

2.5 The community supports and implements sustainability and environmental initiatives that have a positive impact on local wildlife.

Whitsunday Regional Council has partnered with [EarthCheck](#) to become a Sustainable Destination and to support the Healthy Heart Project in its goal to decarbonise the region. The [Whitsundays Healthy Hearth Project](#) (WHHP) not only looks at council's carbon footprint, it also engages the tourism sector. The WHHP has formed partnerships with over 37 local businesses, including island resorts, marinas, and marine tourism operators, to assist them in understanding their carbon footprint and set decarbonisation targets. The Queensland Eco-Certified Tourism Destination Program also provides grant funding to Queensland local government authorities and regional and local tourism operators to support Queensland tourism destinations to achieve globally recognised certification.

Many businesses in our region are also [EcoBiz](#) or [Eco-Tourism Australia](#) certified. The Whitsundays is home to some of the highest levels of Ecotourism certified businesses. Whitsunday Regional Council is also a [Reef Guardian Council](#). The Reef Guardian Council program is managed by The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) and showcases environmentally sustainable practices local governments undertake in the Great Barrier Reef catchment. The [Reef Guardian Councils Climate Change Initiatives Snapshot](#) lays out the individual reef guardian council's activities. See some of Council's other sustainability measures [here](#). Reef Catchments, through the [Mackay Whitsunday Water Quality Program](#), is working with landholders in the sugarcane industry to improve nutrient management, pesticide management, and irrigation practices on farm while maintaining or improving productivity and profitability. The [Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership](#), a collaboration between community, Traditional Owners, farmers and fishers, industry, science, tourism, and government also produces a yearly [Report Card](#) on the condition of the waterways and a [Stewardship Report](#) with sustainability actions from partners.

Some members of the community have taken their commitment to the region to the next level. The Whitsundays piloted a [tourism-led restoration](#) of the Great Barrier Reef. Together with Southern Cross University, Whitsunday tourism operators, vessel owners, and the community collected coral spawn from the ocean's surface during November's annual spawning event, placed it in specially modified larvae nursery pools, and then deployed to damaged reefs. [Boats4Corals](#) is helping up-scale larval re-seeding in the Whitsundays.

Protecting the world renowned beauty and biodiversity of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and ensuring a level playing field for all its users are key aims of the [compliance management](#) undertaken by the Australian and Queensland governments' Reef Joint Field Management Program. A number of Australian and Queensland agencies participate in the compliance program, including [Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services](#), [Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol](#), [Queensland Water Police](#), and [Maritime Boarder Command](#).

The region also has an active marine debris removal group, turtle hospital, and fauna rescue. [Eco Barge Clean Seas Inc.](#) has removed 248,374 kilograms of marine debris/litter from the Whitsundays Islands since July 2009. They have a huge volunteer program and regularly run island and mainland cleanup events. The same organisation also operates the [Whitsunday Turtle Rescue Centre](#) to ensure that any sick or injured marine turtles are provided the care they need. They currently have five quarantine tanks and to date have provided care for over 225 turtles including 69 hatchlings from one nest. [Fauna Rescue Whitsundays](#) provides care for sick, injured, or orphaned native wildlife.

They also provide a 24-hour wildlife hotline service, give informative talks to schools and other interested community organisations, and encourage community participation through outreaches like [Buddies in the Backyard](#).

The Whitsunday Conservation Council has recently been successful in getting “go-slow” buoys installed in front of Cannonvale Beach seagrass meadow to protect the feeding dugong and turtles. This was a large collaborative effort as the area falls under two different jurisdictions. The buoys will alert jetski and other vessel operators that they need to slow down before they are on top of the seagrass area.