



Australian Government

Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority

Reef Guardian School Profile

CARDWELL STATE SCHOOL

AUGUST 2003

Location:

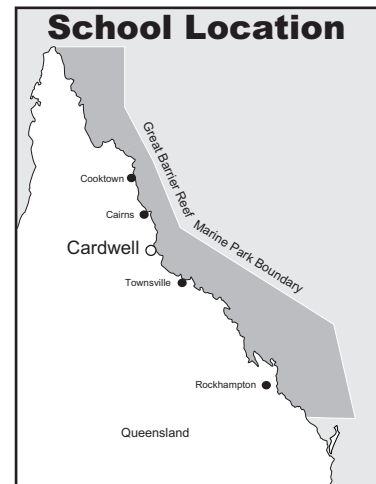
Cardwell State School is the most southerly school in the Tablelands/Johnstone District and is located in the town of Cardwell, a small, rural coastal community situated between Cairns and Townsville.

Size of School:

About 120 students.

Community:

Cardwell is a quiet community with about 1200 residents, many of whom are self-employed or retired. The major employers in the region are the local prawn and barramundi farms, banana farms, and the logging, sugar cane and tourism industries.



What's unique about Cardwell State School?

Imagine studying the Great Barrier Reef from a small, rural, coastal school on the waters edge, overlooking the Coral Sea and Hinchinbrook Island, part of the *Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area*. This is what the students at Cardwell State School are able to experience every day.



Cardwell State School as a Reef Guardian School

The whole school, from Pre-School to Year 7, is involved in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Reef Guardian Schools program. The program comprises all the essential areas of learning with units of work on reef awareness, conservation, protection and best environmental practices implemented in all classes. Knowledge, skills and understanding about the care of the Great Barrier Reef are developed by students and teachers at the school.

Curriculum

As part of their curriculum, students have completed mangrove studies with the assistance of local Queensland Parks & Wildlife Rangers and Cardwell's Local Marine Advisory Committee Chair. In the Arts, students studied the sea and the Reef using an indigenous perspective and a local Indigenous Artist assisted them to paint a reef mural depicting reef creatures found in the local area. Students also participate in Book Week, which is celebrated with authors of marine related books who visit the school to share their texts and provide reef-related education.

let's keep it great

Resource Management

As part of the Reef Guardian program, students consider resource management issues within the school to help reduce human impacts on the Great Barrier Reef. For example, students have learnt about how litter can enter the sea and affect the marine environment by adopting drains in the school and nearby areas and ensuring they are kept clean from green waste and litter.

Community Resources

Students also promote awareness and improve resource management in their local community by undertaking activities such as:

- Stencilling *"This Drain is only for Rain"* above outlet drains on the Bruce Highway next to the beach to encourage community involvement by empowering the public to consider that what goes into gutters and drains ends up on the beach and the Reef; *and*
- A public information night called *"KIDS CAN"* was held in the community hall by Year 5/6 students to educate the community on the need to reduce the use of plastic bags in Cardwell. A letter drop was undertaken inviting community members to attend. This resulted in several hundreds of people attending to listen to the students and learn about ways to reduce plastic bag usage. Initiatives to reduce the number of plastic bags were put forward and local businesses have vowed to take these ideas on board.

Community Education

Teachers and students involved in the Reef Guardian Schools program are strongly supported by their local community and through providing advice and education to the community, the school has gained a significant reputation as Reef educators. Students involved in the program understand the importance of educating the community to ensure best environmental practices are followed to help protect and conserve the health of the Great Barrier Reef.

The school participates in community education activities such as providing displays about Reef Guardianship at the Tully Show and the inaugural Cardwell SEAFEST in 2003. The SEAFEST education display includes:

- a Reef information trail;
- a dugong information area with a life size baby dugong;
- a sustainable fishing game for youngsters to learn about bag limits and best fishing practices;
- 'Butt It Out' canisters;
- art displays featuring the biodiversity of the Reef;
- sample bags with essential community education information about protecting the Reef; *and*
- a seafood cookbook with environmentally friendly tips on sale for the public.