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Nogoa River's waterbugs put under the microscope

Over 100 curious kids and adults helped Fitzroy Partnership for River Health identify waterbugs from the Nogoa River and assess water quality at the Nogoa November family fun day organised by CHRRUP and Central Highlands Regional Council on Saturday.

Fitzroy Partnership for River Health Executive Officer Nathan Johnston said every waterbug species has a sensitivity or tolerance to a waterway's water quality, so their presence and quantity can be used to assess the health of a waterway.

"Waterbugs are small invertebrates or animals without back bones that live in freshwater, also known as macro-invertebrates," Mr Johnston said.

"Participants got to experience aquatic science under the magnifying glass and microscope to assess the health of the Nogoa river.

"11 species in 8 macro-invertebrate families were found on the day including glass shrimp, whirligig beetles, little brindle boatman, little diving beetles, water snails, dragonfly nymph, mayfly nymph, short-tailed damselfly larvae, leaf-tailed damselfly larvae, caddis fly larvae and water striders".

"The most interesting find of the day was a stick caddis fly larvae, they hollow out wood or other plant matter like grass stalks to live in. It looks like a cocoon with one open end where the larvae pops it head out to feed and move.

"We also tested the water quality of the Nogoa River at the Emerald Botanic Gardens with the community for pH, salinity, turbidity and waterbugs. An overall B grade was received for water quality and waterbugs through the Fitzroy Partnerships's MyWater Community Portal.

"Fitzroy Partnership for River Health includes macro-invertebrate data in the ecology indicator of the annual Ecosystem Health report card for the Fitzroy Basin.

The Nogoa river running through town falls within the Theresa catchment and received a C grade in the latest report card," he said.

To view the full results of the community monitoring please visit www.riverhealth.org.au, you can find them under the reports section and then MyWater Community Portal, 2018-19.

The Fitzroy Partnership for River Health includes members from government, agriculture, resources, industry, research and community and has released seven waterway health report cards since it was formed.

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