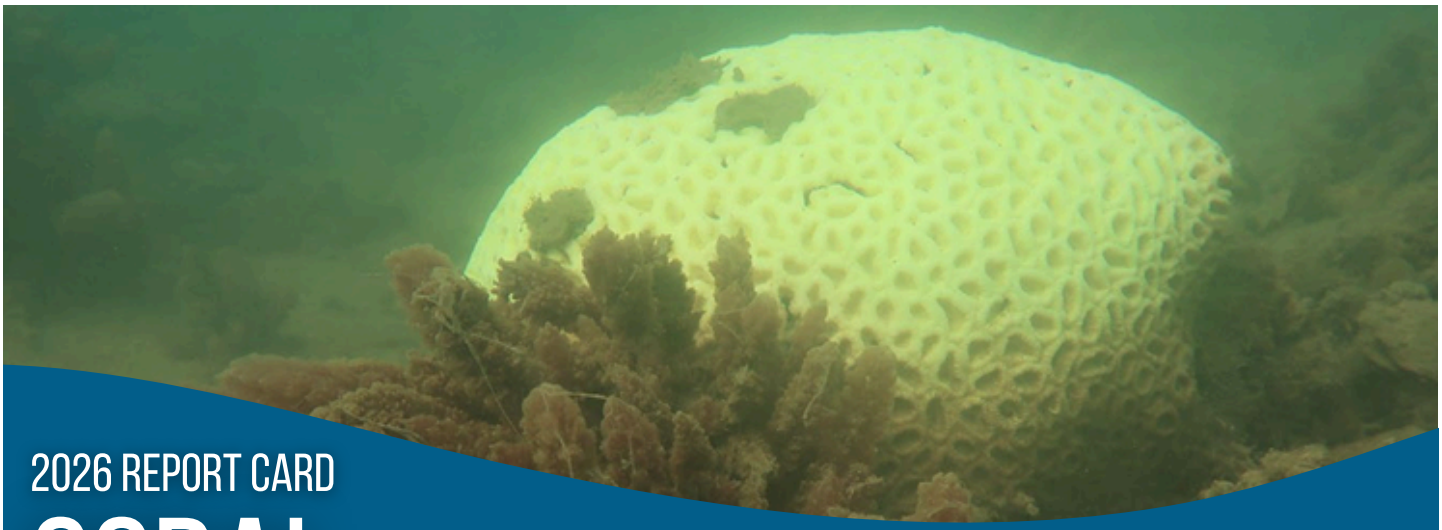


2026 REPORT CARD

CORAL

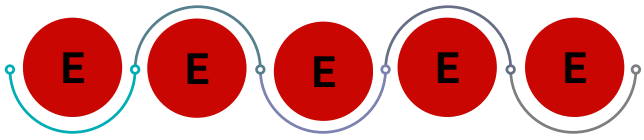
Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership

What is a coral reef?

Corals are tiny marine animals called polyps that live in colonies and build hard, protective skeletons made of calcium carbonate. Over time, these skeletons form the structure of coral reefs.

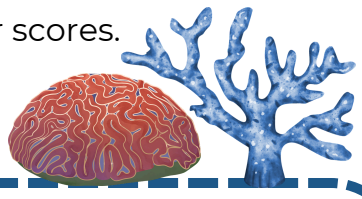
Coral reefs are often called the "rainforests of the sea" because they provide food, shelter, and breeding grounds for thousands of marine species.

Gladstone Harbour is home to both hard and soft corals.



In 2026, Gladstone Harbour's coral communities were in Very Poor condition, receiving an (E) grade.

This was due to low living coral cover, high macroalgal cover, low juvenile coral abundance, and poor change in hard coral cover scores.



How is it measured?

Coral surveys are conducted in Gladstone Harbour by divers and scientists from the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS). AIMS conducts monitoring in the Mid Harbour (Facing Island, Farmers Reef, Rat Island, and Manning Reef) and the Outer Harbour (Seal Rocks North and Seal Rocks South).

Four sub-indicators are scored:

- Coral cover determines the amount of coral at each site.
- Macroalgal cover measures the amount of seaweeds competing with corals.
- Juvenile coral density investigates the reef's ability to recover.
- Change in hard coral cover measures the change in cover each year.

Image © Australian Institute of Marine