



# Reef BLITZ

ReefBlitz.com



# 2016

ReefBlitz 2016 engaged the community and partners in citizen science programs designed to help track the health and biodiversity of the Reef, and associated habitats.

The Great Barrier Reef Citizen Science Alliance (GBRCSA) worked with the Great Barrier Reef Foundation and partners to trial a revised strategic approach for ReefBlitz events. Events integrated data collection and education initiatives from multiple core citizen science programs across Queensland.

This approach focused on augmenting the reach, impact and partnerships for Great Barrier Reef Citizen Science groups, offering both notable achievements during the event campaign and lasting benefits for future growth.

There is little research that has explored how attending a citizen science event influences people's motivation to engage in environmental issues after events, or what aspects of a citizen science event might motivate participants most.

ReefBlitz 2016 event evaluation was undertaken through The University of Queensland to develop and deliver event participant evaluation surveys to contribute to broader social science research and provide constructive feedback regarding event activities and approaches.



- Event activities included surveys of reef health, wildlife, mangroves, saltmarsh, seagrass, and coastal marine debris.
- All of the data collected directly contributed to GBRCSA members and partner programs.
- Throughout October 2016, community participants registered to join community events or contributed through casual coastal and Reef observations to one of five nominated citizen science programs.
- In November 2016, a number of additional school and community events were held.
- The new ReefBlitz framework supported data collection for long-term citizen science programs, encourage collaboration across programs and built new pathways for community and partner engagement.

# ReefBlitz 2016 Key Stats

In a survey of 138 event participants:

**45%** of participants had not heard of citizen science prior to the event

**58%** had not attended a citizen science event

**54%** identified as 'the type of person who acts in an environmentally-friendly way'

**60%** agreed the event increased their ability to help protect reefs and coasts

**92%** agreed they will participate in citizen science in the future

Event value

**40** event partners & supporters

**\$80k** in estimated in-kind event support & volunteer time contributions

**>40%** increase in CoralWatch and Eye on the Reef contributions for the month compared to annual averages

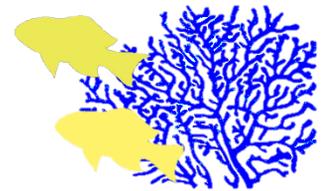
**8** new long-term partnerships



**1,649** participants



**52** events



**611** field surveys



**28,107** data points



**40** partners & supporters



**643kg** of rubbish removed & recorded



## New partnerships were developed during ReefBlitz, including:

- Great Barrier Reef Legacy joined the Alliance as a member. GBR Legacy worked with Wavelength and Mosman High School students to share their citizen science experience.
- Mangrove Watch and Cairns and Far North Environment Centre ran multiple events together for Cairns ReefBlitz and are exploring further collaborative programs, increasing Mangrove Watch capacity in North Queensland.
- CoralWatch and Moreton Bay Environmental Education Centre trialed an approach to use underwater video to engage students in using the Coral Health Chart and are developing reef science lesson plans.
- Sailing for Seagrass worked with Moreton Bay Environmental Education Centre to assess integration of MBEEC regular seagrass data collection into seagrass habitat and condition mapping for Healthy Waterways reporting.
- Six Reef Check Australia volunteers were trained in Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Reef Health Impact Surveys (RHIS) methodology to increase capacity for volunteers to engage in contributing to reef health monitoring activities.
- Reef Check Australia and QUT's Monitoring through Many Eyes were introduced through the ReefBlitz Manly event and now RCA has contributed historical reef health transect video data to support the development of reef aesthetics and health models for the project.
- Project Manta and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority discussed opportunities to include instructions on taking useful identification images for sharks and manta rays to include in Eye on the Reef app to increase program connections and data.
- Mangrove Watch connected with 2 local Bushcare groups in the Redland area, who plan to take custodianship of ongoing monitoring at new saltmarsh research sites.
- Citizen scientists joined Australian Fellows participating in Reef Ecologic Coral Reef Management and Leadership course for reef trips and public talks, including collaborative RHIS and Reef Check surveys off Townsville.
- Clean up volunteers with Tangaroa Blue, GBRMPA, and Capricornia Catchments removed 643 kilograms of marine debris from coastal environments in north and central Queensland.
- A successful corporate event was held on Lady Elliot Island, with notable media coverage, as well as positive initial feedback from event participants and LEI staff.
- Cruise Whitsundays helped create a citizen science fusion by offering dedicated EcoBarge Clean Sea's volunteers the chance to learn reef monitoring skills and understand how their coastal work helps look after the Reef.

