

See inside for drinking water and agriculture grades and trends

Fitzroy Basin Reporting Capaton 2014-15

aquatic ecosystem health results

The Fitzroy Basin received an overall B grade in 2014-15 for aquatic ecosystem health, incorporating the eleven freshwater catchments and the estuary. Six freshwater catchments including Connors, Fitzroy, Lower Dawson, Upper Dawson, Nogoa and Theresa were awarded B grades. The estuary was also awarded a B, with good barramundi recruitment contributing to this result.

The Fitzroy experienced another year of lower than average rainfall, leading to lower than average groundcover, particularly in the western catchments. The influence of severe tropical cyclone Marcia was restricted to the Estuary, Fitzroy and Callide catchments. **Overall performance - highs and lows** The Lower Isaac, Fitzrov and Mackenzie experienced minor declines in river health results, while other catchment results were maintained or improved slightly. The best performing catchment was once again the Nogoa. The Callide was the worst performing, with the ongoing legacy of the historic Mount Morgan Mine site in the Dee River sub-catchment likely to be a major contributing factor. Comparative analysis of five year trends for the Callide show a consistently lower score for sulphate, cadmium, cobalt and several other indicators compared to the other ten freshwater catchments.





These Report Card grades have been drawn from more than 512,781 sample results at more than 179 sites across the Basin. The independent Science Panel have endorsed the results as the best available scientific information. Dive into the detail of the Report Card at www.riverhealth.org.au

agriculture use results

For the second consecutive year water quality data collected across the Fitzroy Basin has been compared to stock and crop water thresholds to deliver an Agricultural Use Report Card. A and B grades were attained for all freshwater catchments for water quality relevant to stock and cropping use in 2014-15.

Stock Use

All catchments attained an A except Upper Isaac and Comet. Aluminium, most likely associated with fine sediment, was detected above guideline values at several sites across both of these catchments, resulting in B grades being awarded.

Crop use

All catchments attained an A except Callide, Upper Isaac and Comet which received B grades. For Callide, electrical conductivity, chloride and sodium contributed to the B Grade. In Upper Isaac and Comet, total iron and aluminium were recorded at several sites above guideline levels, most likely associated with fine sediments. The majority of results complied with stock and crop guidelines, with only isolated exceedances recorded for several indicators including aluminium, EC, chloride, sodium, iron, cobalt, copper, sulfate and cadmium.

cropping water use results

stock

results

water use

drinking water results

Once again the quality of treated water provided for human use in Rockhampton and Central Highlands Regional Council areas was excellent, resulting in A grades being awarded for all townships. Results never exceeded health guidelines and only minor exceedances of aesthetic guidelines were recorded for manganese, colour, turbidity, pH, total dissolved solids, sodium, aluminium, EC and total hardness

at several townships. Aesthetic guidelines do not signify unsafe drinking water; rather this relates to the acceptability of water to the consumer, for example, appearance, taste and odour. Minor exceedances of aesthetic indicators are typical of most drinking water supplies in Australia.

Treatment improves drinking water quality

Our online reports present results for both raw and treated water compared to relevant drinking water guidelines.

Visual snapshot

Turbidity is an aesthetic indicator related to water clarity. Average results from the Rockhampton water supply in 2014-15 showed treatment processes reduced turbidity in treated water to levels well below the aesthetic guideline of 5NTU.



community

Fitzroy Partnership also engages with the community to foster a keen interest in the health of our rivers and increase awareness of the impacts of human activities like towns, agriculture and industry.

The Fitzroy Partnership offers an annual Care for Creeks bursary to school and community groups. This includes water monitoring equipment and training to support youth involvement in waterway monitoring across the Fitzroy Basin.

The Fitzroy Partnership mascot, Mindi the Barramundi, and the new Maisy the

Mayfly outdoor game are also used to increase awareness of the importance of healthy waterways. Partners and local community groups are encouraged to borrow these educational tools for use at relevant events. Budding scientists are also encouraged to use the online community waterway monitoring portal *MyWater* along with the informative Water Sampling and Monitoring Guide. These resources are designed to support monitoring and data collection activities across the Basin - www.riverhealth.org. au/report_card/community/



Visit the website for more information: www.riverhealth.org.au