



Burdekin
Shire Council

HIGHLIGHTS REPORT 2019-21



A Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Initiative

The Reef Guardians program is the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's most widely recognised stewardship and education program. Its purpose is to build a sense of collective stewardship within Reef communities through activities that foster care for the Reef.



The Reef Guardian Council program is a collaborative stewardship arrangement between local governments in the Great Barrier Reef catchment and the Authority, which recognises that local and regional approaches are central to protecting and managing the Reef and the communities it supports.

The Reef Guardian Council program was first launched in 2007 and in 2020 has grown to include 19 member councils covering an area of 300 000 square kilometres and a population of more than one million people.

Through their statutory responsibilities and their voluntary activities local government delivers many actions that support the outcomes of the Reef 2050 Long Term Sustainability Plan — helping manage the threats to the Great Barrier Reef and supporting the community in understanding and appreciating the Reef's values.

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Each year, the Reef Guardian Councils undertake activities to reduce land-based impacts on the Great Barrier Reef through collaboration, education and targeted action.

This report has been collated to celebrate the 2019-21 achievements of the Burdekin Shire Council.

IMPROVING REEF HEALTH

In 2020 and 2021, Council has supported community and industry groups working to improve Reef health by participating in two beach clean-up events which took place at Alva. The first clean-up, which was organised by Tangaroa Blue, removed 294kg of rubbish from the beach and coastal area. The second clean-up which was part of the NAIDOC week celebrations and organised by the Gudjuda Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation, resulted in the removal of 230kg of rubbish from the beach and dune areas. Council assisted in debris data collection and waste disposal. The efforts made by staff and volunteers to conduct these clean-ups means less rubbish on the coastal area and less impact on the Great Barrier Reef ecosystem.



Beach clean-up at Alva Beach October 2020

RIPARIAN MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT PROGRAM



Red Lily Lagoon (before and after weed removal)

In the 2019/2020 financial year, Council signed the Riparian Management Agreement (RMA) framework document with Lower Burdekin Water and NQ Dry Tropics. The Vision in the framework is: Stakeholders in the Burdekin working together to restore and enhance the environmental, economic and recreational value of lagoons and waterways, and in turn improving the quality of the water that enters into the Great Barrier Reef catchment.

The Riparian Management Agreement program has made great achievements in the 2019/2021 financial years. An estimated 9 tonnes of mainly Aleman grass and mud were removed from Red Lily lagoon over four days of work in conjunction with Lower Burdekin Water in March 2020.

In financial year 2020-21 an increase in participation in the program has been achieved. A new spraying technique using a drone was pilot trialed on areas inaccessible by boat or helicopter. The trial gave a 95% kill and will be used more frequently.

Aquatic weed removal through the Riparian Management Program have contributed to Reef health by reducing the organic content flowing out to reef, improving the water quality and maintaining the fish habitats.



Drone spraying used in area inaccessible by boat or helicopter

RECYCLING RIGHT CAMPAIGN

Burdekin Shire Council takes a proactive role in the collection of waste to keep our most valuable resource – our water – clean and clear. Council is part of the North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils (NQROC) and Waste Management Working Group (WMWG) and participated in the Recycling Right Campaign with other Councils. The Campaign focuses on the development of waste and recycling initiatives and educational material for Burdekin residents.

The Campaign features a series of short, interesting videos describing six easy ways Burdekin residents can “recycle right” and ensure we are only placing clean and correct recyclable items in our yellow lid recycling bins.

Burdekin Shire Council also provides presentations to Burdekin schools and community groups to educate about the importance of recycling and waste management, including talks about DIY composting and worm tubes. Resources about waste and recycling are also provided in the forms of booklets, fact sheets, stickers, and magnets.



Burdekin school talk

PLASTIC FREE

Aware of the coming state-wide ban on single use plastic items, Council and the Burdekin Theatre have already been taking action to fight the growing problem of plastic pollution. Council has been undertaking a review of single-use plastic items within its administration buildings and facilities and has recognised improvement options.

The Burdekin Theatre has been setting an example by removing single-use plastic items such as plastic straws, cutlery and plates for more than 2 years. Alternative options such as bamboo or paper have been used at Cultural Venues for some time.



Single-use plastics

REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS



Site visit to conduct REF for Council work

Council has the objective to reduce the negative impacts on the environment from its capital and operational work programs. In 2020, relevant Council staff have received training over two days on erosion and sediment control aimed to increase staff knowledge and skills in managing erosion and sediment run-offs from Council work sites.

Review of Environmental Factors (REF) are now conducted for all Council works to identify potential impacts on the environment and ensure sediment run-offs do not contaminate waterways as well as ensuring appropriate control measures are in place to mitigate any other environmental risks.

In the 2020/2021 financial year, Council's Environmental Health Officers conducted nine REFs, reducing the amount of sediment contaminating waterways which then flow out to the coast and to the Great Barrier Reef.

INCREASED RENEWABLE ENERGY

The Burdekin Shire Council has previously installed a 30kW (2017/18) and 100kW (2018/19) solar system. On average, the combined systems will save 420 tonnes of carbon entering the atmosphere per year thus reducing Council's environmental impact.

It is also proposed to install a solar panel system on the Ayr library in the financial year 2021/22.

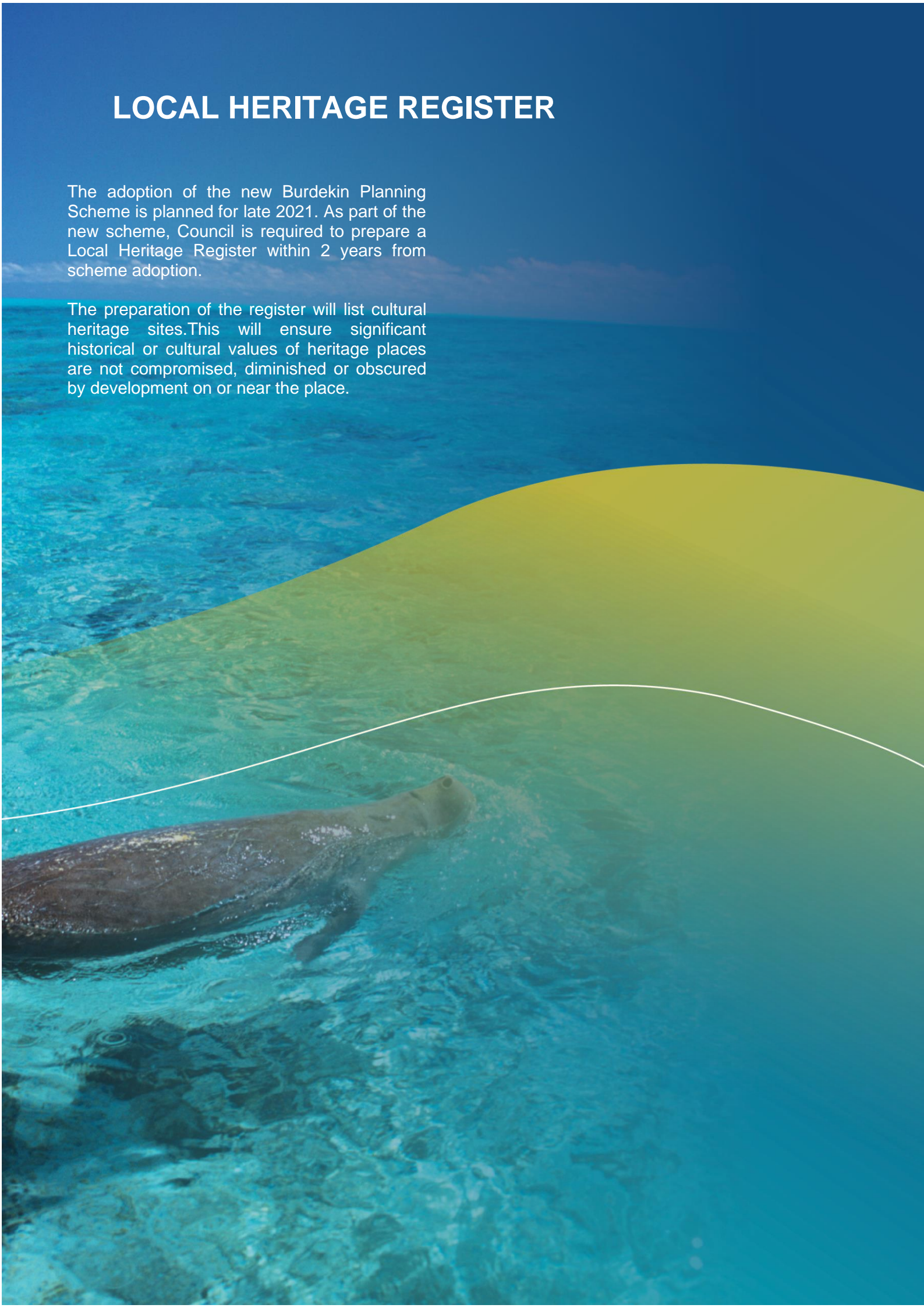


Solar panels

LOCAL HERITAGE REGISTER

The adoption of the new Burdekin Planning Scheme is planned for late 2021. As part of the new scheme, Council is required to prepare a Local Heritage Register within 2 years from scheme adoption.

The preparation of the register will list cultural heritage sites. This will ensure significant historical or cultural values of heritage places are not compromised, diminished or obscured by development on or near the place.





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