

# CORAL



## FIVE FAST FACTS

1. Coral is an indicator under the Environmental component of the Gladstone Harbour Report Card.
2. **CORAL REEFS** provide spawning, nursery and feeding areas for fish and other marine creatures like sea stars, molluscs and sea turtles.
3. Threats to coral reefs include both natural and anthropogenic pressures that can operate at global, regional or local scales.
4. Reefs in GHHP monitored zones include fringing, platform, headland and rubble fields with both hard and soft corals.
5. Coral reefs are monitored around Rat, Facing and Curtis islands and at Seal Rocks.

## THE GRADES

2020	2021	Grading system
		 Very good (0.85 - 1.00)
		 Good (0.65 - 0.84)
		 Satisfactory (0.50 - 0.64)
		 Poor (0.25 - 0.49)
		 Very poor (0.00 - 0.24)

## HOW IS CORAL MEASURED?

Coral surveys in Gladstone Harbour are conducted by a small team of divers and scientists from the Australian Institute of Marine Science.

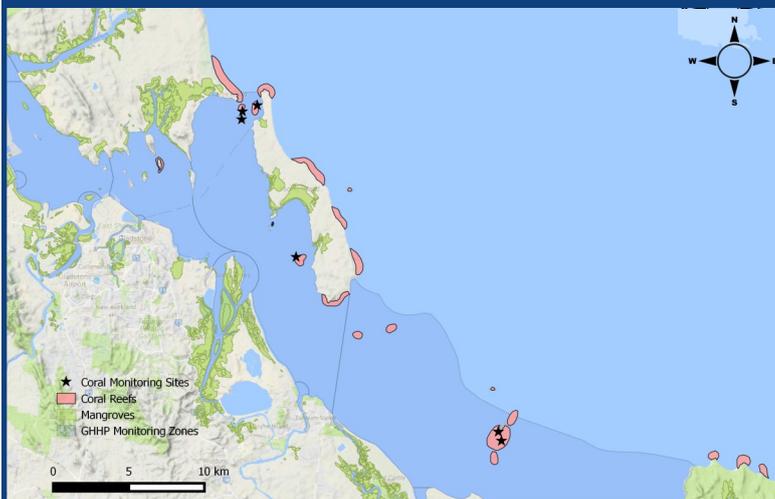
**FOUR** coral sub-indicators are measured to calculate scores for the Gladstone Harbour Report Card:

1. **Coral cover:** determines how much coral (hard & soft) are at each of the monitoring sites.
2. **Macroalgal cover:** large fleshy seaweeds (macroalgae) compete with coral for space on the reef. The more macroalgae the lower the report card score.
3. **Juvenile coral density:** investigates the potential ability of a coral reef to recover from a disturbance. A high score for juvenile coral density indicates that a reef is growing.
4. **Change in hard coral cover:** measures the change in coral cover from one year to the next and allows long-term trends to be recorded.

## WHAT DO THE GRADES MEAN?

In 2021, the coral communities in Gladstone Harbour were in **VERY POOR** condition. This was a result of low coral cover, low juvenile density, high macroalgal cover and a poor overall score for hard coral cover change at most of the surveyed reefs. Initial coral monitoring in 2015 noted very low coral cover, which reflected the severe impacts of the 2013 flooding. Ongoing pressures such as high macroalgal cover and the prevalence of bio-eroding sponges continue to limit the recovery of these reefs.

## CORAL SITES MONITORED BY GHHP



*Coral is monitored in two GHHP zones: Mid Harbour and Outer Harbour*