

WET TROPICS REGION

Daintree catchment water quality targets

Catchment profile

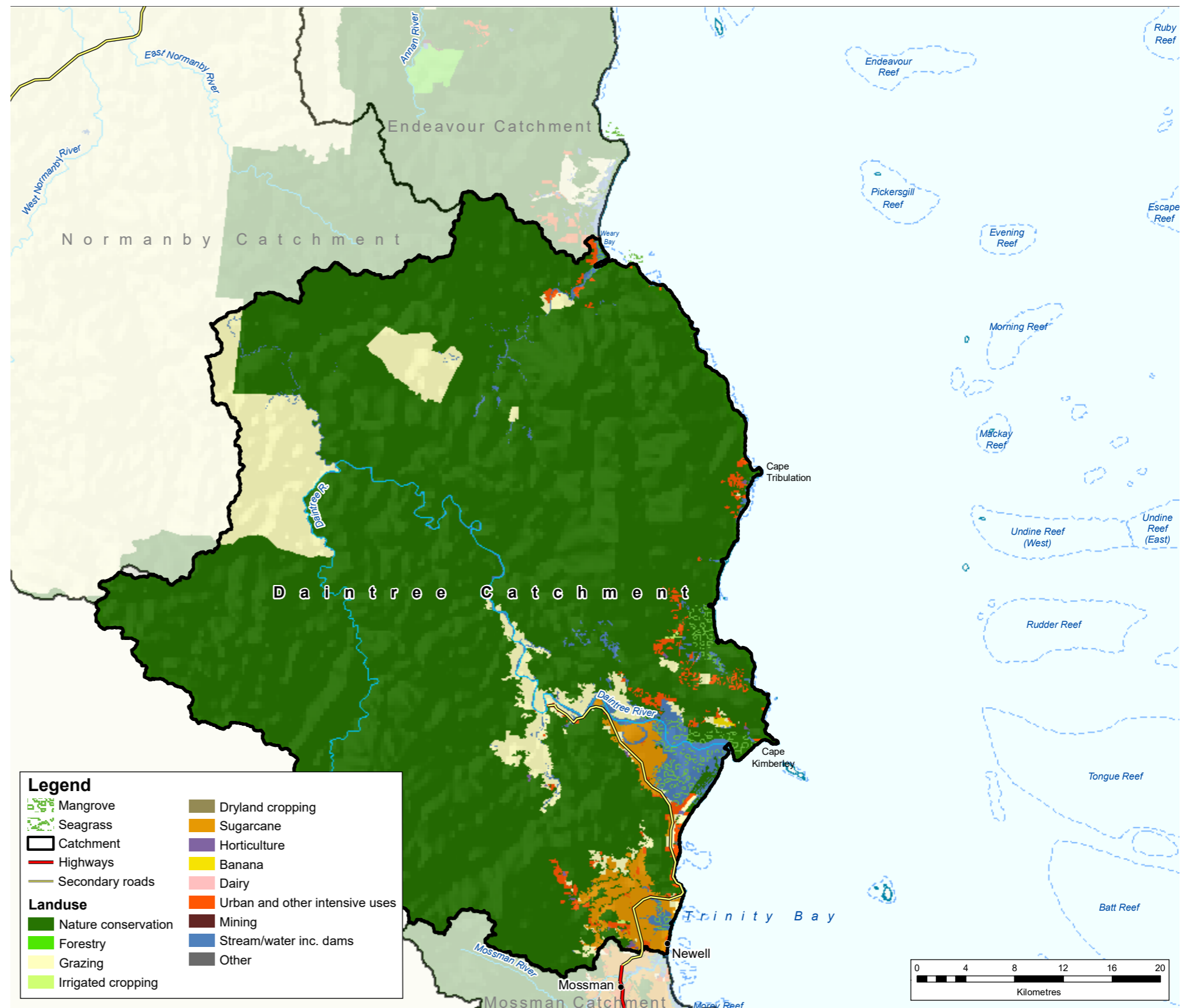
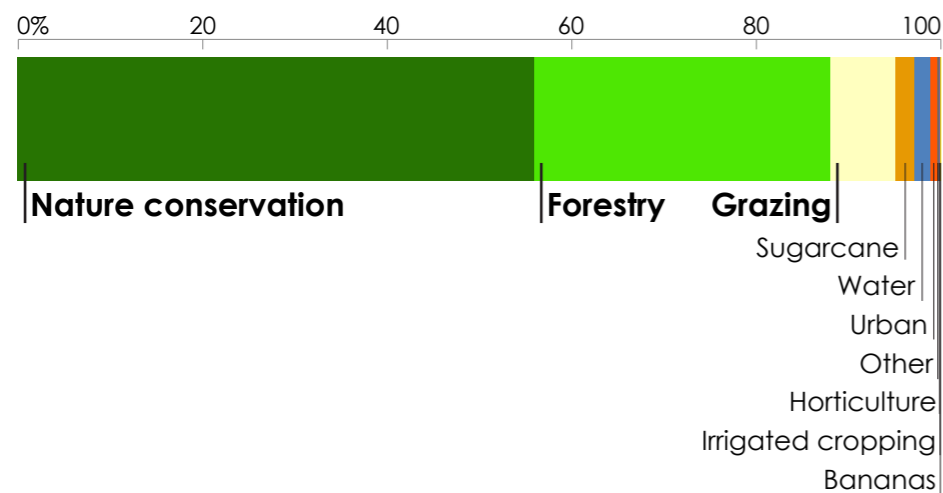
Under the Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan, water quality targets have been set for each catchment that drains to the Great Barrier Reef. These targets (given over the page) consider land use and pollutant loads from each catchment.

The Daintree catchment covers 2107 km² (10% of the Wet Tropics region). Rainfall averages 2521 mm a year, which results in river discharges to the coast of about 2887 GL each year.

The Daintree catchment is the northernmost catchment in the Wet Tropics region. The catchment is divided by two major waterways, the Daintree River in the south and the Bloomfield River in the north, and a number of smaller waterways that flow from the mountain ranges to the coast. The majority of the catchment is covered by mountain ranges with a narrow lowland coastal plain. The highland section is mostly reserved for conservation and is included in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Agriculture and urban areas are primarily located in the lowland coastal section.

Land uses in the Daintree catchment

The main land uses are nature conservation (56%), forestry (32%), and grazing (7%).



Legend

Mangrove	Dryland cropping
Seagrass	Sugarcane
Catchment	Horticulture
Highways	Banana
Secondary roads	Dairy
Landuse	Urban and other intensive uses
Nature conservation	Mining
Forestry	Stream/water inc. dams
Grazing	Other
Irrigated cropping	

2025 water quality targets and priorities

End-of-catchment anthropogenic load reductions required from 2013 baseline

Dissolved inorganic nitrogen (DIN)	Fine sediment	Particulate phosphorus (PP)	Particulate nitrogen (PN)
maintain current load	maintain current load	maintain current load	maintain current load

Pesticides

To protect at least **99%** of aquatic species at the end of catchment

The Daintree catchment has minimal anthropogenic pollutant loads. The aim is to maintain current water quality so that there are no increases in sediment or nutrient loads.

The 2025 targets aim to reduce the amounts of fine sediments, nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) and pesticides flowing to the reef. Each target for sediment and nutrients is expressed as: (a) the percentage load reduction required compared with the 2013 estimated load of each pollutant from the catchment; and (b) the load reductions required in tonnes. Progress made since 2013 will count towards these targets. [Previously reported](#) progress between 2009 and 2013 has already been accounted for when setting the targets. The pesticide target aims to ensure that concentrations of pesticides at the end of each catchment are low enough that 99% of aquatic species are protected. The targets are ecologically relevant for the Great Barrier Reef, and are necessary to ensure that broadscale land uses have no detrimental effect on the reef's health and resilience.

A high percentage reduction target may not necessarily mean it is the highest priority. The priorities (ranked by colour) reflect the relative risk assessment priorities for water quality improvement, based on an independent report, the [2017 Scientific Consensus Statement](#). The priorities reflect scientific assessment of the likely risks of pollutants damaging coastal and marine ecosystems.

Water quality relative priority

Very high	Very high
High	High
Moderate	Moderate
Low	Low
Minimal	Minimal
Not assessed	Not assessed

