

Monitoring the health of Torres Strait coral reefs

Project leader: Dr Ray Berkelmans (AIMS)

The National Environmental Research Program Tropical Ecosystems (NERP TE) Hub is an environmental science program funded by the Australian Government with six projects in the Torres Strait.

About this project

How healthy are coral reefs in the Torres Strait? This project will survey coral reefs so we have a baseline of coral condition to answer this question and monitor changes in future. The project will also establish an early warning system for coral bleaching.

Why this research is important

Torres Strait coral reefs face a number of threats, such as coral bleaching, crown-of-thorns starfish, shipping and disease. Improved knowledge about the status of coral in the area and continued monitoring will help identify problems and allow managers to respond accordingly.

Research benefits for the community

Information about the status of coral reefs will help TSRA and the community identify problems and respond.

Outcomes will include:

- A monitoring program for Torres Strait reefs that meets community needs;
- A report on coral reef biodiversity in the Torres Strait;
- Rangers who can monitor coral reefs and interpret trends in coral reefs
- A program for long-term monitoring of reef water temperatures; and
- A real-time weather station and an early warning system for coral bleaching.

The real-time weather station at Madge Reef, between Thursday and Horn Islands measures water temperature, salinity, light, wind, rain and humidity.



Photo: Scott Bainbridge (AIMS)

Who is leading this project?



Dr Ray Berkelmans
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Ray is a research scientist with an interest in climate change effects on coral reefs.

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Photo: AIMS Long Term Monitoring Program (AIMS)

Very little is known about Torres Strait reefs. This project will conduct a biodiversity assessment and design a long term reef monitoring program

Project partners



THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND
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TSRA
www.tsra.gov.au

Find this project at www.nerptropical.edu.au
Theme 1: Assessing ecosystem condition and trend
Program 2: Natural resources of the Torres Strait land and sea
Project: 2.3

NERP TE Hub researchers acknowledge the valued input of the traditional owners and communities of the Torres Strait