

MEDIA RELEASE

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TOWNSVILLE WATERWAY HEALTH PARTNERSHIP OFFICIALLY KICKS OFF

A Partnership that will produce a new Waterway Health Report Card for the Townsville region officially launches today.

The Dry Tropics Partnership for Healthy Waters will produce a Waterway Health Report Card for the Townsville region that, for the first time, will combine all available waterway and marine monitoring and data to provide the community with a single source of information.

Chair of the Partnership, Diane Tarte, said she was looking forward to the Report Card being delivered in April 2019.

“The Waterway Health Report Card will, for the first time, provide the community with an independent reference point for them to better understand the health of the creeks, rivers and Reef catchment area around Townsville.

“Our region is an internationally renowned hub for marine, catchment and coral reef science, research and investment, and is also home to the largest general cargo and container port in Northern Australia.

Member for Townsville Scott Stewart MP said he was pleased the new Report Card would be in an easy-to-understand format for the average punter.

“The Report Card will mark the waterway health in an A-E format, like a school report, for ecological, community and economic factors that affect the waterways and Reef in the Townsville region,” said Mr Stewart.

“The Townsville community relies on healthy freshwater and estuarine systems, and Cleveland Bay, for our much-loved leisure activities like fishing, swimming and diving, as well as our world-class tourism experiences that attract visitors to the region.”

Townsville Mayor Jenny Hill said Townsville City Council is proud to be a host organisation of the Partnership and knows how beneficial the project will be for the community.

“Previously, there hasn’t been a single source for information on the health of our waterways and the Reef – this Report Card will provide an overview and improve management of our natural resources,” Cr Hill said.

Deputy Vice Chancellor of Tropical Environments & Societies at James Cook University, Iain Gordon said that the scoring would help in the future management of the waterways.

“By understanding the health of our waters we can better identify long-term trends, which means we can also better understand what actions we need to take as a community to help improve or maintain our health scores.”

Port of Townsville Limited’s (POTL) General Manager Infrastructure, Kim Gebers, said the Port was delighted to be part of the important water health report card.

“POTL has been voluntarily monitoring Cleveland Bay for more than 20 years and we are pleased to share our considerable bank of data which will provide the community with a greater understanding of our waterways, said Mr Gebers.”

The Dry Tropics Partnership for Healthy Waters are currently compiling all the data and information and will publish the pilot Report Card in April 2019.

The Report Card model has already been rolled out with great success in other regions along the Great Barrier Reef including Wet Tropics, Mackay-Whitsundays, Gladstone and the Fitzroy region as well as throughout the world.

More information: drytropicshealthywaters.org

Background

The Dry Tropics Partnership for Healthy Waterways for the Townsville region is a new initiative that models other successful partnerships along the Queensland coast.

The Partnership is hosted by Townsville City Council and is funded by the Queensland and Australian Governments and collaborating partners.

The term “dry tropics” refers to the low average rainfall range of 500 to 1000mm per year which generally falls within a short period.

The catchment reporting area includes the greater Townsville area and extends north to Crystal Creek and south to Alligator Creek. The sea area includes Cleveland Bay, Magnetic Island and Palm Island and extends to the edge of the Great Barrier Marine Park boundary.

The Partnership will produce an easy-to-read waterway and Reef health pilot report card by April 2019.

The scoring system is based on an A-E format, like a school report. Freshwater basins, estuaries and the marine environment of the Great Barrier Reef will all receive a score.

Frequently asked questions and more detailed information on the scoring methodology is available at drytropicshealthwaters.org

Ends

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