

# reef beat

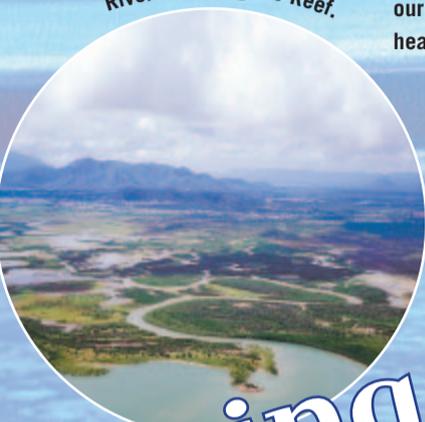
river to reef



THE Great Barrier Reef is one of the most beautiful, diverse and complex ecosystems in the world with more than 2900 reefs, 1500 species of fish and many unique and threatened animals like dugong and turtles. To help keep our waterways and the Great Barrier Reef healthy for generations to come, we all need to

do our bit to protect them. Whether you live in a big city, small town or in the country, what you do at home and at school can affect the quality of water in your local rivers, estuaries and the Great Barrier Reef. We can all do our bit to look after our Great Barrier Reef and help keep it great for future generations.

Rivers entering the Reef.



## Doing your bit to look after it



Coastal activities

### Water Quality

The quality of water entering the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is declining and is impacting on the health of the Great Barrier Reef and the animals and plants that live within it. Reefs grow best in waters that have naturally low concentrations of nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) and sediments. Increasing use of fertilisers, pesticides and other pollutants on the land has resulted in increased levels of these entering our waterways and the Great Barrier Reef. This has resulted in the decline in water quality, which has affected corals, seagrasses and other important habitats, as well as the many marine animals they support. Declining water quality can also have a harmful affect on tourism, fishing and other important industries that depend on a healthy reef.

### How we impact on water quality

The Great Barrier Reef Catchment links the land to the Reef, so what we do on the land affects the water quality in our rivers, estuaries and the Great Barrier Reef. As individuals, we all undertake everyday activities that may impact on the quality of water in local waterways and downstream marine environments. Many major land uses and human activities may contribute to declining water quality in the Great Barrier Reef.

- Some of these activities include:
- \* coastal development
  - \* agriculture
  - \* aquaculture
  - \* mining and industry
  - \* shipping

### Doing your bit to look after it.

- You can do your bit to help protect the Great Barrier Reef by implementing practices on the land and in your own home or school that help minimise your impacts on water quality. You can help to improve the quality of water in the Great Barrier Reef and other important marine environments by:
- Keeping drains and gutters free of chemicals and rubbish, as what goes into drains, creeks and rivers may end up in the ocean.
  - Putting all litter in the bin and recycling to keep the Great Barrier Reef clear and free of litter
  - Washing your car on the lawn instead of your driveway or on the street, as detergents will wash into nearby drains creeks and rivers and may end up in the local waterways or the Great Barrier Reef.
  - Composting and using garden beds or vegetation strips around your home to capture rainwater and minimise runoff.
  - Sharing your knowledge about the effects of declining water quality with others.
  - Joining a local community group that actively supports the protection of our coasts and oceans such as Waterwatch, Seagrass Watch, Landcare or a Catchment Management Group.



Catchment area



### Great Barrier Reef Catchment

The Great Barrier Reef Catchment is the land area that surrounds the rivers that drain into the Great Barrier Reef. This area is the main source of sediment, nutrients and other pollutants that enter the Reef. Within the Great Barrier Reef Catchment there are a number of smaller catchments that surround each of the larger rivers that drain into the Great Barrier Reef.