



MEDIA RELEASE

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17 November 2011

Key water monitoring research released

The Port Curtis Integrated Monitoring Program (PCIMP) today released its second Ecosystem Health Report Card based on extensive monitoring in the Gladstone Harbour between July 2008 and November 2010.

This EcoCard reports results from three years of monitoring in eight distinct zones in the and around the Gladstone Harbour including the Narrows, Fisherman's Landing, Auckland Creek and Boyne Tannum.

PCIMP Independent Chair Professor Chad Hewitt said the EcoCard provided PCIMP members and the community with a scientifically-based insight into the long-term health of the Gladstone harbour and surrounding waterways up to November 2010.

"The PCIMP monitoring program focuses on detecting long term changes in the health of the overall Port Curtis Ecosystem, rather than monitoring specific developmental impacts," explained Professor Hewitt.

"The objective of this EcoCard is to assist all stakeholders with future planning and sustainable strategies in terms of their long term impact on the water quality and local marine environments."

The water monitoring was undertaken by independent team of researchers lead by environmental consulting and research company Vision Environment, directed by Dr Leonie Andersen and Dr Felicity Melville.

The monitoring involves independent sample collection and assessment under two main themes – water quality and intertidal and coastal monitoring. Measurements were taken at 243 water and sediment sites spanning from the top of the Narrows to Rodds Bay and incorporating the estuaries in between.

"The results proved similar to those of the first EcoCard released in 2008 suggesting very little change had occurred over the six years of monitoring," Dr Andersen said. "Looking at the overall grades for each zone most scored an 'A' with two scoring an 'A+'. The lowest grade was 'B+' in the South Trees zone which is still a very positive result."

"It's important to clarify that these results are based on three years of monitoring up to November 2010 and therefore are not indicative of the impacts of the big Queensland wet of summer 2010 which may have contributed to various changes in the harbour this year. However the results in this EcoCard do provide a critical baseline of information prior to future developments and are therefore a significant reference point."

The full 2008-2010 Port Curtis Ecosystem health Report Card can be viewed on the PCIMP website: www.pchimp.com.au

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