rescue
- Boyne Island Lions Club
- Capricorn Coast Conservation Council
- Capricorn Coast Eco Warriors
- Clean Up Australia
- Clear Tides
- Climateforce
- Co-Exist Australia
- Conservation Volunteers Australia
- CQ Off-road
- Ecofiesta
- EcoMarines Foundation
- Elijah's World
- Fitzroy Basin Association
- Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership
- Great Barrier Reef Legacy
- Healthy Waters Partnership for the Dry Tropics
- Magnetic Island Community Development Association
- Magnetic Island Network for Turtles
- Mangrove Watch
- Nautilus Scuba Club
- North Queensland Conservation Council
- Oceans 2 Earth
- Ocean Decade Australia
- People for Wildlife
- Pioneer Catchment and Landcare Group Inc
- Project Brupeg
- Queensland Conservation Council
- Quoin Island Turtle Rehabilitation Centre
- Reef Check Australia
- Reef Ecologic
- Rifle Range Beach Clean Up
- SeaKeepers
- Sea Turtle Foundation
- South Cape York Catchments
- Tangaroa Blue Foundation
- Team Turtle CQ
- Tropical Animal Rehabilitation Centre (TARC)
- Tully Coast Guard
- Wet Tropics Waterways
- Whitsunday Catchment Landcare

*Pictured from left: Volunteers from various organisations at the Capricorn Coast GBRCU event (Credit: Capricorn Conservation Council), St. Clare's Catholic School GBRCU clean-up, Gunggandji-Mandingalbay Yidinji Peoples Prescribed Body Rangers monitoring marine debris at Jilgi Beach.*



# Contributing Organisations

## Traditional Owner Groups

- Apudthama Land Trust
- Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
- Darumbal Rangers
- Dawul Wuru Aboriginal Corporation
- Djeclck Rangers
- Djunbunji Land & Sea Rangers
- Giangalidda Garawa Rangers
- Gimuy Walubara Yidinji Rangers
- Giringun Aboriginal Corporation Land and Sea Rangers
- Goondoi Rangers
- Gudjuda Aboriginal Rangers
- Gunggandji-Mandingalbay Yidinji Peoples Prescribed Body Corporation RNTBC
- Hopevale Congress Rangers
- Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation
- Jabalbina Yalanji Rangers
- Kuuku Ya'u Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC
- Kuuku Ya'u Land and Sea Rangers
- Lama Lama Rangers
- Lama Lama Land Trust
- Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council
- Mamu Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC
- Mandingalbay Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation (MYAC)
- Mandubarra Aboriginal Land and Sea Rangers
- Minggamingga Rangers
- Mutung/Gong-Dal Aboriginal Corporation

- North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance
- Northern Land Council
- NPARC Apudthama Land and Sea Rangers
- Palm Island Aboriginal Rangers
- Woppaburra TUMRA Aboriginal Corporation
- Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation
- Yintjingga Aboriginal Corporation
- Yuwi Aboriginal Corporation

## Schools & Education

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in Marine Science (ATSIMS)
- Belgian Gardens State School
- Calliope State School
- Central Queensland University
- Clearview Christian College
- Clinton State School
- Cooktown State School
- Discovery Christian College
- Gladstone West State School
- Glenmore State High School
- Holy Spirit College
- Green STEM Townsville
- Harbour Watch
- James Cook University
- Miallo State School
- OnTrek Volunteering (Education Queensland)
- Orpheus Island Research Station
- Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School (Thursday Island)
- St Benedict's Catholic School
- St Francis Catholic Primary School
- St Joseph's Mundingburra
- Tannum Sands State School
- Trinity Anglican School, Kewarra Beach
- Trinity Beach State School

# Contributing Organisations

## Businesses

- 1770 LARC Tours
- AGE Consulting
- Alluvium Consulting
- Ark Energy
- Benny's Line Caught Fishing
- Cairns Yacht Club
- Conocophillips
- Coral Expeditions
- Coral Sea Marina
- Crystalbrook Marina
- Curtis Ferry Services
- Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal
- Daydream Island Resort and Living Reef
- Entrada Travel Group
- Experience Co
- Gladstone Ports Corporation
- Great Adventures Cruises
- Green Island Resort
- Ian Weigh Auto Group
- Jet Zero
- Keppel Bay Sailing Club
- Kurrimine Beach Game Fishing Club
- Magnums Accommodation
- NGH Wild Environmental Consultants Townsville
- North Wind Environmental Services
- NQ Bulk Ports
- NQ Crays - Cossack Pearl
- Ocean Film Festival
- Octopus Dive Cairns
- Opposite Lock
- PLOYS
- Port of Townsville
- Salty Monkeys

- Santos LGG
- Shell QGC
- Skyrail Rainforest Cableway
- The Tinnie Shack
- Tidy Up Townsville
- Triple M
- Wildlife Habitat Port Douglas FNQ
- Wildlife Surrounds

## Councils

- Burdekin Shire Council
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council
- Douglas Shire Council
- Gladstone Regional Council
- Livingstone Shire Council
- Townsville City Council
- Whitsunday Regional Council

## Natural Resource Management

- Cape York NRM
- Healthy Rivers To Reef Partnership
- NQ Dry Tropics

## Government

- Australian Defence Force, (Cowley Army Base)
- Australian Institute of Marine Science
- Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)
- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)
- Department of Primary Industries
- Education Queensland
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (Reef Authority)
- Queensland Museum Tropics
- Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service (QPWS) - multiple departments



**ReefClean®**

Educate • Reduce • Prevent



***We want to thank all partnering organisations of the ReefClean® program for helping us to deliver a better future for our Reef.***



**reefclean.org**

