fitzroy partnership for river health

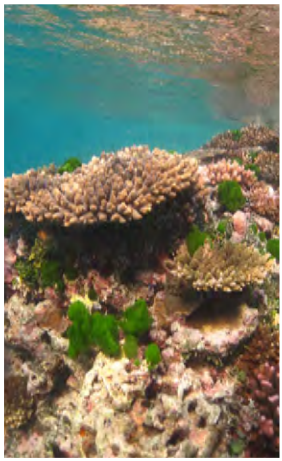
See inside for more grades and trends.

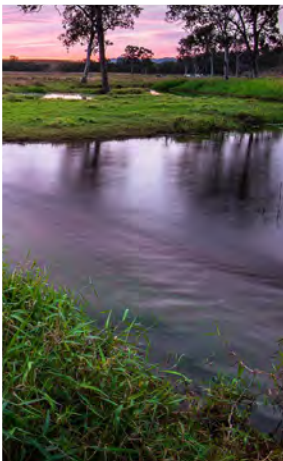
Fitzroy Basin Report Card

aquatic ecosystem health

B

2015-16





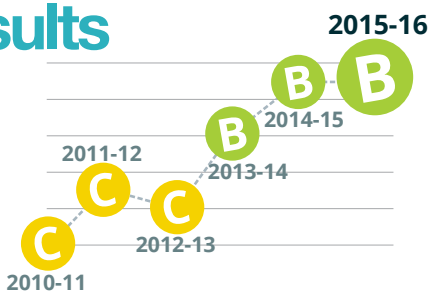
Who is the Fitzroy Partnership?

The Fitzroy Partnership for River Health (the Partnership) is a formal collaboration between government, industry, research organisations and community who all have an interest in the health of waterways across the Fitzroy Basin. The role of the Partnership is to facilitate improved water quality monitoring, collate and assess data, and publicly report on waterway health and sustainable use. Data and results are assessed by an independent scientific panel to ensure annual report cards accurately reflect condition and trends of waterways for ecology, drinking water suitability and agricultural suitability. These annual reports are provided to increase public awareness of waterway health and facilitate better waterway management decision making.

Ecosystem health results

Overall Performance

In 2015-16 the Fitzroy Basin received a B grade for aquatic ecosystem health with no change to overall score compared to last year. Connors, Callide and Mackenzie Rivers were awarded C grades, with all other reporting areas being awarded B grades.



Physical-chemical results were generally good and comparable to the long term average. Salinity results decreased marginally in Lower Connors and Lower Dawson but were stable otherwise. Sulfate results decreased in the Lower Dawson, but were stable otherwise. Turbidity results were stable except for a notable improvement in the Upper Isaac and a decline in Nogoa. pH results were generally excellent or good across all catchments.

For the first time in six years of reporting no catchments were awarded worse than a C grade for toxicants. Toxicants like boron and molybdenum have almost never been detected at concentrations of concern during this period. Copper and aluminium continue to stand out as the toxicants of interest across the Basin and further investigation is being considered.

Collection of ecology data remains patchy across the Basin. Ecology results were stable or improved where waterbug data was available.

Highs

No catchments were awarded a poor score for toxicants for the first time in six years. Estuary nutrient and phys-chem results improved and in the Upper Isaac turbidity results went from a poor score last year to almost an A.

Lows

Barramundi recruitment in the Fitzroy Estuary was disappointing this year.

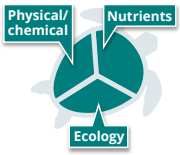
2015-16 Results

Legend

A	B	C	D	E	
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Fail	No data

Freshwater

Estuary



Nutrient results were generally good, which is comparable to long-term condition. Western catchments of Theresa, Upper Dawson and Nogoa received lower scores than more eastern catchments.

These Report Card grades have been drawn from more than **437,510 sample results at more than 244 sites** across the Basin and endorsed by the Independent Science Panel.

Weather

Very low rainfall totals were recorded across most of the Basin, resulting in minor or below minor flows in most catchments. Groundcover was subsequently low, particularly in western catchments.

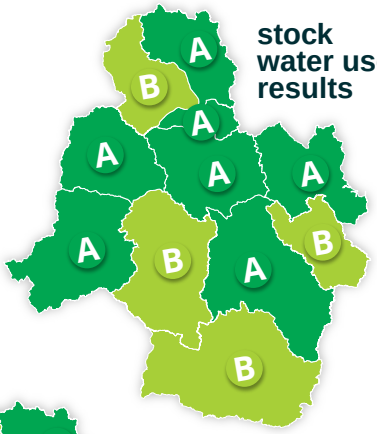
Agriculture use results

For 2015-16, A and B grades were awarded to all catchments for agricultural use of water. For stock water use, the Connors, Lower Isaac, Fitzroy, Theresa, Mackenzie, Lower Dawson and Nogoa received A grades while Callide, Comet, Upper Dawson and Upper Isaac received B grades. For crop water use, all catchments received A grades, except for Callide, Comet and Upper Isaac which received a B grade.

> “Generally water was excellent or good quality for stock and crops”

Stock use

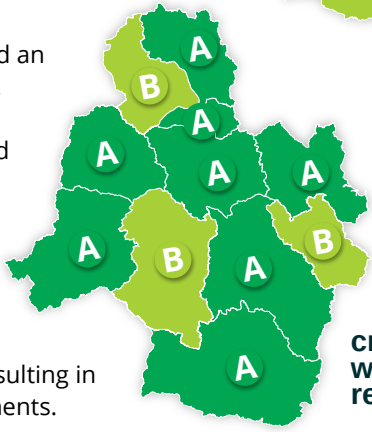
Most catchments attained an A grade for stock water use. Aluminium, most likely associated with fine sediment, was detected above guideline values at several sites in the Comet, Upper Dawson and Upper Isaac catchments resulting in B grades. For Callide, salinity was enough of an issue to see this catchment marked as a B.



stock water use results

Crop use

Most catchments attained an A grade for cropping use. Callide had some issues with sodium, chloride and salinity, which resulted in a downgrade to a B grade. Upper Isaac experienced issues with aluminium and iron, as did Comet which also had high sodium, resulting in B grades for both catchments.



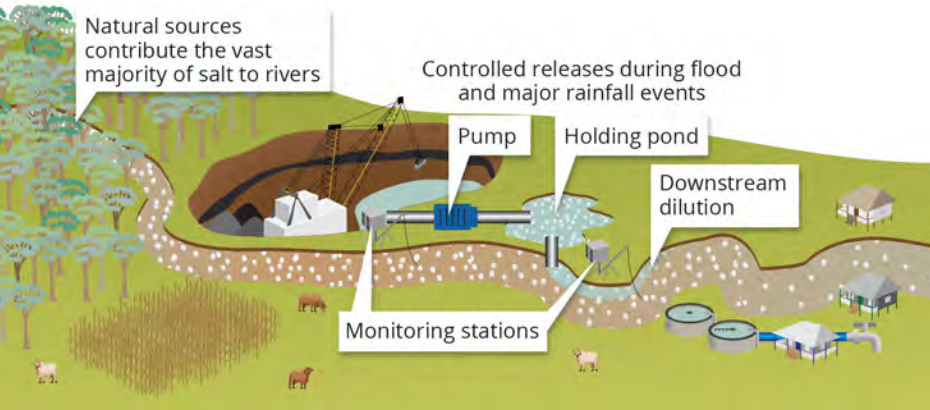
cropping water use results

Drinking water results

Once again treated water provided for human use in Rockhampton and Central Highlands Regional Council areas was of excellent quality, resulting in A grades for all townships. Results never exceeded health guidelines and only minor exceedances of aesthetic guidelines were recorded for turbidity, pH and aluminium for some townships. Springsure had minor aesthetic exceedances for total dissolved solids, salinity, sodium and total hardness due to chemistry of groundwater supply. Aesthetic guidelines relate to acceptability of water appearance, taste and odour to the consumer. Minor exceedances of aesthetic indicators are typical of most drinking water supplies in Australia.

Salt and water treatment

This year drinking water aesthetic guidelines for salt were not exceeded in any water supplies drawing from surface waters. Even though water treatment processes significantly reduce or eliminate many contaminants from our drinking water supplies, chemicals that dissolve easily, like sodium chloride (salt) often slip through. Whilst salt is a natural compound that is safe to consume, it can give water an unpleasant taste. Natural sources account for the vast majority of salt found in Fitzroy Basin waterways. On-going improvements to mine water release arrangements work to ensure downstream communities continue to have pleasant-tasting drinking water.



Dive into the detail

Community

Our vision is to create one of the largest citizen science datasets in Australia. We are helping local communities collect and record waterway data in locations that matter. We encourage community to monitor local waterways and enter results in the MyWater portal. MyWater is easy to use, creates real time reports and includes a free downloadable 'how to' guide on water sampling and monitoring. Get involved at **riverhealth.org.au/report_card/community**

Marine Report

Results for the marine zone adjacent to the Fitzroy Basin can be found at the Queensland Government Reef Plan website **reefplan.qld.gov.au**

Freshwater and Estuary Ecosystem Report Cards

Looking for data on your local catchment for the latest year? Find it and all previous report cards at **riverhealth.org.au/report_card/ehi**

Agriculture Suitability Reports

Agriculture is one of the Basin's major industries. Detailed information on suitability of water for agricultural purposes in each catchment is available at **riverhealth.org.au/report_card/ag**

Drinking Water Reports

Water for human consumption is of interest to us all. Drinking water reports provide assurance that our tap water has met drinking water guidelines. Find out more at **riverhealth.org.au/report_card/drinking-water/**

Major Partners

Queensland Government

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CHRC Central Highlands Regional Council

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Queensland Resources Council

Visit riverhealth.org.au for more information.