

## Inquorate GHHP Partnership Meeting 22 Minutes

**Date:** Thursday, 1 December 2022 **Time:** 1:00 – 3:00pm

**Location:** Leo Zussino Building 3/1.29, CQUniversity

### Attendees:

Name	Position	Organisation
Prof Iain Gordon (via Zoom)	GHHP Chair	Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership
Rachel Darcy	Manager Reef Partnerships	OGBRWH
Codey Stowe (via Zoom)	Office Manager - Gladstone	Gidarjil Development Corporation
Elyse Riethmuller (via Zoom)	Chief Executive Officer	Fitzroy Basin Association
Lisa McComb (via Zoom)		
Ingrid England (via Zoom)	Environment Manager	Shell QGC
Pam Thomas (via Zoom)		Queensland Alumina Limited
Chantale Lane	Chief Executive Officer	Gladstone Industry Leaders Group
Brittany Campbell		Orica
Fiona Horner		Gladstone Ports Corporation
Isabella Warrington		Orica
Trent Attard	HSE Manager	WICET
Mark Evans	Environment Superintendent	Rio Tinto Yarwun
Emma Jackson	Director, CMERC	CQUniversity
Tim Deery		Boyne Smelter Limited
<b>Staff</b>		
Prof John Rolfe	ISP Chair	GHHP Independent Science Panel
Hannah Russell	Project Officer	Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership
<b>Proxies</b>		

### Apologies:

Name	Position	Organisation
Mr Dan Clark		ConocoPhillips
Dr Megan Ellis		Gladstone Ports Corporation
Ms Nataly Zelayandia		Shell QGC
Ms Grace Duckham		Gladstone Area Water Board

## **Agenda Item 1 – Introduction**

Meeting Started: 1:15pm

### **1.1 GHHP Welcome**

Ms Hannah Russell, GHHP Project Officer, welcomed all Partners attending in person and via Zoom for the GHHP Partnership meeting of December 2022. Hannah noted that Iain Gordon, Chair, would be arriving online shortly, but wished to begin the meeting. In the interim, GHHP Deputy Chair, Elyse Riethmuller, would Chair the meeting.

Hannah started the meeting.

### **1.2 Acknowledgement of Country**

Mr Codey Stowe, Gidarjil Development Corporation, delivered an acknowledgement of country and welcomed everyone attending the meeting.

### **1.3 Apologies and Introductions**

Elyse asked for apologies presented from the Partners.

Mr Dan Clark, ConocoPhillips  
Dr Megan Ellis, Gladstone Ports Corporation  
Ms Nataly Zelayandia, Shell QGC  
Ms Grace Duckham, Gladstone Area Water Board

### **1.4 Previous Partnership Meeting 21 Minutes to be ratified**

The previous meeting minutes from Partnership Meeting 21 held 23 June 2022 were accepted as a true and accurate record. There were no actions from this meeting.

**Moved:** Ms Elyse Riethmuller

**Second:** Mr Trent Attard

## **Agenda Item 2 – Items requiring Decision**

### **2.1 2022 GHHP Report Card Results and Design**

Mangroves and Indigenous Cultural Heritage were not assessed in 2021/2022. Mangrove data from 2019 was used and is due to be assessed in 2023/2024. Indigenous Cultural Heritage data from 2018 was used and is due to be assessed again this financial year 2022/2023. Fish Health Assessment Index was last monitored in 2021 and is now reserved for major events.

The total rainfall is included as background. The last financial year had above average rainfall, particularly in November, March, and May. This may have driven some of the results as runoff increases as rainfall increases.

#### **Environment** **Water Quality**

Physicochemical received a decline, particularly in turbidity where two zones were given a 'A' score, four received a 'B' score, six received a 'C' score, and one, Auckland Inlet, was given a 'D' score. All 13 sites received a 'A' grade for pH.

Nutrients also received a decline, owing to higher loads of nitrogen and phosphorus. This may be a result of the higher rainfall and increased runoff into the harbour. Four zones received a poor 'D' score for Total Nitrogen, while all others received a 'C' score. Total Phosphorus presented slightly better results than Total Nitrogen, while Chlorophyll-*a* had five zones received a poor 'D' score. Chlorophyll-*a* is a good surrogate for light, which is important for seagrass and coral.

Dissolved metals received a very good score with almost no metals recorded above the guideline values. Copper was noted to have received a lower 'A' score. John noted that it is thought that most of the nutrients identified are naturally occurring within the harbour.

PCIMP aims to sample sites at the same order and the same tidal height each time, which acts to control any variations. Tim Deery raised a question on taking wind speed into consideration. John suggested that the data collected is expanding and that this could be considered or compared in future.

The overall water quality score decreased from 0.91 (A) in 2021, to 0.81 (B) in 2022, owing to turbidity and nutrient scores. This may be a result of the higher rainfall.

### ***Sediment***

Sediment samples are taken once per year via a grab sample. This analysis is focused on the metals and metalloids in the sediment and typically receives a very good score. The overall score for sediment quality was 0.96, which is identical to the 2021 score. Some zones identified nickel and arsenic as above the guideline values, but these are naturally occurring within the harbour. The laboratory analysis in the 2021/2022 year became more accurate and so mercury was able to be included. Mercury was identified as being well below the guideline levels.

### ***Water and Sediment Quality***

Water and Sediment Quality received a very good 'A' score for the 2022 year.

### **Habitats**

#### ***Corals***

Corals have been graded as 'E' very poor but has increased from 0.14 in 2021 to 0.15 in 2022. Coral cover was given a very poor 'E' grade score which may relate directly to the macroalgae cover, which also received a very poor 'E' score. The lower the macroalgae score, the greater the prevalence of macroalgae. Juvenile density also received a very poor 'E' score which suggests a similar result next year, while change in hard coral cover received a poor 'D' grade.

Corals have received a very poor or poor score since 2013 and have received a very poor 'E' score for the fifth consecutive year. In 2016, corals received a poor 'D' score but has since declined or maintained a very poor score.

John noted that the Gladstone Harbour has received similar scores at the Fitzroy and Mackay-Whitsundays regions. Trent Attard asked if the water quality and other parameters in these regions match the Gladstone Harbour which may indicate why corals have been receiving a poor score. John noted that water quality guidelines are measured by taking the guidelines provided by the Queensland Government and assessing how close the measures are to the guidelines. This means that it's not a simple 'pass' or 'fail' in terms of not exceeding the guidelines, but also how close the measurements are to meeting the guidelines. The other regions are using the same approach.

Emma asked what the baseline for corals is. John responded that work completed by AIMS in 2002-2010 which measured corals in the harbour forms the baseline.

Mark Evans raised that the 2010 sampling would have coincided with the increased rainfall at that time. John agreed that the freshwater rain impacts negatively upon coral health. Workshops held throughout 2022 revealed that macroalgae was a major contributor to poor coral health, and the prevalence of macroalgae may be increased owing to turbidity, an increase in nutrients, a reduction of herbivorous fish, or impacts to light filtration resulting in conditions that suit macroalgae but not coral.

### **Seagrass**

Gladstone Ports Corporation contract James Cook University to conduct seagrass assessments, which is shared to GHHP. Seagrass has received another good 'B' grade score for the third year in a row but decreased from 0.72 in 2021 to 0.70 in 2022. Historically, seagrass was receiving poor scores following the floods in 2011 and 2013 but have received good scores for the past three years.

Notably, poorer scores were shown in the Inner Harbour and Rodds Bay, particularly owing to the species composition indicator which received a very poor 'E' score in both sites. This result indicates that only one species was found. Rodds Bay Meadow 94 also received very poor scores in the 'area' and 'overall meadow' indicators.

John noted that there was a decrease in the total annual daytime tidal exposure hours, which correlates with the improved seagrass scores. The preceding year (2021) was characterised by dry, benign weather conditions with minimal Calliope River discharge and very low rainfall. Seagrass meadows in Gladstone Harbour started 2022 with a high level of resilience to external pressures, particularly owing to the greater variety of seagrass species within seagrass beds.

Tim asked how a meadow is defined. John stated that the meadows largely vary in size. Emma stated that a meadow is based on the distance to the next meadow, and the suitability of the habitat surrounding the meadow.

### **Habitats**

Corals and seagrass have been measured every year since 2015, while mangrove data was used from 2019. Overall, the Habitat indicator has typically received a 'D' score owing to the coral grading. Habitats did receive a satisfactory 'C' grade in 2020. Habitats have again received a poor 'D' grade for 2022.

### **Fish and Crabs**

Mud crabs have again received a poor 'D' score for the fifth consecutive year but has decreased from 0.48 in 2021 to 0.39 in 2022. John noted that in Graham Creek, Calliope Estuary, Auckland Inlet and Rodds Bay, the abundance received 0.00, which indicates a very poor catch rate. An indicator needs to have a least five crabs caught to assess sex ratio and rust lesions.

The poor sex ratio indicates a larger abundance of female and few males. This may indicate fishing pressure, but also could indicate the fishers are following regulations and returning female crabs. Overall, prevalence of rust lesions received a good 'B' score. The same delivery provider conducted mud crab surveys in Eurimbula Creek in 2019 and received perfect scores for sex ratio, abundance, and rust lesions, which corresponds to the assumption of increased fishing pressure in the harbour zones.

Fish were assessed using fish visual condition (FVC) and fish body condition (FBC). For FVC, the overall detection rate of visual damage was very low. For all species, the most detected issue was fin erosion, the severity of which was low, and had an overall result of a very good 'A' score. FBC scores were around the long-term average (2002-2022), where four species scored a poor 'D' and one species scored as satisfactory 'C'. FBC is recorded by fishers recording weight and length, and the fish BMI calculated. Overall fish condition was a good 'B' score of 0.72.

Fish recruitment data was collected by Infish by sampling juvenile fish through cast netting. Data for two bream species were collected from 12 harbour zones. The 2022 score of 0.57 (C) was similar to the 2021 score of 0.62 (C).

Overall, fish and crabs received a satisfactory 'C' score of 0.55.

### ***Environment***

The overall environment score was a satisfactory 'C' in 2022 compared to a good 'B' in 2021. As habitats received an identical score to the previous year, the reduction in the environmental letter grade was a result of declines in fish and crabs from 0.62 to 0.55, and water and sediment quality from 0.93 to 0.89.

Mark asked if a small increase in nutrients in high ecological value areas (HEV) may significantly alter the score of the HEV areas owing to the high standard that they begin with. John stated that the moderate value scores are used across the harbour. The Queensland Government has two different water quality guidelines for the harbour. One is specific for the HEV zones which have a lower threshold and the remainder of the harbour have moderate guidelines. However, the moderate guidelines are used across the harbour in all zones to ensure a standard of outcomes across the zones.

### 3.2 Report Card – Draft Social Results

200 community members were sampled, using the CATI survey, and estimated the scores from there. There was almost no change in Social (Sense of Place) scores between the 2019 data (which was used in 2021), and the 2022 data. The Social (Sense of Place) received a good 'B' score of 0.67 in 2019, and a good 'B' score of 0.68 in 2022.

The highest indicator score was *satisfaction with access to the harbour* (0.75). The lowest indicator score was *perceptions of harbour safety for human use* (0.55). The largest change in measure score was *oil spills*, which was 0.66 in 2019 and 0.38 in 2022, which may have been a result of several smaller oil spills recorded in the government database.

Emma asked why 'oil spills' were included under the social indicator, rather than environment. John states that this was because oil spills are considered a management factor. John suggested that oil spills and similar indicators should be shifted to stewardship for 2023.

### 3.3 Report Card – Draft Cultural Results

Cultural Health (Sense of Place) increase from a good 'B' score of 0.66 in 2019, to a good 'B' score of 0.68 in 2022, which indicates a very stable community.

The highest indicator score was *appreciation of the harbour* (0.84) while the lowest indicator score was *place attachment* (0.61). The largest change in measure score was *how long lived in the area* which was 0.44 (D) in 2019, and 0.55 (C) in 2022. The score of appreciation of the harbour has been consistently good over a 9-year period, indicating the importance of the harbour to the people of Gladstone.

### 3.4 Report Card – Draft Economic Results

The Economic Health increased from a good 'B' score of 0.73 in 2019, to a good 'B' score of 0.76 in 2022. Economic performance, economic stimulus, and economic value (recreation) were all values sourced externally to gain a better understanding. Poor performances were recorded for commercial fishing (0.41) and employment (0.45). Commercial fishing is recorded from QFish and compared to the 10-year average of trawl, net, and beam fisheries.

The highest indicator scores were *shipping activity* (0.90) and *tourism* (0.90). The lowest indicator score was *commercial fishing* (0.41). The largest change in score was *net fisheries-productivity* which was 0.25 in 2019 and 0.45 in 2022.

### 3.5 Report Card – Draft Outline

#### ***Litter***

The litter indicator was included for the second time in GHHP products. Tangaroa Blue provides data from beach clean-ups and utilises the same model across the five report cards. Two types of data were used; the standardised ReefClean data, and other beach clean-up events which weren't standardised. 49 clean-ups were recorded in the Gladstone region in 2021-2022.

Not all sites had data available from Tangaroa Blue, such as Fisherman's Landing and Police Creek. Currently, the data is not robust enough to calculate an overall score, so the data is used to compare between sites and years. This metric provides insight in the amount of activity being undertaken, and the amount of community support for litter clean-ups.

#### ***Confidence Ratings***

There has been no change from the previous year. Overall, the environmental component scored a high confidence level, with all receiving a high level except for water and fish health which both received a moderate level owing to data limitations. Both Social and Economic received a high confidence rating, while Cultural received a moderate rating owing to the need for further refinement of the Indigenous Cultural Heritage indicator.

#### **Drafted 2022 Report Card**

The back page contains highlights. In 2022, these are the seagrass scores, and the completion of social, cultural, and economic health assessments. Gladstone rainfall is also included in the report card to indicate that it is a big driver of health in the Harbour. There is also an Acknowledgement of Country.

The inside pages show the results of each of the four indicators. Each indicator provides a summary of the results. The environmental page also contains a map of the harbour with a pie chart for each zone indicating scores for water and sediment, habitats, and fish and crabs.

John noted that some zones weren't scored for specific indicators, such as no seagrass in Boat Creek. This is difficult to portray within the report card.

Iain raised that the similarity between the 2022 social, cultural, and economic results to the 2019 results confirm GHHP's approach to conducting these analyses on a staggered basis rather than every year.

Iain asked the Partners if GHHP had approval to release the report card in 2023. All approved.

### **Agenda Item 3 – Items for Consideration**

#### **3.1 Stewardship Report and Report Card Launch**

Iain thanked the Partners for their contribution towards the Stewardship Report, and Marketing Mafia for the collation of the report. The Management Committee suggested releasing the Stewardship Report in late January 2023 as this will avoid the Christmas period and remain separate to the launch of the report card.

Hannah provided the dates for the Stewardship Report launch will be Tuesday 24 January, and the Report Card will be launched Thursday 16 February.

### **3.2 What's Our Grade Report – Darwinian Consulting**

Simon Costanzo, Darwinian Consulting, presented the What's Our Grade report to the meeting.

What's Our Grade began in late 2019 when the Office of the Great Barrier Reef approached Darwinian Consulting to assess the five report cards. This assessment is conducted every two years.

February 14, 2020, brought together the Executive Officers, Chairs, and other best-placed individuals to discuss and arrive to values, indicators, and what the report card would look like. This is presented through the success nautilus which grows from the inside - cohesive staff, credible science, resilient organisation, stakeholder relevance, and effective outreach. Each of the five values are broken into three additional indicators.

Data was collated through surveys of the different staff, the chairs, and the partners of the report cards.

In 2020, GHHP received an overall score of B-, brought down by the resilient organisation value (Poor D), and the effective outreach value (Satisfactory C). Simon suggested that report cards are used to influence decision making and measuring this is quite difficult, therefore influencing the effective outreach value.

In 2022, GHHP received an overall score of B+, following an improvement in resilient organisation (now a Good B), and effective outreach (now a Good B). The overall score improved from 61% to 76%.

Overall, the five partnerships have maintained a Good B grade, improving from 67% to 75%. Effective outreach an improved significantly as partnerships identified the best methods to communicate and how many public events were attended. Staff retention did decrease from a Good 'B' to a Satisfactory 'C'.

Darwinian Consulting also produces a recommendation report that is unique to each of the partnerships.

#### Observations and recommendations – staff survey

- Staff respect and trust one another, enjoy their jobs where they strive for excellence, have open communication, and are equipped to delivery expected outcomes. For GHHP, contractors were included in the staff survey to increase survey numbers.
- Ensure staff feel they have a contact and process available to them for discussing contract arrangements over time.
- Grades can also be improved for succession planning.

#### Observations and recommendations – team survey

- Partnership is in a better financial position this year compared to 2020 due to not having to maintain an EO salary over the previous year.
- Timeliness of release of the report card can be improved. This is a criticism of report cards worldwide in that data reported upon is usually 12-months old. This could be addressed through interim data releases (where available) ahead of the report card release.
- The partnership has increased its total reach and visibility via the use of roadside billboards and advertising at the airport, yet the number of those engaged is unknown.
- Recommend recording metrics of Partnership reach within the community, such as number of website visits and resource downloads.

#### Observations and recommendations – partner survey

- The partnership received a lower survey response rate from partners in 2022 (four responses) compared to 2020 (11 responses). Greater effort needed to elicit partner responses in future.
- Results reflect the transition the partnership has been working through over the past years. Presenting a strong and cohesive team moving forward will likely improve the partnership's image.
- Work with partners to identify how technical products could be used to better influence stewardship actions and enhance benefits to partner operations.

#### Overall recommendations – GHHP

- Commend partnership on changing grade from a B- in 2020 to a b+ in 2022, following challenging times within the Partnership.
- Recommend communicating to partners the new-upcoming Partnership structure and stronger financial position to strengthen external image.
- Investigate options for more frequent release of technical documents and data throughout the year.
- Recommend highlighting good news stories.

Mark asked how the five partnerships compare to other partnerships within Australia and around the world. Simon stated that the partnerships are a massive success because they are continuing. Often there is an initiative to make a report card but does not continue owing to ownership and funding issues. This is the first time that an assessment of the report card hosts has been conducted. Traditionally, funding bodies want to know how effective report cards are.

### **Agenda Item 4 – General/Recurring Business**

#### **5.1 General Business**

No General Business raised.

#### **5.2 Next Meeting**

**Next meeting date:** TBA. Project Officer will send out a 'Save the Date' once dates and times are confirmed.

**Meeting closed:** 3:00pm.