



Reef BLITZ



2017

Uniting citizen science from coast to coral

In October and November 2017, ReefBlitz featured more than 30 events engaging Queensland communities in citizen science and practical conservation activities to look after the Reef.

Activities were delivered by members of the Reef Citizen Science Alliance and partners. The Alliance is a network of coastal and marine citizen science programs collaborating to amplify citizen science that contributes to the health and resilience of Queensland's reefs.

Activities included surveys of critical habitats (like reefs & mangroves), wildlife (such as coastal birdlife and marine megafauna), and signs of stress (like coastal marine debris). In addition to collecting data, some events included restoration activities such as revegetation and beach clean ups.

This is the fourth annual ReefBlitz event, which united reef citizen science across the State. Collectively, the events contribute a snapshot of reef health and showcase opportunities of how communities can actively contribute to looking after reefs from catchment to coral.

This event also marks the next phase in citizen science collaboration. Together with new host Conservation Volunteers Australia, we seek to strengthen connections between catchment and marine citizen science, and amplify the amazing work delivered by citizen science across the Reef.



751 active participants



36 events



>3,000 volunteer hours



20,885 data points



41 partners & supporters

www.reefblitz.com

 **REEF**
CITIZEN SCIENCE
ALLIANCE



Partnerships and projects from ReefBlitz 2017 included:



Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) launched ReefBlitz in Mackay, bringing together BirdLife Mackay, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, with a birthday cake for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, which was declared in Oct 1981. In Gladstone, CVA brought together 12 local groups for a collaborative coastal citizen science project that continues through 2018 with support of a Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership grant.



Reef Catchments, CVA and Reef Check Australia partnered to deliver their first collaborative 3 day Marine Classrooms program as part of ReefBlitz. 14 high school students spent 3 days in the Whitsundays undertaking reef surveys, dune restoration and beach clean ups.



Cairns and Far North Environment Centre and Great Barrier Reef Legacy partnered to launch a new Mangrove Watch program for Cairns. This project builds on the pilot from ReefBlitz 2016 and was supported through Cairns Regional Council, Advance Queensland and ReefBlitz.



CVA's CreekWatch activities in Townsville throughout October highlighted the community's work in monitoring water quality as part of the Creek to Coral initiative. Water quality is a particular pressure for nearshore reef environments.



Reef Check Australia and Reef Ecologic worked on a project on Magnetic Island to engage volunteers in reef citizen science, algae experiments and beach clean ups. Social research surveys will provide insights on how the experience influences participants.



CoralWatch and Reef Check Australia visited locations from Cairns to Brisbane to help more people get involved in programs to look after their local reefs. Teams even had the chance to show off citizen science for Australian Chief Scientist, Dr. Alan Finkel onboard Reef Magic Cruises.





Partnerships and projects from ReefBlitz 2017 included:



More than 90 people gathered together in Cairns for reef and coastal activities on Fitzroy Island and nearby Moore Reef. Reef Check Australia launched their first survey site on the Island's fringing reef, Coralwatch checked up on coral colour, tourism staff with Sunlover Reef Cruises had the chance for a crash course in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Eye on the Reef program, and CVA teams cleaned up these beautiful beaches!



Fitzroy Partnership for River Health organised a Tilapia Terminator and Wetland Care day to showcase recreational fishing and water quality citizen science programs. More than 80 people joined in to contribute and an annual report was generated for Yeppen Yeppen Lagoon via the Mywater community portal.



Eco Barge Clean Seas ran a successful Clean Streets and Creeks program launch with the Green Army program. Teams collected 490 kilograms of debris from beaches a notable number of plastic bags and remnants. Findings were documented through Tangaroa Blue's Australian Marine Debris Initiative database.



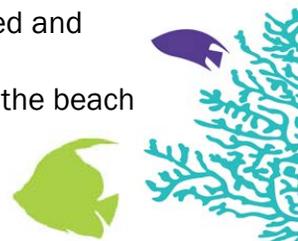
Wildlife Queensland organised mangrove and seagrass surveys in Moreton Bay to re-visit existing monitoring locations and collect critical long-term data on these coastal habitats that help support healthy marine environments for coral reefs.



Great Barrier Reef Legacy ran an event for more than 90 students on Lowe Isles to undertake reef and water quality monitoring activities, contributing to GBRMPA's Eye on the Reef program and boosting skills for future Reef stewards.



Tangaroa Blue Foundation volunteers collected and recorded more than 300kgs of debris from Four Mile Beach. The weirdest item found on the beach clean ups was a saline drip bag!





2017 at a glance

Impact factor

Research into participant experiences at ReefBlitz events was undertaken in collaboration with ARC Centre of Excellence for Environmental Decisions (CEED). Participant surveys provide insights into the opportunities to reach new audiences and use citizen science as a pathway for sparking ongoing environmental behaviours. In a survey of 121 event participants:

42%

had not heard of citizen science before ReefBlitz

71%

learnt about a new behaviour to protect reefs & coasts

50%

said they were very likely to adopt the behaviour in the following month

Event figures

41

 event partners & supporters

\$130k

 in estimated in-kind event support & volunteer time contributions

2

 launch events for new ongoing projects

ReefBlitz 2018

Join us in 2018 to building on the ReefBlitz model. 2018 is the Third International Year of the Reef and it is a critical time to galvanise the community to contribute to efforts that deliver best-practice activities to support reef health and resilience.

Get involved: contact info@reefcitizenscience.org.



SUPPORTED by the REEF CITIZEN SCIENCE ALLIANCE & FOUNDING PARTNERS

