



# Seagrass-Watch E-Bulletin

**31 May 2013**

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## NEWS

### **Coal terminal developer questions dredge spoil research (Australia)**

30 May 2013, ABC Local

The developer of the Abbot Point coal terminal in north Queensland says it has concerns about new research which suggests dredge spoil moves further than previously predicted. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) revealed the draft research at this week's Senate hearings. It found that dredge spoil could concentrate in very sensitive areas like seagrass beds and inshore coral reefs. It also suggests that strong dispersal of the sediment may lead to less of an effect on those areas.

North Queensland Bulk Ports plans to dredge at Abbot Point near Bowen. In a statement, the company says it has reviewed the research but it is concerned about the ability of the modelling to accurately predict the risk to the reef. GBRMPA spokesman Dr Russell Reichhelt says it is still reviewing the study, but it will be released later this year as part of a comprehensive assessment of the reef.

Yesterday, Queensland Senator Larissa Waters said the Federal Government needed to request more information about plans to dump dredge spoil at sea from the Abbot Point coal terminal. Senator Waters says the company needs to be up-front with the public too. "The obligation on them is to speak not only with fisher folk but also then be clear about what they're proposing," she said. "Clearly this proposal is up in the air, the details aren't yet resolved. "Environment Minister [Tony Burke] should not make a decision until we know the full details of what's going to get dumped where and the full impacts of that are understood."

*more..... <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html>*

*Story also covered by:*

*<http://www.dailymercury.com.au/news/spoil-campaign-unrelenting-abbot-pt-expansion/1887462/>*

### ***Pesticides authority open to reviewing diuron ban (Australia)***

*29 May 2013, ABC Online*

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Management Authority (APVMA) says it would consider reviewing a ban on the use of the herbicide diuron. The APVMA has told a federal budget estimates hearing it is no longer concerned about the herbicide's impact on the biodiversity of the Great Barrier Reef off Queensland. It said it would consider reviewing the ban if new evidence and research on the herbicide's use in cane farms was submitted.

North Queensland Senator Ian Macdonald says cane farmers desperately need the authority to lift the ban. "They no longer think that it's a problem for the reef," he said. "They do think it's a problem for primary and secondary waterways, but again I think the farmers, through Reef Rescue and other programs, have done all the work necessary to make sure these chemicals don't flow on unwantedly into streams and rivers."

Senator Macdonald says it is time for the ban to be lifted. "The authority said that they were no longer concerned about the impact of the chemical on the reef biodiversity," he said. "They indicated they had discounted that some time ago. "What their concern was now was the impact on aquatic life in primary and secondary waterways and streams."

*more..... <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html>*

### ***Dredge spoil may have wider reaching impacts (Australia)***

*29 May 2013, Mackay Daily Mercury*

The dumping of dredge spoil on the Great Barrier Reef from port developments along the Queensland coast could have effects as big as sediment run-off, Senate estimates was told on Tuesday. Under questioning during hearings in Canberra, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority scientist Dr Adam Smith made the comment.

The revelation come as the July deadline for Environment Minister Tony Burke to consider the approval of a 3 million cubic metre dredging project at Abbot Point, near Mackay. Dr Smith said new research which included ocean currents had shown the impacts of dumping dredge spoil on the reef could be more extensive than previously thought.

GBRMPA representative Andrew Skeat also spoke during the meeting. He said more recent work had suggested the quantum of suspended sediments moving up and down the coast due to dredging remobilisation was "in the same order of magnitude as what is coming out of the rivers".

*more..... <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html>*

*Story also covered by:*

*<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/reef-research-finds-spoils-spread-further/story-fn59niix-1226652566501>*

*<http://www.warwickdailynews.com.au/news/scientist-claims-dumping-dredge-waste-destroy-reef/1887308/>*

### ***Corps aims to replant seagrass (FL, USA)***

*28 May 2013, Florida Today*

The Indian River Lagoon may soon undergo a transplant. Water managers plan to harvest seagrass from healthier spots of the lagoon to transplant to the bald spots made barren by years of algae blooms. The St. Johns River Water Management District has applied for a federal permit to transplant seagrass to 30 sites in the lagoon and the Banana River. The sites range from Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge to Titusville, to Vero Beach, according to a public notice released Wednesday by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Biologists hope to restore some of the almost 74 square miles of seagrass lost since 2009, much of it clouded out by algae blooms. Seagrass provides prime habitat for fish, crabs and other marine life and is considered a key barometer of the estuary's overall health. Each acre of seagrass supports about 10,000 fish and \$5,000 to \$10,000 in economic activity in the lagoon region, according to water management district and other studies.

According to the corps' public notice, seagrass would be harvested — with hand tools only, no machinery — and manually installed at the recipient study sites. The restoration sites would be 100 meters from shore and cover about 100 square meters of the lagoon bottom. The planned cost for the three-year transplant project is \$85,000, according

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to Hank Largin, a water management district spokesman. Donor sites where seagrass will be harvested include just off Pine Island on Merritt Island, just north of A. Max Brewer Memorial Parkway in Titusville and near Vero Beach.  
*more..... <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html>*

*Story also covered by:*  
*<http://www.floridatoday.com/article/20130529/NEWS01/305290019/Officials-want-transplant-seagrass-Lagoon-bald-spots->*  
*<http://www.floridatoday.com/article/20130529/NEWS01/305290019/Corps-aims-replant-seagrass>*

### **Bay anglers might snare something big (NSW, Australia)**

*29 May 2013, South Coast Register*

Researchers from the University of Wollongong are running an experiment on Jervis Bay seagrass between Murray's Boat Ramp and Hole-In-The-Wall from now until August. Fishermen have been asked to avoid the area as a total of 36 cages have been placed within the seagrass meadow to help researchers, who have partnered with Booderee National Park and Jervis Bay Marine Park, to determine the importance of the seagrass meadows for organisms in Jervis Bay.

*more..... <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html>*

### **Researchers sow seeds of seagrass transplant success (WA, Australia)**

*27 May 2013, Science Network Western Australia*

Western Australian researchers have had a major breakthrough by successfully transplanting seagrass – considered the forests of the marine world – in a section of Cockburn Sound. Seagrass trials since the 1980s nationally and internationally have been largely unsuccessful, and costly. But a study by researchers from UWA's Oceans Institute and Murdoch University, in collaboration with the Kings Park's Botanic Garden and Parks Authority has bucked the trend with a successful four-year transplant trial at Cockburn Sound.

UWA's Oceans Institute Professor Gary Kendrick says with this trial, held between 2004 and 2008, researchers had changed their methodology by looking at the quality of the sediment or soil and the genetic quality of the donor plant, rather than just the water conditions. Sprigs of the species *Posidonia australis*, sourced from a naturally occurring seagrass meadow on Parmelia Bank, at the northern end of Cockburn Sound, were also securely anchored at 50cm shoot plantings into bare sand at the 3.2 hectare trial site.

Prof Kendrick says at the end of the trial, the meadow had become healthy and self-sustaining, and levels of genetic diversity were also very high. Prof Kendrick says the genetic diversity of the seagrass chosen and the choice of site may have helped with the success of the Cockburn Sound trial. But he says the trial's success will help other researchers attempting to restore seagrass meadows.

*more..... <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html>*

### **Annual health check shows Moreton Bay's turtle population on the rebound (QLD, Australia)**

*23 May 2013, Herald Sun*

Moreton Bay's turtle population is continuing to show signs of recovery following the devastating 2011 floods. The Environment Department's Dr Colin Limpus yesterday led an annual health check of the bay's turtles on the eve of World Turtle Day today. A small sample of the population were wrangled in the water and brought aboard a departmental barge to be weighed, measured and given a general health check to gauge how the 10,000-strong population was coping compared to last year.

Dr Limpus, the department's chief scientist (aquatic threatened species), who was accompanied by Environment Minister Andrew Powell on the trip, said the signs were good. But he warned the animals were still under threat from boat strikes and plastic wrap and containers making their way into Moreton Bay

Mr Powell said he was keen to ensure the health checking program was replicated in other turtle habitats across the state, including Port Curtis and areas further north. Dr Limpus also raised concerns about the dwindling population of loggerhead turtles in the bay, with longline fishing in the open ocean continuing to claim the lives of juveniles that would otherwise eventually make their way into Moreton Bay to breed.

*more..... <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html>*

### **Tough times for turtle centre (QLD, Australia)**

*22 May 2013, ABC Local*

A Queensland turtle rehabilitation centre is calling on the Federal Government for funding as the "sentinels of the sea" continue to struggle post-Cyclone Yasi. Cairns Turtle Rehabilitation Centre released three turtles in front of more than 50 visitors and tourists on Fitzroy Island on Tuesday. One volunteer openly wept as she said goodbye to 'Princess', whom she'd nursed for more than a year.

Co-founder of the centre, Dr Jennie Gilbert says while public releases are raising awareness about turtles in the region, managing the volunteer organisation's facilities in Portsmouth and the island is expensive. "With Fitzroy Island we've literally run out of money," she says. "It's cost a fair bit to set up and we estimate every year that it's somewhere between \$80,000 and \$100,000 a year to run the centre. "We depend on locals and companies donating money to us to keep this rolling. "But I think everybody needs to get behind this and really work towards saving these animals. They need our help and we need money to do that."

Hailed by Shadow Environment Minister Greg Hunt as one of the best run volunteer programs in the southern hemisphere, Dr Gilbert says she'd like to see the Coalition's pledge of \$300,000 matched by Labor if they win this year's election.

The three turtles released all were spotted suffering from starvation, a sign Dr Gilbert says the Great Barrier Reef is still recovering from damage caused by Cyclone Yasi. "It's an indicator on the health of the ocean," she says. "The sea grass beds that were wiped out ... that's green sea turtles food source. So they had no food and became opportunistic eaters." "Some were literally starving to death."

*more..... <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html>*

## **Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke to decide on "mega-port" for GBR**

*20 May 2013, Herald Sun*

A decision on a "mega port" for the Great Barrier Reef will be made within 40 days, the Australian Marine Conservation Society says. The proposal by North Queensland Bulk Ports to dredge three million tonnes of seabed at Abbot Point, near Bowen, is now in the hands of Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke.

The society's Felicity Wishart says the minister has until early July to decide whether or not to accept the proposal. Ms Wishart says if Mr Burke gives his approval he will be going against a UNESCO recommendation not to develop areas along the reef. The committee will meet early next month, although it may defer its decision until next year.

Brad Fish, head of Bulk Ports, has previously said the firm has gone to great lengths to assess whether dredging will have any environmental impacts. It could possibly make the water cloudy over a short period and damage or destroy seagrass, but would unlikely affect other flora and fauna, he said. The dredging, which will allow coal-loading ships to dock at the port, will likely be carried out in the next year if the development gets the green light.

*more..... <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html>*

*Story also covered by:*

*[http://bigpondnews.com/articles/Finance/2013/05/20/Decision\\_looms\\_over\\_Old\\_reef\\_dredging\\_873665.html](http://bigpondnews.com/articles/Finance/2013/05/20/Decision_looms_over_Old_reef_dredging_873665.html)*

*<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/federal-environment-minister-tony-burke-to-decide-on-mega-port-for-great-barrier-reef-within-40-days/story-e6frf7jo-1226646882509>*

## **Seagrass carbon sinks fast disappearing (Australia)**

*16 May 2013, The Conversation*

Rising sea levels will lead to a drastic decline in seagrass stocks, a new study has found, but reducing water pollution may help offset the effects. Seagrass is crucial to slowing climate change because of its remarkable capacity to absorb greenhouse gases, with some experts saying it is as important as forests in the fight against global warming.

The study, conducted by University of Queensland researchers published in the journal *Global Change Biology*, examined seagrass meadows along Queensland's Moreton Bay. The researchers calculated that seagrass there will decline by as much as 17% by 2100 if sea levels rise by 1.1 metres, unless water quality is improved or humans retreat from coastlines.

The study looked at changes to water depth and clarity and the presence of roads, houses and other developments along inundated coastlines. "A scenario including the removal of impervious surfaces, such as roads and houses, from newly inundated regions, demonstrated that managed retreat of the shoreline could potentially reduce the overall decline in seagrass habitat to just 5%. The predicted reduction in area of seagrass habitat could be offset by an improvement in water clarity of 30%," the researchers said in their paper.

*more..... <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html>*

*Story also covered by:*

*<http://www.uq.edu.au/news/?article=26214>*

*<http://theconversation.com/seagrass-carbon-sinks-fast-disappearing-study-14284>*

*<http://phys.org/news/2013-05-seagrass-decline.html>*

*<http://sciencealert.com.au/news/20131605-24373.html>*

*<http://indymedia.org.au/2013/05/18/moreton-bay-seagrass-projected-to-dramatically-decline-with-sea-level-rise>*

## **'Blue carbon' emissions on the increase: scientists**

15 May 2013, *The Sydney Morning Herald*

The equivalent of Japan's annual carbon load is being released each year as a result of the destruction of the world's coastal and ocean ecosystems, an expert says. Addressing a workshop in Sydney on Wednesday, the University of Technology's (UTS) Professor Peter Ralph said the issue had become critical.

Mining and other human activities are contributing to the emissions, which are stored in seagrass, salt marshes, mangroves and surrounding sediments, and are known as blue carbon. "Unfortunately these critical ecosystems are being destroyed worldwide at a rapid pace," said Prof Ralph, who is executive director of the UTS Plant Functional Biology and Climate Change Cluster. "It's estimated that this destruction releases as much as a billion tonnes of carbon dioxide each year into the atmosphere and oceans, almost the equivalent of Japan's yearly emissions."

Emily Pidgeon, from Conservation International, says understanding the science of blue carbon could help formulate future climate policy. "It's only because of the science (involved) that we are beginning to understand the richness and value of these systems to the carbon cycle, which underpins the question of climate change," she told AAP.

more..... <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html>

Story also covered by:

<http://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/blue-carbon-emissions-on-the-increase-scientists-20130515-2jmca.html>

<http://www.perthnow.com.au/news/breaking-news/blue-carbon-issue-critical-expert/story-fnhrvfuw-1226643219376>

<http://www.theage.com.au/environment/climate-change/blue-carbon-emissions-on-the-increase-scientists-20130515-2jmca.html>

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/breaking-news/blue-carbon-issue-critical-expert/story-e6frf7kf-1226643219376>

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-05-16/vital-coastal-carbon-capture-systems-under-threat/4692696>

<http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2013/s3760303.htm>

<http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/radio/program/connect-asia/seagrass-and-mangrove-capturing-carbon/1131828>

## **Landholders and farmers get support for Great Barrier Reef protection (Australia)**

10 May 2013, *Sail World*

Landholders and farmers will receive assistance in reducing the run-off of damaging chemicals into the Great Barrier Reef, under a \$200 million extension to the Reef Rescue program. Starting in 2008, Reef Rescue has already stopped over 92,000 tonnes of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment and around 1,300 kilograms of pesticide from leaching into the Great Barrier Reef. That is the equivalent of around one million wheelbarrows. Due to the program's success to-date, the Gillard Government today announced an additional \$200 million in funding to ensure the extension of the Reef Rescue program until 2018.

Reef Rescue helps farmer's lift on-farm productivity. It also plays a crucial role protecting the Great Barrier Reef, with run-off from farms causing coral bleaching and algae growth and smothering seagrass and coral reefs. Reef Rescue is also a highly successful partnership between Government, farmers, indigenous owners and other land managers along the Queensland coast. Reducing their chemical and fertilizer use is good for farmers as well as being good for the reef.

Reef Rescue is driven by farmers. For every dollar the Government has invested in Reef Rescue farmers have contributed around \$1.80. This demonstrates their commitment to Reef Rescue and protecting the Reef. Reef Rescue's second phase will continue to support the development of new cutting-edge water quality technologies and fund the control of crown of thorns starfish.

more..... <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html>

Story also covered by:

[http://www.cairns.com.au/article/2013/05/15/242398\\_local-news.html](http://www.cairns.com.au/article/2013/05/15/242398_local-news.html)

## **Dugongs are safer in Torres Strait than Townsville (QLD, Australia)**

10 May 2013, Helene Marsh, James Cook University

"How many are there?" and "how are they doing?" are the first questions people usually ask about species of conservation concern. These seemingly straightforward questions are tough to answer when it comes to the dugong. What we do know is that dugongs are generally safer in remote areas, where traditional hunting is the major pressure, than they are around coastal urban areas where they are affected by habitat loss, gill netting, and vessel-strikes, rather than hunting.

We don't know how many dugongs there are globally or in Australian waters. Estimating dugong numbers is difficult because the animals mostly live in turbid water and tend to surface discreetly, often with only their nostrils breaking the surface. Our best estimates mostly come from aerial surveys combined with sophisticated statistical models.

The status of Australian dugongs varies greatly. Shark Bay supports a large dugong population with minimal human pressures, making it the most secure dugong population in the world. On the other hand, the urban coast of the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) region between Cairns and Bundaberg poses many threats to dugongs. Torres Strait is the

world's largest dugong habitat. Surveys conducted by my group at James Cook University show that the region contains a remarkable 58% of the habitat supporting high densities of dugongs in Queensland, as illustrated by the map below.

[more..... http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html](http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html)

### **Burke to consider UNESCO reef report in port assessments (Australia)**

09 May 2013, ABC Online

Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke says he will take UNESCO's recent report on the health of the Great Barrier Reef into account when he assesses port development proposals in Queensland.

Among them is the proposal to dredge Trinity Inlet in Cairns to improve shipping access in and out of the far north Queensland city. It is undergoing an environmental impact study before being sent to the Federal Government for approval. Mr Burke says resolutions from UNESCO will help guide his decisions.

[more..... http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html](http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html)

*Story also covered by:*

<http://businessmirror.com.ph/index.php/en/features/biodiversity/13616-sacrificing-the-great-barrier-reef-for-mining-port-development>

### **'Red List' introduced to protect at risk ecosystems (Australia)**

09 May 2013, ABC news

A team of international scientists is drawing up a "Red List" identifying ecosystems on the brink of extinction - and Australia appears eight times. The global report is similar to what already exists for animal and plant species that are threatened, vulnerable or on the brink of extinction.

Led by a team of Australian scientists, in co-operation with the United Nations affiliated conservation body the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the study aims to assess every major ecosystem around the world by 2025. Twenty ecosystems around the world have been assessed so far, across six continents and three oceans.

The Coorong lagoons, Karst rising springs (Mt Gambier), coastal sandstone upland swamps (Wollongong), marshes and lakes in the Murray-Darling Basin (Warren) are listed as critically endangered. The seagrass meadows (Spencer Gulf), the Coolibah-black box woodland (Walgett) and the semi-evergreen vine thicket (Inverell) are listed as endangered.

[more..... http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html](http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html)

### **Corps meeting on proposed Lake Worth Inlet channel dredging is today**

09 May 2013, by Aleese Kopf, Daily News

A proposal to dredge the Lake Worth Inlet will be discussed today by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The 5:30 p.m. meeting will take place at the Port of Palm Beach in Riviera Beach where the Corps will present its Draft Environmental Impact Statement and hear questions and concerns from the public. The statement was published recently in the Federal Register, beginning a 45-day public review and comment period that will end June 3.

Town Manager Peter Elwell said he will be at the meeting to listen, but that the town won't offer its comments until an engineering and environmental firm assesses the document. The Town Council awarded a contract capped at \$29,485 to Coastal Systems International at Tuesday's meeting to analyze the Corps' environmental impact statement.

Approximately 4.5 acres of seagrass habitat and 4.9 acres of hard-bottom habitat would be affected, with mitigation of 8.25 to 11.25 acres of seagrass and 4.9 to 9.8 acres of hard-bottom still under negotiation. The proposed expansion "may adversely affect Johnson's seagrass," the report says. However, the expansion is not likely to adversely affect sea turtles, whales, the small-tooth sawfish or manatees.

To view the report visit:

[www.saj.usace.army.mil/Portals/44/docs/Planning/EnvironmentalBranch/EnvironmentalDocs/LWI\\_01\\_Draft%20Feasibility\\_EIS\\_April\\_2013.pdf](http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/Portals/44/docs/Planning/EnvironmentalBranch/EnvironmentalDocs/LWI_01_Draft%20Feasibility_EIS_April_2013.pdf).

[full story: http://www.palmbeachdailynews.com/news/news/national/corps-meeting-on-proposed-lake-worth-inlet-channel/nXk3p/](http://www.palmbeachdailynews.com/news/news/national/corps-meeting-on-proposed-lake-worth-inlet-channel/nXk3p/)

*Story also covered by:*

<http://www.palmbeachpost.com/news/news/public-meeting-at-port-today-to-discuss-100-million/nXmRD/>

## **Scientists discover that marine animals disperse seagrass**

09 May 2013, by Jeremy Hance, mongabay.com

Lesser known than coral reefs, marine seagrass ecosystems are rich in biodiversity and are powerhouses when it comes to sequestering carbon dioxide. Yet, much remains unknown about the ecology of seagrass beds, including detailed information on how seagrass spread their seeds and colonize new area. Now a recent study in Marine Ecology Progress Series documents that several species of marine animal are key to dispersing seagrass, overturning the assumption that seagrass was largely dispersed by abiotic methods (such as wind and waves).

"Traditional thinking is that eelgrass disperses by abiotic mechanisms such as floating seeds, floating reproductive shoots, or currents pushing seeds along the seafloor," explains lead author Sarah Sumoski with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. "Our study shows that eelgrass seeds can also be dispersed through consumption and excretion by fish, terrapins, and birds—providing a means to bring seeds to isolated areas."

The researchers studied eelgrass (*Zostera marina*), a type of seagrass, in the Chesapeake Bay in the eastern U.S. Feeding nearly two thousand eelgrass seeds to five species—including three fish, one turtle, and one seabird—the researchers found that the seeds survived the passage through the animal's guts and germinated successfully. But survival isn't the only important thing to a plant: distance also matters. If a plant species is to colonize new areas it will need to ensure its seeds can go far.

[full story: http://news.mongabay.com/2013/0509-hance-seagrass-dispersal.html](http://news.mongabay.com/2013/0509-hance-seagrass-dispersal.html)

## **UN Threatens to List Great Barrier Reef as Endangered (Australia)**

08 May 2013, LiveScience.com

Ahead of the meeting of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) World Heritage Committee in Cambodia next month, the UN has warned the governments of Australia and Queensland state that the Great Barrier Reef could be added to the List of World Heritage in Danger, if certain actions and plans aren't put in place by those governments, the Sydney Morning Herald reports.

Government representatives are not happy about the possibility and are working to prevent the listing. "Australia would be the only developed country in the world to have a world heritage site on [the] endangered list. It would be a huge international embarrassment and it would be a big blow to our tourism industry," Queensland Greens Senator Larissa Waters said, as quoted by the Morning Herald.

Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke said the report published by the UN didn't take into account several government initiatives and that Australia was working with the World Heritage Committee to ensure the protection of the reef.

[more..... http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html](http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html)

Story also covered by:

[http://abcnews.go.com/International/death-thousand-cuts-coal-boom-destroy-great-barrier/story?id=19248789#\\_Ud-Nxm0w3Jo](http://abcnews.go.com/International/death-thousand-cuts-coal-boom-destroy-great-barrier/story?id=19248789#_Ud-Nxm0w3Jo)

<http://www.livescience.com/29429-great-barrier-reef-endangered.html>

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<http://au.news.yahoo.com/video/national/watch/17013959/great-barrier-reef-in-danger-un/>

## **Scientist says reef health report a wake-up call (QLD, Australia)**

08 May 2013, ABC News

An environmental scientist says it would be an embarrassment for the Australian Government if the Great Barrier Reef ended up on the World Heritage 'in danger' list. Professor Helene Marsh from James Cook University is among 200 delegates attending a reef conference this week in Cairns in far north Queensland. She is calling for stronger action to protect the reef.

"We need to be much more strategic and more careful about how we use the land," she said. "I think we have to be deeply concerned about the quality of the water that goes from the land into the Great Barrier Reef lagoon." She says UNESCO's recent report on the health of the reef is a wake-up call.

However, north Queensland Senator Ian Macdonald says there should not be too much emphasis placed on the UNESCO report. "Australia has been managing ships through the Barrier Reef for decades now - be they coal ships, bauxite ships or any other ships - and I think we do a pretty good job," he said. "This scare tactic by UNESCO and some of the radical green groups just doesn't help Australia and is not based on facts. "The reports from the Australian scientists clearly show that the reef is in good shape."

[more..... http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html](http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html)

Story also covered by:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-05-08/scientist-says-reef-health-report-a-wake-up-call/4676910>

## **Fears mega ports will 'industrialise' Great Barrier Reef (Australia)**

08 May 2013, CQ News

The Australian Marine Conservation Society said recent moves by the state government show their intent to industrialise the Great Barrier Reef. Campaign director Felicity Wishart said publicly available documents submitted by the Queensland government to the senate inquiry show they are refusing to stop projects that will damage the reef.

Ms Wishart used Gladstone's Curtis Island as an example of disregard for the environment. "The damage to World Heritage values meted out in Gladstone on Curtis Island demonstrates that current environmental protections are not good enough," she said.

Minister for Environment Andrew Powell described Ms Wishart's actions as scaremongering. "I am confident that as a government, alongside the federal government, we are doing all that is necessary," he said. Mr Powell said the state government had scaled back plans for Abbot Point and committed \$35 million every year to invest in reef protection, plus established the Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership.

*more..... <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html>*

*Story also covered by:*

*<http://abcnews.go.com/International/death-thousand-cuts-coal-boom-destroy-great-barrier/story?id=19248789#.Ud-OcW0w3Jo>*

## **CONFERENCES**

### **CERF 2013 Conference (San Diego, California, 3-7 November 2013)**

22nd Biennial Conference of the Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation  
Toward Resilient Coasts and Estuaries, Science for Sustainable Solutions.

CERF advances understanding and wise stewardship of estuarine and coastal ecosystems worldwide. Its mission is to: Promote research in estuarine and coastal ecosystems, Support education of scientists, decision-makers and the public, and Facilitate communication among these groups. The 2013 scientific program offers four days of timely, exciting and diverse information on a vast array of estuarine and coastal subjects. Presentations will include discoveries and synthesis on the adaptive dynamics of coastal and estuarine ecosystems and human societies. Participants will explore how these dynamics and adaptations can be understood and managed at regional and global scales. CERF will convene about 1,600 Scientists, Managers and professionals in government, business, nonprofit and related organizations, and Graduate students. From North America's coastal states and provinces, as well as from more than 20 countries around the world, CERF conference attendees are scientists and managers who conduct research and observe/manage change within a variety of global coastal and estuarine habitats. They rely on the information, expertise, methods, products, technology and innovative equipment your organization provides.

*Please visit the conference & workshop web site for further details: <http://www.erf.org/cerf2013>*

## **SEAGRASS-WATCH Workshops 2013**

**Australia** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/training.html#workshop13>

Moreton Bay, Qld: 17-18 August 2013r

## **SEAGRASS-WATCH on YouTube**

**Seagrass: Pastures of the sea** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66Y5vgswj20> or  
<http://www.seagrasswatch.org/seagrass.html>

Presentation on what seagrasses are and why they are important (over 29,000 views to date)

## **...seagrass matters blog**

**World Seagrass Association blog** <http://wsa.seagrassonline.org/blog/>

Keep up to date on what's happening around the world from the WSA with regular updates from WSA President Dr Giuseppe Di Carlo and *notes from the field* by Siti Yaakub.



# FROM HQ

**Past E-bulletins** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/publications.html#ebulletin>

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**Giveaways** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/shop.html#GIVE1>

**Future sampling dates** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/sampling.html>

**Handy Seagrass Links** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/links.html>

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Seagrass-Watch E- Bulletin is compiled by Len McKenzie & Rudi Yoshida.