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.

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.
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

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 and 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).

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.