




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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ADJOURNMENT

Mackay-Whitsunday Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (10.32 pm): The first Mackay-Whitsunday Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership pilot report card was launched last week, marking a significant step in improving the health of our region's waterways. The Mackay-Whitsunday region supports a range of land and waterway uses including urban centres, agriculture, ports, recreation, fishing and tourism.

Since the Mackay-Whitsunday Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership was announced it has been pleasing to see the community, tourism, industry, research organisations and government working together to develop a shared vision for the future of the region, its rivers and the reef. The Mackay-Whitsunday Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership is made up of 28 partners.

The challenge for us set out in the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan was to create a partnership that would facilitate the production of an annual report card that would help drive continued improvement in the health of the region's waterways. Not only has a pilot report card been developed but also a program that integrates existing monitoring and reporting across the region.

This partnership has achieved an exceptional amount in a very short time, not only reporting on ecosystem health, but stewardship by industry and the health of the region from a social perspective. This achievement would not have been possible without access to data from over \$4 million worth of existing monitoring programs in the region. I look forward to the inclusion of economic and cultural indicators in the next report card which will also identify trends across the region.

Through effectively coordinating our activities and using modern monitoring technologies to assess progress, we can improve waterway health across the region and the wider Great Barrier Reef. Report cards are a great way to have a conversation with our community about the health of our waterways. Our waterways report card contained a mixed bag of results from Bs to Ds. The Whitsundays, which is critical to our tourism industry, received a C, showing it is in moderate condition. These results show that in some areas we are doing well, but we need to do work in other areas to improve waterway health. These results will also help us target our efforts over coming years in terms of restoration programs and additional monitoring.

The Queensland government is a proud member of the Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership and has contributed \$300,000 over two years as well as providing resources to help establish the partnership.