



Management Committee Meeting 61 Minutes

Date: Thursday 16 November 2023 **Time:** 1:00 – 3:00pm

Location: CQUniversity Leo Zussino Building 1.22, and Zoom

Attendees:

Name	Position	Organisation
Chair		
Professor Iain Gordon	GHHP Chair	GHHP
Staff		
Ms Hannah King	GHHP Project Officer	GHHP
Dr Kirsten McMahon	GHHP Research Officer	GHHP
Partner Tier 1		
Ms Demi Blucher	Gladstone Manager	Gidarjil Development Corporation
Partner Tier 2		
Ms Elyse Riethmuller	CEO and GHHP Deputy Chair	Fitzroy Basin Association
Partner Tier 3		
Mr David Voss	Chief Executive Officer	Gladstone Industry Leadership Group
Mr Alan Hayter	Environmental Lead	Conoco Phillips
Partner Tier 4		
Dr Megan Ellis	Environment Specialist	Gladstone Ports Corporation
Ms Fiona Horner	A/ Environment Superintendent	Gladstone Ports Corporation
Government		
Ms Rachel Darcy	Manager, Reef Partnerships	OGBR&WH, DES
Ms Ali Moore	Manager Environment and Conservation	Gladstone Regional Council
Research		
ISP Members		
Observers		
Brady Hartwell	Management Accountant Support Assistant	CQUniversity Research Finance

Apologies:

Name	Position	Organisation
Professor Emma Jackson	Director, Coastal Marine Ecosystems Research Centre	CQUniversity
Cr Darryl Branthwaite	Councillor	Gladstone Regional Council
Professor John Rolfe	ISP Chair	GHHP Independent Science Panel

Agenda Item 1 – Introduction

Meeting Started: 1:05pm

1.2 Apologies and Introductions

Iain provided an Acknowledgement of Country. Apologies were noted from Emma Jackson and John Rolfe.

1.3 Previous Minutes and Actions

The Chair invited a review of the previous minutes and actions with updates made to the actions that are included in the Meeting Action Register.

The meeting minutes of Management Committee Meeting 60 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

Moved: Rachel

Seconded: David

Agenda Item 2 – Items Requiring Decision

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2.1 2023 Gladstone Harbour Report Card Results

Almost all Environmental health component indicators were assessed in 2023, except the mangrove indicator, which was last assessed in 2019, and the Health Assessment Index (HAI) which forms part of the fish condition indicator score, last assessed in 2021.

The Social and Cultural components were not assessed this year and results from previous years were carried over. The Economic indicator was partially assessed in 2023, with some results replicated from previous years. Large rainfall events and extended dry seasons can impact the health of the harbour.

In the 2022–23 reporting year, annual rainfall at Gladstone Airport was above the 29-year average for the second year in a row, with monthly rainfall in July, September and October being greater than twice the monthly average. The rainfall data is again included in the 2023 Report Card.

Water and Sediment Quality

The overall grade for water quality was good (B), the same as 2022, but decreased from the 2021 grade of (A). The most variation between zones were seen in the Physicochemical – turbidity and nutrient scores. Turbidity received a lower score than 2022 and declined a grade from (B) to (C). Overall nutrient scores were similar to the 2022 results. Metals remain consistently very good across the board, except for a (B) grade for copper in Auckland Inlet.

The overall sediment quality scores very good in 2023, which was very similar to 2022 and 2021. Hannah noted that sediment had received an (A) since monitoring first began, which is a good highlight to share. Most zone scores were very good (A). There were some satisfactory (C) and good scores (B) for arsenic and nickel, which is like previous years. The scores for arsenic and nickel were also noted in 2022 and was provided with the narrative that: *both are naturally occurring within the harbour and may not be associated with anthropogenic inputs. Angel et al. (2012) also reported low levels of sediment metals and metalloids within Gladstone Harbour below the guideline values, however, particulate arsenic concentrations exceeded the ANZECC/ARMNCANZ ISQG3-low trigger value in two samples from The Narrows and one sample near Quoin Island. They noted that the source of this arsenic is natural (geological formation on the area) and is not associated with anthropogenic inputs.*

Overall, it was noted that sub-indicator trends are as follows:

- Physicochemical – turbidity has been variable over the past nine years.
- Nutrients the lowest sub-indicator score, 2023 result similar to 2022.
- Variance in turbidity and nutrient possibly attributed to by high rainfall in the reporting year.
- Dissolved metals consistently very good scores.
- Sediment quality consistently very good scores.
- Overall water quality grade/score has been relatively stable for past nine years, with a consistent (A) grade since 2015, excluding a (B) grade in 2016.

Megan suggested highlighting the fact that water and sediment quality has remained an (A) for the last seven years.

Iain noted that rainfall may impact turbidity.

Coral

In 2023, coral received an (E) grade of 0.14, which is the same as 2022, and is the sixth consecutive year. This on-going (E) grade is likely due to low cover of living coral, high macroalgal cover, low abundance of juvenile corals, and a poor overall score for change in hard coral cover. Other ongoing pressures include the widespread presence of bio-eroding sponges. Coupled with extremely low coral cover, these pressures may be negatively impacting juvenile density and hard coral cover change. High water temperatures also impacted change in hard coral cover scores as disturbance years are excluded from analysis. Reef resilience is measured by juvenile density, macroalgal cover and coral cover change.

Megan suggested that GHHP request Gladstone Ports Corporation's Reef Survey Report for the Technical Report. The report is finished, but not yet publicly available, so a request will need to be made.

Action: Kirsten to ask Gladstone Ports Corporation for a copy of their Reef Survey Report for consideration of inclusion into the GHHP Technical Report.

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Action: Kirsten to ensure that all causations tied to indicator grades are backed by research, and are consistent across the Report Card, Technical Report, and final reports by contract service providers.

Seagrass

Seagrass received a 0.58 (C) score in 2023, which is a decline from the 2022 score of 0.70 (B). Seven of 14 meadows were rated as being in good or very good condition in 2023. Decreases in seagrass biomass and meadow condition in 2023 can be attributed to above average rainfall and increased river flow in 2022/2023 relative to the previous four years. Turbidity associated with rainfall and river outflow reduces benthic light conditions inhibiting seagrass growth and can ultimately lead to plant death.

The largest seagrass meadow in Port Curtis, Pelican Banks (Meadow 43) is in poor condition after being rated satisfactory in 2021. Changes in species from foundation species *Z. muelleri* to small, less persistent *H. uninervis* and *H. ovalis* during this period contributed to lower meadow biomass and poor meadow condition. The Pelican Banks meadow is subject to high levels of herbivory from dugong and turtles that may be altering the species composition and restricting recovery at Meadow 43.

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Seagrass in the Western Basin and the Narrows remains in good condition but there were declines in seagrass biomass, area, and species composition in Rodds Bay, Inner Harbour and Mid Harbour. In the Western Basin and north to the Narrows, seagrass remained in good condition with five of the seven monitoring meadows in these zones in good or very good condition. This is the first time seagrass in the Narrows has been in very good condition for consecutive years.

For the Harbour, only the meadows at Quoin Island (Meadow 48) and at South Trees Inlet (Meadow 60) were in good condition. Seagrass at Pelican Banks (Meadow 43) returned to poor condition after reaching satisfactory condition in 2021 after 6 years of poor condition. The seagrass meadow at the Inner Harbour (Meadow 58) was in very poor condition due to a large decrease in biomass and the absence of persistent seagrass *Zostera muelleri* in the meadow. Rodds Bay received a poor condition because of decreases in biomass.

Habitats

Seagrass scores are the most variable – likely due to increased grazing and heavy rainfall. Corals consistently receiving very poor scores. Mangroves not assessed since 2019 but will be assessed in 2024. Overall, the Habitats grade has been steady since 2019, receiving a poor (D) grade.

Fish and Crabs

The Fish and Crabs indicator group consists of three indicators: Mud crabs, Fish Recruitment and Fish Health – made up of the HAI and Visual fish condition. HAI was not assessed this year.

Mud Crabs

Overall, the harbour scored higher for the mud crab indicator in 2023 (0.51) than in 2022 (0.39) and was more like the 2021 score (0.48), resulting this year in a C grade. These results represent the seventh year of Mud crab sampling.

Three metrics are assessed – abundance Catch per unit effort, prevalence of rust lesions and sex ratio. The mud crab indicator reflects a variety of pressures on mud crabs in Gladstone Harbour, including commercial fishing, recreational fishing, and environmental/habitat condition. In the Inner Harbour - only 4 mud crabs were caught here in 2023 and the small sample size ($n < 5$) means it is not appropriate to calculate grades for this zone, except for the abundance measure. Only 3 individuals (out of 94) showing lesions.

Fish Health – Fish Condition

In 2023, Fish Health received a 0.73 (B), which is a very slight increase from 2022 0.72 (B). All five fish species received a very good (A) grade for visual fish condition, while three of the five received a poor (D) grade for fish body condition and the remaining two species received a satisfactory (C) grade (Pikey Bream and Barred Javelin). Overall, all five fish species received a good (B) grade.

Megan asked if there was any narrative regarding fish body condition. Kirsten noted that this narrative will be provided within the Technical Report.

Fish Recruitment

Fish Recruitment received a poor (D) grade in 2023, which is a decline from 2022 where it received a 0.57 (C). Many of the zones declined in score, and Hannah noted that this will also need to be communicated appropriately with the Partners and community upon Report Card release.

Fish and Crabs Trends

Mud crabs received a (C) after five years of a poor (D) grade. Fish Recruitment is quite variable but has declined to a poor (D) after three consecutive years of a satisfactory (C). Fish Health has received a (B) for the last five years. Overall, Fish and Crabs has maintained a steady (C) grade for the past four years. Kirsten noted that the fish HAI was not assessed in 2023, which is one of the components of Fish Health, and may contribute to the steady (B) grade of the indicator.

Environmental Health Overall

Water and Sediment Quality maintained a very good (A) grade from 2022. Increased rainfall and river outflow contributed to low turbidity and nutrient scores. Very good sediment grade for the ninth consecutive year.

Habitats remained at a poor (D) grade and had a decline in Seagrass grade (B to C) due to increased rainfall and grazing. Corals were unchanged (E), and Mangroves were not assessed. Fish and Crabs maintained a satisfactory (C) grade overall, with Mud crabs improving grade (D to C) and Fish Recruitment declining (B to C).

Overall, Environmental received a grade of (C) 0.63. This is similar to the 2022 result of 0.64 (C). Environmental Health has hovered around a satisfactory (C) grade, except for two consecutive years of a good (B) grade in 2020 and 2021.

Economic

Economic Health was partially assessed in 2023. This data was collected from third party groups for shipping activity, tourism, commercial fishing, and employment indicators. All other Economic Health indicator results were carried over from 2022 as these are assessed through the CATI survey results. Overall, the Economic Health results were very similar to 2022 receiving a good score (B). Over time, Economic Health has remained steady with a good (B) score, although no new data was assessed between 2019-2021.

Social and Cultural Health

Neither Social nor Cultural health was assessed in 2023 but shows steady trends for both components. Both components received a good (B) grade.

Confidence Ratings

Sediment, Seagrass, Coral, Fish Recruitment, and Mud Crabs all received high confidence ratings owing majorly to consistent methods and monitoring. These are the same results as 2022. Water and Fish Health both received a moderate confidence rating, the same as 2022. Mangroves declined from a high rating in 2022 to a moderate rating in 2023, owing to the length of time since last monitored (2019).

Social received a high confidence rating as computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI) regarded as reliable and repeatable developed exclusively for Gladstone Harbour. Economic also maintained a high level of confidence as the CATI survey is reliable, repeatable, and designed specifically for Gladstone Harbour. Other data is received from reputable sources such as The Australian Bureau of Statistics. Finally, Cultural received a stable moderate rating as the

Sense of Place methodology is well established but based on a single survey and last assessed in 2022. Indigenous cultural heritage was last assessed in 2018.

Rachel noted that when referring to 'grazing', it is generally thought of as land-based grazing by cattle. It would be worth expanding to that 'grazing' refers to marine based grazing by dugongs and turtles, particularly in the Technical Report and online media.

Action: Hannah to send PowerPoint Presentation slides with Management Committee to review Report Card results.

Hannah presented the drafted Report Card. Kirsten has updated the Report Card Monitoring Evolution narrative at the top of the Report Card, which details the indicator staggering for the Social and Cultural indicators, as well as the fish Health Assessment Index and Mangroves.

The Environmental results have been expanded to showcase the scores and grades for the overall components, as well as the individual indicators. A narrative has been provided to supplement this. The Harbour Zone map has been moved to underneath the Environmental results, and showcases the Water and Sediment, Fish and Crabs, and Habitat results for each of the zones.

Megan asked where the litter and marine debris results were located. Kirsten commented that these will be in the Technical Report.

As Social and Cultural were not assessed in 2023, and the Economic component only had minor changes, indicator scores and grades were not supplied in the 2023 Report Card. Further details for these components will be in the Technical Report. Grading, Confidence and Trends were included, and the narrative was updated to confirm that confidence levels relate to confidence in data relevance, rather than quality of data.

The Urban Water Stewardship Framework was included in the Report Card, including the coaster and narrative. The last page includes highlights, Gladstone rainfall table, Acknowledgement of Country, and Partner logos.

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Action: Kirsten and John to discuss expediting future Report Card releases to November/December each year.

Iain thanked Hannah and Kirsten for presenting, and shared thanks to the Independent Science Panel for their work.

Agenda Item 3 – Items for Consideration

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3.1 Independent Science Panel Review Recommendations

The ISP and science team are responsible for two parts of the Ten-Year review process:

- Stage 3: GHHP Science Projects Review
- Stage 4: Trends and Relationships Over Time

Progress to date on Stage 3 includes:

- Charting all grades by indicators over the past 10 years to summarise results.
- Revisiting the results and recommendations of the five-year review from 2017.
- Reviewing each indicator in the four components.
- Developing draft recommendations for improvements where appropriate.

Progress to date on Stage 4 includes:

- Requesting and receiving the 10-year data set from PCIMP for water and sediment quality.
- Discussions with the ISP about appropriate ways of conducting the data analysis.
- Discussions with AIMS about appropriate ways of conducting the trend analysis.

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Action: Iain and John to ensure that appropriate measures have been taken prior to launching the concept of the Traditional Owner Values component at the Ten-Year Review Workshop, such as liaising with and obtaining endorsement from Traditional Owner groups.

Agenda Item 4 – Reports

4.1 Chair Report

On 9th of October, the Chairs of the five Regional Report Cards met with the Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Environment, Energy, and Water. John Foster, Branch Head of the Great Barrier Reef of DCCEEW attended, and it was agreed that a regular meeting would be put in place. The meeting was to inform the Department of the Regional Report Card Partnerships, their value to State and Federal Governments, and the regions. The next meeting will take place on 15 December, with meetings to be scheduled every three to four months.

On Monday 13th November, the Office of the Great Barrier Reef held a Strategic Workshop in Brisbane and included staff from each of the five Regional Report Cards. It was a very successful meeting and discussed collective methods of success and collaboration. Iain thanked OGBR for hosting the meeting.

Also on 13th November, the Chairs met with Sam O'Connor, Shadow Minister for the Environment. Sam had not heard much of the Partnerships, so the meeting detailed each of the Partnerships and the value they bring. The Chairs will also meet with Leanne Linard, Minister for the Environment, and the Great Barrier Reef, on the 29th of November.

4.2 Project Officer Report

25 September – The Communications Working Group Meeting with Marketing Mafia. This meeting discussed upcoming opportunities, and the renaming of the Stewardship Report. Hannah thanked David for his suggestion of *Above and Below* which has been accepted. Marketing Mafia was also told of GHHP's intention to release a Communications Tender in early 2024.

26 and 27 September - Gladstone Library Virtual Reef Event, where GHHP was active in community engagement through the Drains and Ladders Game, sharing of Stewardship Report and Report Card, and through the educational resources.

29 September - GHHP Ten-Year Review Inception Meeting. Hannah thanked everyone who attended and discussed ideas and methods with Alana from Alluvium Consulting. With special thanks to Kirsten who took the lead on the surveys while the Project Officer was on leave, and to those who provided feedback. Surveys were released in late October, will all responses received on Friday 10 November.

26 October - Research Officer and Project Officer attended the Gladstone Area Water Board's Here and Now Event, which celebrated the water history within the Gladstone Region.

13 November - Strategic Workshop with the other Regional Report Cards, the Office of the Great Barrier Reef, Healthy Land and Water, and the Australian Government. The focus was on data management and reporting, waterway management and stewardship, and on future proofing our partnerships for better outcomes for local waterways, the Great Barrier Reef, communities, and industries.

Other Notes

- Almost all Partners have returned their signed Memorandum of Understanding and have been issued an invoice. There are still four Partners outstanding.
- GHHP has committed to another year of sponsorship to the Boyne Tannum Hookup, as approved by the Partners in June 2023. It has been negotiated that instead of a stall, GHHP will be able to showcase the Infofish/BTHU video on repeat on the screens. It is anticipated that we will also be able to share the Stewardship Report and Report Card over the weekend as well.
- It is anticipated that 35 people will attend the Ten-Year Review Workshop, and 20-25 attendees to the networking event. Simon Costanzo will also be joining for the workshop.

Upcoming

20 Nov – Ten Year Review Workshop

20 Nov – GHHP Networking Event

22 Nov – LMAC meeting

23 Nov – Fitzroy Partnership Report Card Launch

30 Nov – Gidarjil Development Corporation Meeting

2 Dec – Library to borrow Drains and Ladders

7 Dec – Stewardship Launch and Partners Meeting

4.3 ISP Chair Report

Chair Report for ISP Meeting 48 occurred Wednesday 1 November 2023. The meeting was held as a Zoom meeting, and was the third and final meeting for 2023. All members were able to attend apart from Dr Eva Abal.

John Rolfe reported that:

- Dr Eva Abal had agreed to be the Deputy Chair for the ISP.
- John had talked with Dr Murray Logan at AIMS about statistical approaches to identify trends in the Ten-Year data sets that had been provided by PCIMP.
- Agreements for the 2024 report card are in progress.

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Action: Kirsten to speak with John regarding the best process to follow, regarding the Mangroves Scope of Works and Management Committee approval.

The ISP considered options for meetings in 2024. It was agreed to hold four meetings to be able to progress the Ten-Year review, and to look at the first meeting in March where there may be an opportunity to meet directly with the Management Committee.

The ISP reviewed the scores and grades for the different components of the report card. The ISP endorsed the available scores. The detailed presentation and text for the report card were not completed, so will be reviewed by the ISP out of session. The Technical Report is not yet completed, so will be reviewed by the ISP in November / December.

Megan asked if the Technical Report would be sent to the Management Committee for review, to which Kirsten agreed.

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4.3 GHHP Finance Report

Brady Hartwell from CQU Research Finance joined and provided an update on the CQU Finance Report.

As at 31 October 2023:

- Carry forward from June 2023	\$675,532.11
- Total Cash at Bank	\$923,885.78
- YTD Memberships Received	\$113,000
- Memberships Invoiced but Not Paid	\$35,000
- Memberships to be Invoiced	\$145,100
- Other funding Received	\$280,000
- YTD Expenditure	\$259,071.26

Hannah noted that this was Brady's final Management Committee meeting, and Iain thanked Brady for his hard work. Brady provided that his supervisor, Alana, will be attending instead.

Agenda Item 5 – General/Recurring Business

Iain asked the scheduled date for Report Card Release in 2024. Hannah noted that the Communications Working Group tentatively suggested a date in February but left it open for the Management Committee to discuss. It was suggested that Thursday is a good date. Megan asked to avoid the two middle weeks of February, owing to the Gladstone Ports Corporation review. Rachel suggested early February, and Iain agreed that Thursday 1st February would be good. All in favour of the 2023 Report Card Release to be Thursday 1st February 2024.

Hannah asked the Management Committee if they are still happy to attend meetings on every third Thursday of every second month, with the first one being Thursday 18 January 2024. Iain attends meetings in person every four months. The December Partners meeting may need to be shifted, dependent on if the Report Card release be brought forward to November/December 2024.

Action: Hannah to liaise with other Regional Report Cards for meeting dates, and then send meeting invitations to Management Committee for 2024. Hannah to liaise with Kirsten regarding December 2024 Partners meeting.

Megan asked about availability of meeting minutes. Hannah noted that 2022 and later Management Committee meeting minutes are available on the website in a redacted format, and that the Management Committee has full access

to minutes via the Data Information Management System. Hannah has also been placing meeting documents into calendar meeting invites for easier location.

Megan mentioned that the GPC Reef Survey Report is available for the Technical Report.

Action: Hannah to share invitation from Griffith University regarding light pollution workshops, with the Management Committee.

5.2 – Meeting Closure and Next Meeting

Meeting Closed: 2:40pm

Next meeting: GHHP Partners Meeting 61, 7 December 2023, 1pm – 3pm

Meeting Action Register

Number	Action	Responsible	Due	Status	Notes
MC Meeting 55					
MC55.7	Consider adding coral monitoring data collected by Gidarjil Development Corporation into the report card. To be discussed at the 2023 GHHP Review.	ISP Chair	Sep 2023	In-progress	To be discussed at review on 20 November 2023.
MC Meeting 57					
MC 57.3	Continue communicating with PCCC and update Scope of Works for Traditional Owner Values as required.	ISP Chair	Sep 2023	In-progress	John will meet or has met with PCCC to discuss.
MC 57.6	Go through the e-Portal to determine what, if any, documents are relevant and should be kept.	Research Officer	Sep 2023	Complete	Kirsten has completed.
MC Meeting 58					
MC 58.7	Organise the appointment of a Deputy Chair of the Independent Science Panel.	ISP Chair	Sep 2023	Complete	John's meeting notes provided that Dr Eva Abal has been appointed to the role.
MC Meeting 60					
MC 60.1	Develop a drafted proposal and tender for the Communications delivery provider and present to the Management Committee for comment, including a planned schedule of work.	Project Officer	Nov 2023	In-progress	Marketing Mafia is aware of this process.

MC 60.2	Contact Simon Costanzo to see if he would be willing and available to attend the GHHP Ten-Year Review workshop, and what his day rate would be.	Project Officer	Sep 2023	Complete	Simon will be attending the workshop on 20 November.
MC 60.3	Send date claimer for ten-year review workshop to Partners for 20 November 2023.	Project Officer	Sep 2023	Complete	Sent to Partners.
MC 60.4	Reassess the Partner categorisation and contribution and provide a narrative.	Project Officer	Nov 2023	In-progress	Elyse noted that the categorisation will need to be assessed by Management Committee prior to communication with Partners. Megan asked that Fiona be kept abreast.
MC Meeting 61					
MC 61.1	Ask Gladstone Ports Corporation for a copy of their Reef Survey Report for consideration of inclusion into the GHHP Technical Report.	Research Officer	Dec 2023		
MC 61.2	Ensure that all cautions tied to indicator grades are backed by research, and are consistent across the Report Card, Technical Report, and final reports by contract service providers.	Research Officer	Dec 2023		
MC 61.3	Send PowerPoint Presentation slides with Management Committee to review Report Card results.	Project Officer	Nov 2023		
MC 61.4	Kirsten and John to discuss expediting future Report Card releases to November/December each year.	Research Officer ISP Chair	Nov 2023		
MC 61.5	Ensure that appropriate measures have been taken prior to launching the concept of the Traditional Owner Values component at the Ten-Year Review Workshop, such as liaising with and obtaining endorsement from Traditional Owner groups.	GHHP Chair ISP Chair	Nov 2023		
MC 61.6	Speak with John regarding the best process to follow, regarding the Mangroves Scope of Works and Management Committee approval.	Research Officer ISP Chair	Dec 2023		

MC 61.7	Liaise with other Regional Report Cards for meeting dates, and then send meeting invitations to Management Committee for 2024. Hannah to liaise with Kirsten regarding December 2024 Partners meeting.	Project Officer	Dec 2023		
MC 61.8	Share invitation from Griffith University regarding light pollution workshops, with the Management Committee.	Project Officer	Nov 2023		