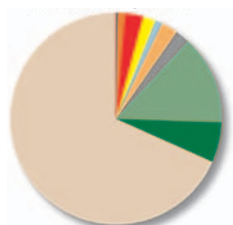


Burnett Mary region

First Report Card 2009 Baseline
Reef Water Quality Protection Plan

Regional profile

The Burnett Mary region is approximately 53,000 square kilometres and encompasses the World Heritage-listed Great Sandy Strait. This includes Fraser Island and the southern tip of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The region has a moderate, subtropical climate with mean annual rainfall of around 1000 millimetres. **This report card presents results up to 2009 and therefore does not include the more recent flood events which will be presented in subsequent reports.**



Burnett Mary region land use

- Horticulture
- Mining
- Intensive animal production
- Urban and other intensive uses
- Sugarcane
- Water and wetlands
- Other cropping (predominantly grains)
- Other uses
- Forestry
- Conservation and protected areas
- Grazing

Key findings

- Cutting-edge or best management practices for herbicides are used by eight per cent of sugarcane growers and 70 per cent of horticulture producers.
- The loss of riparian vegetation between 2004 and 2008 was the highest among the Great Barrier Reef regions (1.04 per cent).
- Seagrass meadows in the region are in decline or have failed to recover from the effects of flooding in 2006.

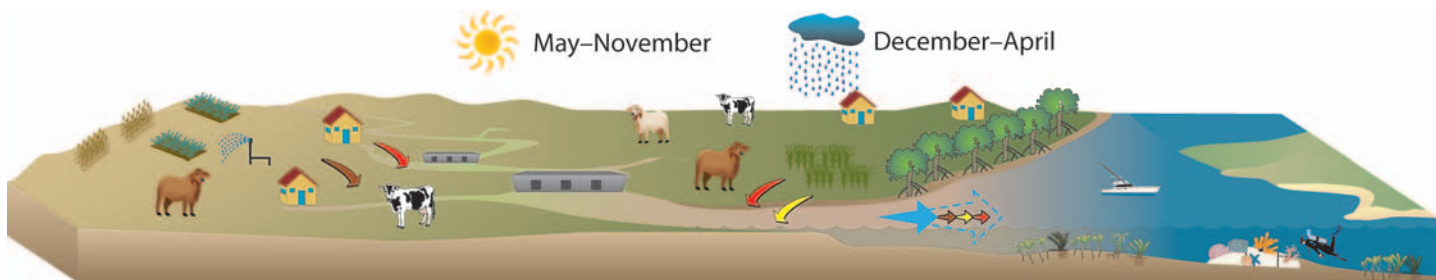


Map of the Burnett Mary region and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park showing the paddock, catchment and marine monitoring sites.

Paddock

Catchment

Reef



The Burnett Mary region has a subtropical climate, with more rain in the summer and in the coastal areas that delivers sediments, nutrients and pesticides to the inshore and sometimes offshore portions of the reef in pulsed flows which can be affected by water reservoirs and dams. The landscape has mixed land use, including grazing, dairy, horticulture, sugarcane and other cropping. Surface and groundwater are important for irrigation. Urban centres such as Bundaberg, Hervey Bay and Maryborough are located on the coastal strip, with other towns such as Gympie and Kingaroy located inland. The region includes the Great Sandy Biosphere, and the Fraser Island World Heritage Area is located offshore. Habitats include offshore reefs, intertidal and deep-water seagrass and mangroves. Reef-based tourism, as well as commercial and recreational fishing, are an important part of the regional economy.

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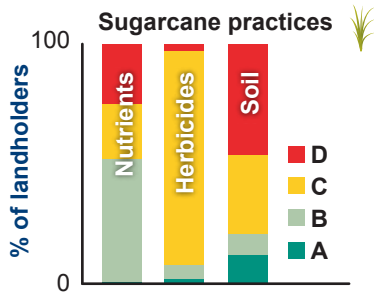
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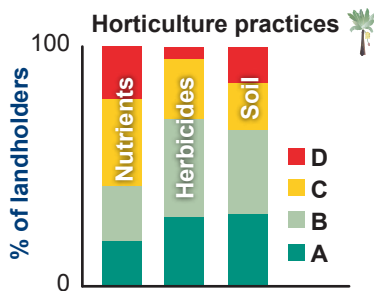
Land practice results

Adoption of improved management practices varies by industry and practice. The adoption of improved management practices is presented using the following framework:

- A – Cutting-edge practices**
- B – Best practices**
- C – Common practices**
- D – Unacceptable practices**



Cutting-edge (A) or best management (B) practices are used by 52 per cent of sugarcane growers for nutrients, eight per cent for herbicides and 21 per cent for soil.

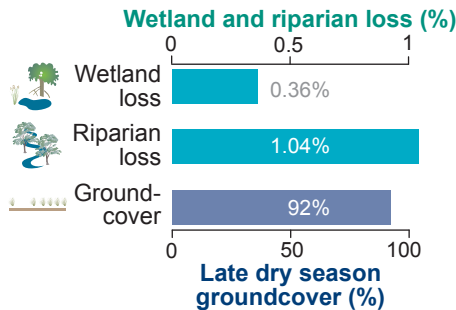


Cutting-edge (A) or best management (B) practices are used by 42 per cent of horticulture producers for nutrients, 70 per cent for herbicides and 65 per cent for soil.

Management practice adoption data for the grazing and grain industries is not available at this time.

Catchment results

Catchment indicators include wetland and riparian loss, groundcover and catchment loads.

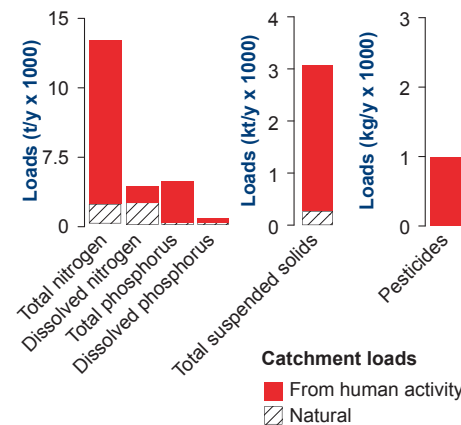


Loss of wetlands between 2001 and 2005 was 180 hectares (0.36 per cent). Wetland loss since pre-European times is 30 per cent.

The loss of riparian vegetation between 2004 to 2008 was 9185 hectares (1.04 per cent), the highest proportion among the Great Barrier Reef regions.

Late dry season groundcover is high (92 per cent).

Catchment loads

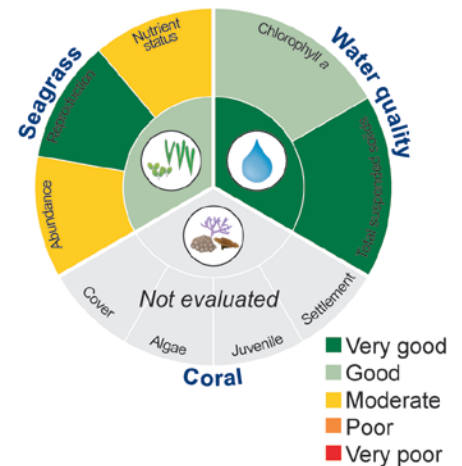


The estimated total suspended solids loads are 3.1 million tonnes per year, of which 2.8 million tonnes are from human activity. Most of this originates from grazing lands within the region.

The estimated total nitrogen loads are 13,000 tonnes per year, of which 12,000 tonnes are from human activity.

Marine results

Marine results are good and very good for seagrass and water quality, respectively. Further validation of remotely sensed water quality data for the Burnett Mary region is required to verify this assessment. Coral was not evaluated in this region.



Water quality: Inshore waters within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park portion of the Burnett Mary region are in very good condition.

Seagrass: Seagrass meadows in the region, although in good condition overall, are in decline or have failed to recover from the effects of flooding in 2006. The presence of many reproductive structures suggests recovery may be possible.

What is being done?

The Burnett Mary Regional Group works with industry and landholders to improve land management practices and improve water quality across the region. Land management practices are being improved through capacity-building activities and the use of incentives. This will reduce sediments, nutrients and pesticides entering waterways and ultimately the reef.