

## How do you use and value Townsville's waterways?

### Context

Creek to Coral is the manager of a Coastal Catchments Initiative project for the Black and Ross River Basins. The Coastal Catchments Initiative (CCI) is an Australian Government funded program aimed at achieving targeted reductions in pollution discharges to coastal water quality 'hot spots'. The Great Barrier Reef Catchment is a priority hot spot.

The main task of the Creek to Coral CCI project is the development of a Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP).

The WQIP study area covers most waterways within the new Townsville City Council local government area, in particular the Black and Ross River Basins. It also includes coastal/marine waters e.g. Cleveland and Halifax Bays, as well as Magnetic Island (see Overview Map on next page).

For consultation purposes the region has been divided into 3 main areas:

1. Magnetic Island;
2. Rural (Crystal Creek to Black River and upper Ross River); and
3. Urban and rural residential (Bohle River, lower Ross River and waterways to Cape Cleveland).

We are seeking comments on waterway uses and values in all of these areas including the adjoining coastal and marine areas.

To assist you at the workshop information on the waterways in the study area has already been gathered and a technical panel has made an initial assessment of areas that could be considered as having high ecological values. These will be outlined and discussed at the workshop.

We have also developed a survey which has been sent out to stakeholders and placed on the Creek to Coral website. Responses to the survey have been collated and, together with land use mapping and water use information, form the basis of our draft human use of waterways information.

We now need your input on waterway uses/values and to let us know if we have identified all the areas with high ecological values (collectively known as Environmental Values).

### How will this information be used?

Once we know the Environmental Values (uses and values) of these waterways, we will include them in the Black/Ross Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP). The Draft WQIP will develop water quality objectives to protect your waterway Environmental Values and then priority management actions to achieve the objectives.

### Further Opportunities for Input

There will be further opportunities for stakeholder input to this process in response to draft results from the workshops and during the public release of the draft WQIP.

Further information about Creek to Coral's CCI WQIP can be found on the website at: [www.creektocoral.org.au](http://www.creektocoral.org.au)  
The website also has the survey with similar tables to those used in the workshop. If you have any other thoughts about waterway values and uses or you think someone else might be interested in completing a survey, check out the website and tell other people about it as well.

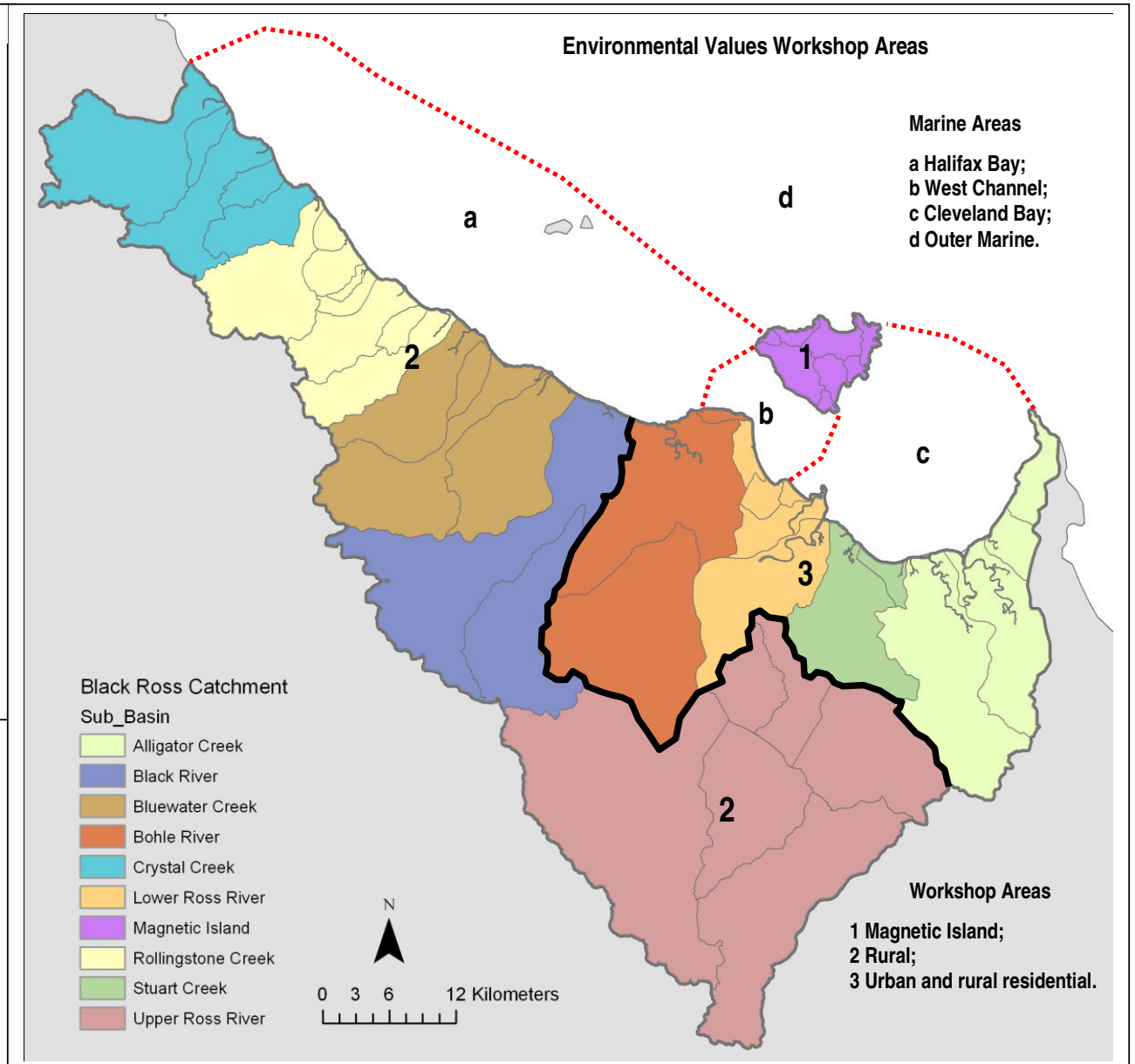
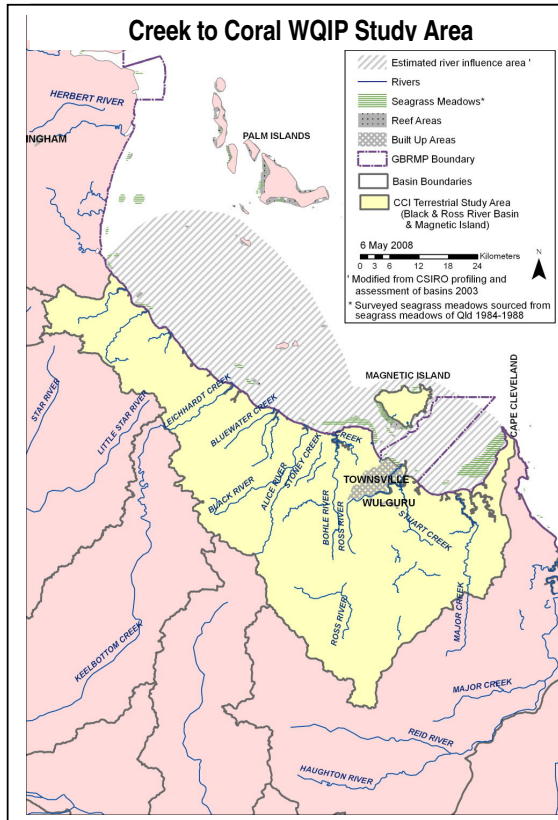
### Further inquiries

For further information on the Creek to Coral Coastal Catchments Initiative Water Quality Improvement Plan and the consultation process for this project contact:

**Chris Manning** Ph 07 47278660  
[chris.manning@townsville.qld.gov.au](mailto:chris.manning@townsville.qld.gov.au)

or **John Gunn** Ph 0413019359  
[earth@mackay.net.au](mailto:earth@mackay.net.au)

## Overview Map









### What are Environmental Values?

Environmental Values are defined by the National Water Quality Management Strategy (NWQMS) and are included in Queensland's Environmental Protection (Water) Policy 1997 (Water EPP).

Determining the Environmental Values (EVs) of waterways is a basic step in the preparation of a Water Quality Improvement Plan. EVs as defined by the NWQMS are divided into two major groupings (see table below):

- Environmental values of aquatic ecosystems; and
- Environmental values for human use (divided into a number of categories).

		Maintaining aquatic ecosystems
		Primary industries (irrigation, farm use, stock watering, aquaculture, consumption of fish/shellfish)
		Recreational purposes (primary recreation, secondary recreation, visual appreciation)
		Drinking water
		Industrial use
		Maintaining cultural and spiritual values

### How will we identify Environmental Values?

Creek to Coral has organised workshops with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) to gather information from community members to establish draft environmental values.

Prior to the workshops the EPA and GBRMPA have worked with Creek to Coral and scientific experts to identify waterway ecological values including draft High Ecological Value (HEV) freshwaters, estuaries and coastal/marine waters. GBRMPA is also working closely with the EPA and Creek to Coral to identify high ecological value areas in the Marine Park.

Along with these draft HEV areas, Creek to Coral and the EPA have summarised available information on existing human uses throughout the WQIP area as an input to discussions on these uses and values at the workshops. This includes land use/water use mapping and results of the survey that was sent out to stakeholders in February and is posted on the Creek to Coral website.

### Workshop Process













Members of the Creek to Coral team will outline the process for developing the Water Quality Improvement Plan and the process for the workshop (see Table 1 for a description of environmental values and questions to be considered during the workshops).

Attendees will then go through a list of the waterways and identify human uses (before lunch). This will be done by recording uses in a table provided at the workshop and, if required, marking areas on specially prepared maps.

For aquatic ecosystem environmental values (after lunch), the collated information on potential high ecological value (HEV) waters will be outlined, then discussed. HEV areas include National Parks, Fish Habitat areas and certain areas in Marine Parks. There will be an opportunity to comment on the proposed areas, suggest any changes, indicate support for the potential areas and suggest any new HEV areas or other natural assets in more modified systems which you think need to be identified.

The workshop will then wrap up with the Creek to Coral team advising of further opportunities for input to the WQIP.

Table 1 **Environmental values and questions to be considered at stakeholder workshops**

Environmental Values	Supporting Details	Questions
<b>AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS</b>		
<b>Aquatic Ecosystems</b>	 Pristine or modified <b>Aquatic Ecosystems</b> –three possible “Levels of Protection” apply (see Level 1 - HEV systems below)	
High conservation/ ecological value systems (HEV)	Systems are largely unmodified or have undergone little change. Often found within national parks, conservation reserves or inaccessible locations. Targets aim to maintain no discernable change from this natural condition (i.e. no physical, chemical and biological change)	Are waterways largely unmodified or changed very little? Where are they?
Environmental management goals for all aquatic ecosystems	Estuarine/Coastal/Marine	What components of ecosystems do you want to protect e.g. reefs, seagrasses, mangroves, dugongs, turtles, fish, shellfish?
	Freshwater	What components of ecosystems do you want to protect e.g. turtles, fish, macroinvertebrates, riparian vegetation, instream habitats, flows?
<b>HUMAN USES</b>		
<b>Primary Industries</b>	 <b>Irrigating</b> crops such as sugar cane, lucerne, etc	Where is the water used for irrigation? What crops, etc are irrigated?
	 Water for <b>Farm Use</b> such as in fruit packing or milking sheds, etc	Where is the water used around farms for washing down areas or fruit packing?
	 <b>Stock Watering</b>	Where is the water used for watering stock? What type of stock?
	 Water for <b>Aquaculture</b> such as barramundi or red claw farming	Where is the water used in aquaculture operations and what species are cultivated?
	 <b>Human Consumption</b> of wild or stocked fish or crustaceans	Where is there consumption of wild or stocked fish or crustaceans?
<b>Recreation &amp; Aesthetics</b>	 <b>Primary recreation</b> with direct contact with water such as swimming or snorkelling	Are there any recreational activities where people are fully immersed in the water e.g. swimming, snorkelling? If so, where?
	 <b>Secondary recreation</b> with indirect contact with water such as boating, canoeing or sailing	Are there any recreational activities where people are possibly splashed with water e.g. fishing, boating, sailing? If so, where?
	 <b>Visual appreciation</b> but no contact with water such as picnicking, bushwalking, sightseeing	What areas of waterways are regularly used by people who enjoy looking at and being near the waterway?
<b>Drinking Water</b>	 <b>Raw Drinking Water</b> supplies	Where do people or local governments take water from the river for water supplies?
<b>Industrial uses</b>	 Water for <b>Industrial Use</b> such as power generation, manufacturing plants	What are the industries that take water from the river for their operations and where does this occur?
<b>Cultural &amp; Spiritual</b>	 <b>Cultural and spiritual</b> values	What are the cultural and spiritual values associated with these waterways?