

Action Plan Milestone Report

The Reef Guardian Council stewardship program recognises the good environmental work Councils and communities are achieving to help the Great Barrier Reef.

Each year the Council prepares an Action Plan to record the diversity of actions. This annual Milestone Report highlights some of the achievements and positive changes that have occurred over the past year.

Improving waste water treatment

A range of initiatives have been implemented to improve the Council's waste water treatment system and minimise water quality impacts on Douglas waterways and the Great Barrier Reef. Sewer networks were inspected and re-lined and overflow chambers at three sewer pump stations were upgraded to ensure proper screening. Sewer manhole and pump station rehabilitation continued. An outfall flow meter was installed at the Port Douglas plant and the meter at Mossman was relocated to give more accurate readings. Automatic change-over generator systems were installed at main wastewater pump stations for use during severe weather conditions.



Love Where You Live: tackling illegal dumping

Council is promoting a culture of zero tolerance to illegal dumping through our "Love Where You Live. Keep Douglas Clean and Green" education campaign; initiated by displaying a pile of illegal dumping at the Port Douglas Markets and Mossman show.

The Council provided free disposal of 1700 tonnes of green waste and mulched it for re-sale. The Council also provided collection points for a range of waste materials that were sent south to be recycled including over 1000t of packaging material, 320t of scrap metal, 26t of batteries, 14t of tyres and 10t of waste engine oil.



Recycling refrigerant gas

The fluorocarbon refrigerant contained in air conditioners and refrigerators can be extremely harmful to the environment. One kilogram of refrigerant emissions has the same greenhouse impact as two tonnes of carbon dioxide, which is the equivalent of running a car for six months.

Douglas Shire Council Waste Services commenced a recycling program for refrigerant and LPG gas in February 2015. The program has resulted in the recovery of 144 kg of refrigerant gas from 342 gas bottles and 765 fridges and air conditioning units.



Fish Ladders

Marine life are as delighted as residents of Degarra with the new Banabilla causeways project. The two new causeways are a joint flood mitigation initiative of Council and the Queensland Government with the added environmental benefit of the ability for marine life to access parts of the river system previously off-limits. The old causeways' crushed pipes didn't allow the free movement of marine life up and downstream but, in the first week after completion, sharks, stingrays and even a two-metre groper were observed relishing their new access. Council has installed fish ladders during construction of Woobidda Bridge, Spring, and Connelly Causeways.



Natural Areas Rehabilitation

Hiptage is a locally declared pest vine capable of smothering large rainforest trees. Council has spent over 2000 staff hours surveying and treating Hiptage, a process involving aerial surveys to find the vines, then ground work in very rough mountainous terrain to confirm and treat.

Council's pig trapping program has resulted in 268 feral pigs trapped and destroyed and we have recruited and trained a new pest animal controller to continue the work. Council has also completed revegetation works in sensitive areas including the planting of 628 trees in three locations in Cassowary.



Working together today for a healthier Reef tomorrow