



Reef Guardian School Profile

COOKTOWN STATE SCHOOL

AUGUST 2003

Location:

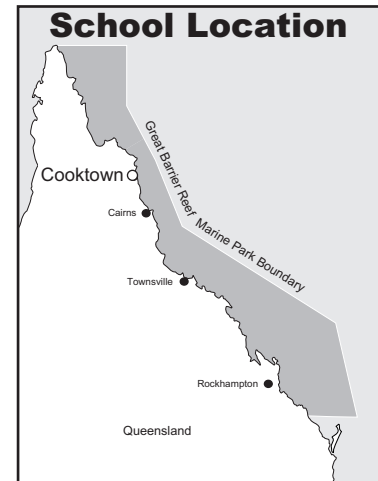
Situated in Cooktown in Far North Queensland.

Size of School:

About 455 students from preschool to year 12.

Community:

Cooktown has a population of approximately 1600 people and is a multicultural community with a significant Aboriginal population. The town mostly contains primary producers, local people involved in the fishing industry, tourism operators, local business owners, and various public service and local government employees. Many people pursuing an alternative lifestyle reside in this small unique far northern town.



What's unique about Cooktown State School?

Cooktown State School services students from a number of remote communities. Students enjoy unique opportunities to study very different and diverse environments, as the school is located close to the vast Australian outback, dense and magnificent rainforests, and the spectacular Great Barrier Reef.



Cooktown State School as a Reef Guardian School

As part of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Reef Guardian Schools program, Cooktown State School focuses on protecting the Great Barrier Reef from land-based impacts through increased awareness, understanding and appreciation of the Reef.

Curriculum

Cooktown State School has three classes involved in the Reef Guardian Schools Program: the Year 9 class, the Connections class (a class of boys from Years 7 to 9), and the Marine Studies class.

The Year 9 class has incorporated Reef Guardian projects in their school curriculum through English, Science, SOSE, Art and Maths. Students study reef-related topics by participating in activities such as developing a campaign kit for the local community focussing on the care of the Reef. The school's main focus in reef education is the management, impacts and importance of the Great Barrier Reef.

The Connections class has been looking at the range of marine animals and habitats, and threats to the Great Barrier Reef. Their Reef Guardian activities incorporate investigation reports and excursions to local beaches.

The Marine Studies class is actively involved in learning about the Great Barrier Reef and participates in the Waterwatch program, in collaboration with the Cape York Marine Advisory Group. The class has monitored points along the Endeavour River, collected water samples, and investigated pollution scares that impact on the Great Barrier Reef. Students have developed an awareness of the value of the Reef and the coastal zone necessary for the sustainable management of a healthy marine environment.

Resources Management

The school has developed resource management activities to educate students and teachers to reduce the use of resources within the school, especially those that may heavily impact on the health of the Great Barrier Reef. The recycling program encourages students, teachers and the local community to reduce, reuse and recycle materials such as paper and cans.

Students also focus on the effects of litter and debris on the marine environment. Within the school grounds, they are helping to reduce the amount of litter entering nearby waterways through their drain spray-painting activity. Students have spray painted drains to educate and remind people about the impacts of litter entering drains and ending up in the sea.

Community Resources

Students have focused on managing community resources and contributing to the protection of local marine environments through:

- The Calico Bag Project, which involved printing and selling calico bags to help reduce the use of plastic bags in the community; *and*
- Participating in Clean up Walker Bay Day.

Community Education

Students understand the importance of educating the community to help ensure the protection and sustainability of the Great Barrier Reef into the future. Students have helped to educate the community about Reef guardianship through:

- A presentation evening to present the Reef Guardian Campaign Kits to the local community;
- Articles in the school newsletter and Cooktown Local News;
- Displays around town;
- Children's storybooks; *and*
- Activities for Book Week.