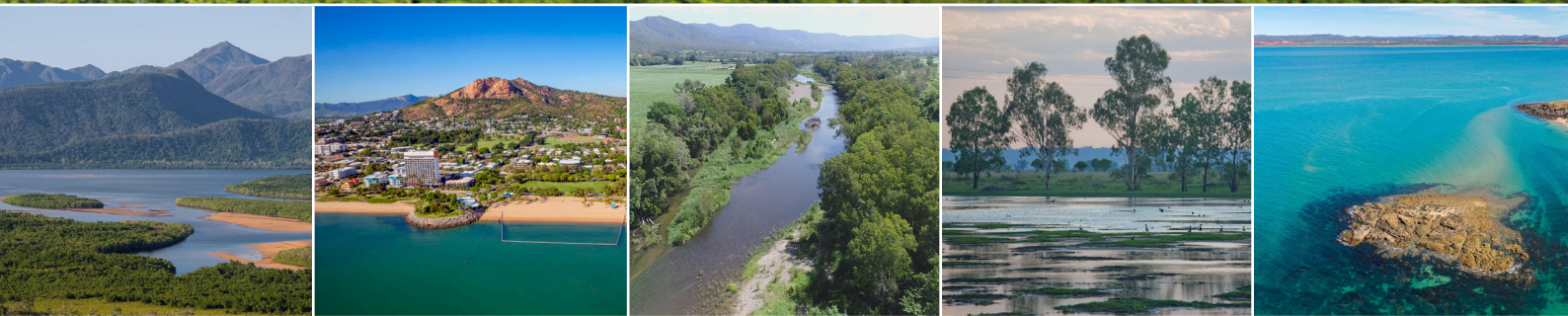




**WHAT'S  
OUR  
GRADE?**

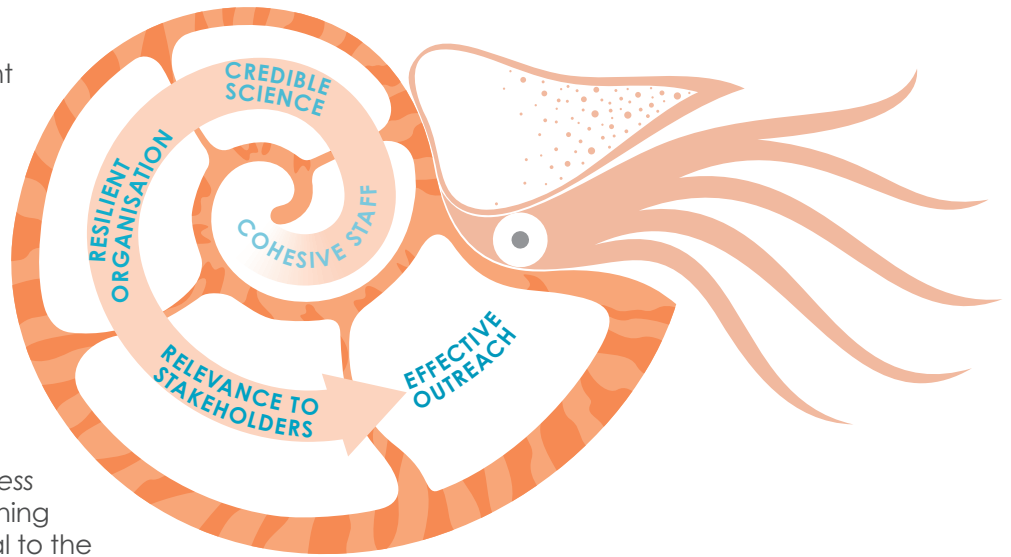
**REEF REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS  
REPORT CARD**



**2020**

## SUCCESS NAUTILUS


A nautilus is used to represent the sequence of goals that the reef regional partnerships have established because these marine creatures are iconic, symmetrical and beautiful. Fulfilling the goals in each of the nautilus chambers is a recipe for success, thus the term *Success Nautilus*.




At the very core of the *Success Nautilus*, recruiting and retaining **cohesive staff** is fundamental to the success of a partnership. Next, basing resource management on **credible science** is a key to the credibility and relevance of the partnership. Following on from staffing and science is the importance of creating a **resilient organisation** that can withstand disruptions and external challenges and be financially sustainable. The partnership works to provide **relevance to stakeholders** and to develop **effective outreach** in order to propel the partnership forward, not unlike the water jet propulsion system of the nautilus.

Partnership success






**Effective outreach:** The ability of the reef regional partnerships to maintain the health of the local waterways, catchments, communities and the Great Barrier Reef ultimately depends on getting the message out and having that message received by the target audiences (*overall impact*). Developing large and receptive audiences (*total reach*) is key to achieving a positive action using communication products that resonate with those audiences (*communication effectiveness*).




**Relevance to stakeholders:** Key stakeholders can influence changes in behaviour and create positive environmental outcomes (*influencing change*) when partners are motivated and effective. Satisfied partners (*partner satisfaction*) who are actively involved (*partner engagement*) are key to generating motivation and actions.



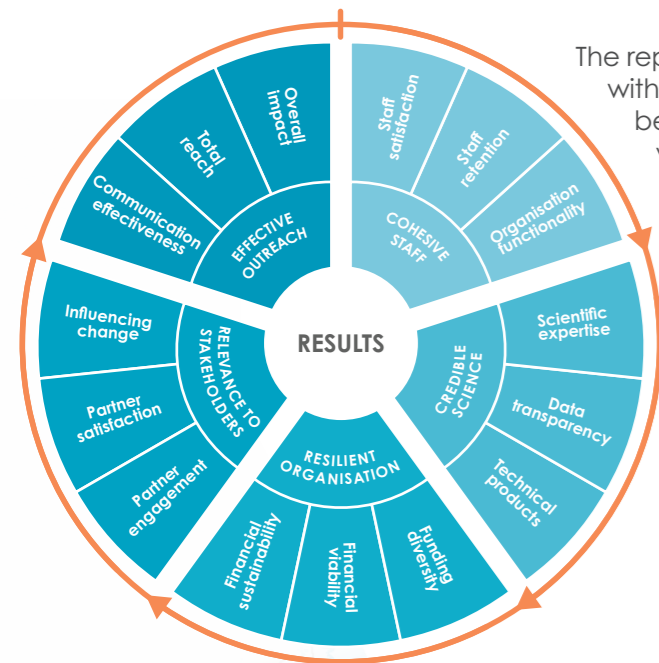
**Resilient organisation:** A key to organisational resilience is the ability of an organisation to be maintained at a productive and effective level (*financial sustainability*). This financial sustainability relies on the overall financial status of the partnership (*financial viability*), aided by increasing its partner numbers, contributions and support, and maintaining a diverse suite of funders (*financial diversity*).



**Credible science:** The various actions and approaches applied by the reef regional partnerships need to be supported by documentation (*technical products*). Data used in regional report cards to inform policy and management need to be made widely available (*data transparency*). Finally, the relevant scientists need to be involved in the process of developing scientifically-robust policies and management decisions (*scientific expertise*).



**Cohesive staff:** Fundamental to any organisation is having staff who can function effectively through both normal (or good) times as well as crises and disruptions (*organisational functionality*). Being able to both recruit and retain staff (*staff retention*) is key to developing a 'corporate memory' and for developing strong stakeholder relationships. Content staff, who enjoy their jobs and who see their contribution as worthwhile, is key to developing cohesive staff (*staff happiness*).



The report card wheel is a sequential set of five goals with three indicators per goal. The sequence begins at the top, with the goal of **cohesive staff** viewed as fundamental, followed clockwise and sequentially by **credible science**, **resilient organisation**, **relevance to stakeholders** and **effective outreach**. Each of the indicators are scored separately for the five reef regional partnership organisations, colour-coded and averaged to create scores for each goal and then averaged again to create a grade (A = Very Good to E = Very Poor) for each partnership organisation.



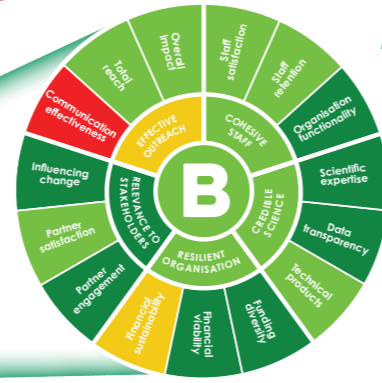
#### WET TROPICS WATERWAYS (est. 2016)

Wet Tropics Waterways partnership scored well overall (B), with the highest scores for cohesive staff and credible science. The organisational resilience scored well, with room for improvement in the financial sustainability indicator. The relevance to stakeholders also scored well, but with room for improvement in the partner engagement indicator. Effective outreach was where the scores were not at satisfactory levels – in particular, the communication effectiveness and overall impact needs improvement.



#### DRY TROPICS PARTNERSHIP FOR HEALTHY WATERS (est. 2018)

Dry Tropics Partnership for Healthy Waters scores were mixed across the various goals, and overall received a C. The strongest aspect of this partnership was credible science, followed by cohesive staff. Both resilient organisation and relevance to stakeholders had mixed results, with challenges in funding diversity and partner engagement being identified. Effective outreach was in need of improvement in terms of communications effectiveness, but there was currently insufficient data to adequately assess total reach and overall impact.



#### MACKAY-WHITSUNDAY-ISAAC HEALTHY RIVERS TO REEF PARTNERSHIP (est. 2014)

Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership scored well overall, with a B grade. The strongest aspect of this partnership was relevance to stakeholders. Cohesive staff and credible science scored well, as did resilient organisation goals, apart from the need for improvement in financial sustainability. However, effective outreach needed improvement, particularly with regard to communication effectiveness.



#### FITZROY PARTNERSHIP FOR RIVER HEALTH (est. 2012)

Fitzroy Partnership for River Health scored well overall, receiving a B+ grade. High scores were achieved across three of the five areas of cohesive staff, credible science and relevance to stakeholders. Resilient organisation scored well, but effective outreach had room for improvement, particularly with regards to communication effectiveness and total reach.



#### GLADSTONE HEALTHY HARBOUR PARTNERSHIP (est. 2014)

Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership received a B- overall with the foundation of cohesive staff and credible science scoring well and very well, respectively. Financial viability was a key issue, affecting the organisation's financial resilience. In addition, influencing change and all indicators within effective outreach still have room for improvement.



#### WET TROPICS WATERWAYS

Wet Tropics Waterways was established in 2016 and has over 50 partners and produces report cards for freshwater, estuaries, inshore and offshore reefs. The partnership also produces regular podcasts and various reports, supported by a Technical Working Group.



#### DRY TROPICS PARTNERSHIP FOR HEALTHY WATERS

Dry Tropics Partnership for Healthy Waters is a relatively newly created organisation (established in 2018) with a small staff. The lower scores are not unexpected given this level of maturity, but a solid foundation of credible science has been created with a Technical Working Group.



#### HEALTHY RIVERS TO REEF PARTNERSHIP MACKAY-WHITSUNDAY-ISAAC

Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership has a well-developed program encompassing a diverse suite of catchments, estuaries and marine environments. Staff have been tracking a range of indicators over the past 5 years including environmental, stewardship, cultural heritage, social, and economic indicators, as well as marine debris and coral bleaching.



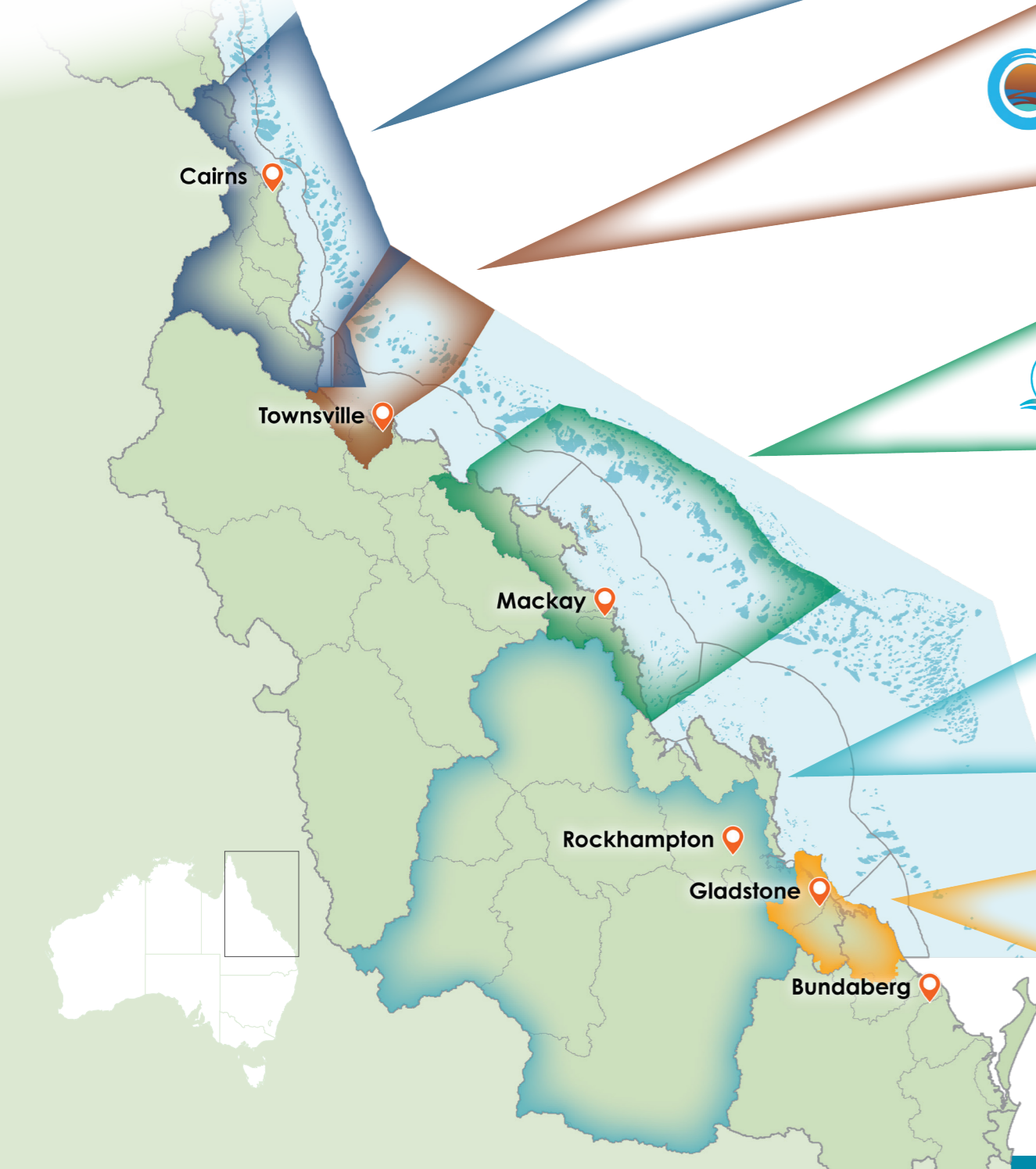
#### FITZROY PARTNERSHIP FOR RIVER HEALTH

Fitzroy Partnership for River Health was Queensland's first regional report card initiative and has played a key role in the establishment of other regional report cards. Backed by the best available science and a diverse network of partners, the partnership has produced eight annual report cards and assesses long-term trends for the region.



#### GLADSTONE HEALTHY HARBOUR PARTNERSHIP

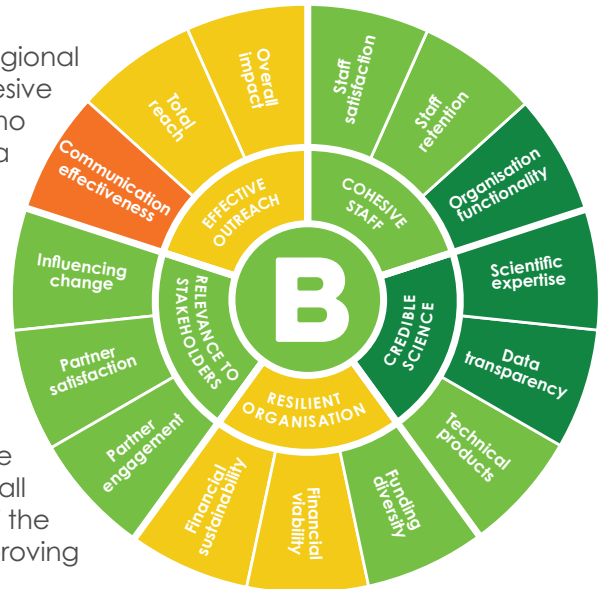
Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership is a well-established program. The Partnership has a well-developed outreach program, particularly with educational resources. In addition, scientifically rigorous report cards with a large number of indicators have been produced annually since 2014.



## OVERALL RESULTS

The overall score created by integrating the five regional partnership scores shows a pattern of strong scores for cohesive staff. Since the regional partnerships have small teams who need to be flexible and effective, having **cohesive staff** is a key fundamental aspect of each regional partnership.

The strong scores for **credible science** are also important for maintaining the integrity of the regional partnerships. The **resilient organisation** scores have room for improvement since each of the regional partnerships had average scores for at least one of the resilient organisation indicators. The **relevance to stakeholders** score overall was reasonable, but there was considerable variability between regional partnerships, indicating that some enhancements are necessary. **Effective outreach** had the poorest score across all partnerships, which could be considered partially a result of the degree of difficulty in achieving overall effectiveness. Improving these scores will be a priority as we move forward.



## EVALUATION PROCESS UNDERTAKEN TO DEVELOP THIS REPORT CARD

This is the first evaluation report card for the collective reef regional partnerships. External evaluators (Darwinian Consulting) were contracted to facilitate report card development and science communication. The *What's Our Grade?* report card is a product of the evaluation process that included reflection on the past two years (2018 and 2019), with input from each regional partnership to establish the goals, indicators and thresholds. As a group, the aim was to challenge ourselves to look at both failings and successes in an open manner, to take on feedback and share learnings. Successive iterations of the report card will track progress on the health of the partnerships and help guide improvements with the ultimate goal of improving water quality for the Reef through successful Reef regional waterway partnerships.

An in-person workshop with all regional partnerships represented was held in Brisbane on 14 February 2020, followed by virtual sessions with the Office of the Great Barrier Reef and regional partnerships. Three surveys were conducted to generate report card scores: 1) All regional partnership staff were given anonymous surveys to assess their perspectives, 2) Executive Officers of each regional partnership provided assessments of their respective partnerships, and 3) Partners of each regional partnership were surveyed to establish their perspective on each regional partnership. Results were tallied, discussed with each regional partnership to detect inconsistencies and incorporated into the final report card.



**Back row (left to right):** Craig Davenport, Leigh Stitz, Gerard Graham, Simon Costanzo, Angela Stokes, Roger Shaw, Jamie Corfield, Charlie Morgan, Ben Hammill, Sharon Marks, Mark Schultz, Richard Hunt, Paulina Kaniewska, Al Grundy, Nyssa Henry, Carl Mitchell. **Second back row (left to right):** Bernadette Hogan, Julie Boyd, Greg Vinall, Sharon Koh, Nicole Flint, Alysha Lee, Eva Abal, Di Tarte. **Front row (left to right):** Rachel D'Arcy, Stephen Turton, Megan Ellis, Bill Dennison.



## For more information

For more information on the reef regional report card partnerships, contact [OfficeoftheGBR@des.qld.gov.au](mailto:OfficeoftheGBR@des.qld.gov.au)

Workshop facilitation and production of this report card by Darwinian Consulting Pty Ltd. Contact Simon Costanzo: [costanzo@darwinian.com.au](mailto:costanzo@darwinian.com.au)

Cover photo: Aerial view of mangroves with Cairns City in the background. Source: Big Cat Green Island Reef Cruises. Cover strip photos (from left to right): Hinchinbrook Channel (Source: Paul Curtis); Aerial view of Townsville (Source: Roslyn Budd - Budd Photography); Cattle Creek, upper Pioneer Valley (Source: Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership), Wetland - Fitzroy River (Source: Fitzroy Partnership for River Health), Gladstone coastline (Source: Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership).

This report card was funded by the Queensland Government's Reef Water Quality Program.



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