



Reef Guardian School Profile

MERINDA STATE SCHOOL

AUGUST 2003

Location:

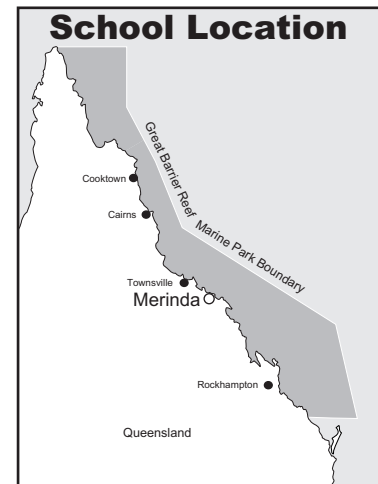
Merinda State School is situated in Merinda, a small town located along the Bruce Highway, just north of Bowen.

Size of School:

64 students, from Pre-school to Year 7.

Community:

Merinda is a very small community with a significant Indigenous population. Most of the community is employed in seasonal work in the fruit and vegetable, commercial fishing, service and pastoral industries.



What's unique about Merinda State School?

Merinda State School services a number of very small communities including the towns of Merinda, Euri Creek and Delta. The school has a large population of students with parents involved in marine-related industries, such as commercial fishing, therefore, students are very aware of the value of the Great Barrier Reef.

Merinda State School as a Reef Guardian School

As part of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Reef Guardian Schools program, Merinda State School is focussing on reducing landfill and the amount of litter entering the marine environment to help protect the Great Barrier Reef.

Curriculum

Students regularly participate in reef-related curriculum activities through science and marine subjects. The school's Reef Guardian activities educate students about the impacts of litter and waste on the Great Barrier Reef.

Resource Management

Students have initiated a number of projects to help reduce the amount of litter in the school grounds. One of the projects is to promote recycling and best environmental practices by placing signs on all bins in the school. The signs encourage students to put certain materials in allocated bins, so litter can be recycled instead of ending up at the dump.

Students have divided bins into:

- Plastic bins;
- Scrap bins;
- Paper bins;
- Metal bins; *and*
- Composting scraps.

The school is also promoting clean drains and will develop signs to encourage students, teachers and the community to consider that what goes into drains ends up in the sea and on the Reef.

Community Resources

Students are also participating in activities to help keep their community free of litter. Students are liaising with Bowen Shire Council Environmental Officers to concentrate on maintaining key areas such as the dump and Muller's Lagoon to help manage the amount of litter entering local waterways and the nearby Great Barrier Reef. Through increased community involvement, the school is also focussing on keeping all drains clear and free of litter, debris and harmful chemicals.

As every little bit counts, students also carry small containers with them to place cigarette butts in when they find them on the ground. Students are collecting the butts from all over the community and are keeping tally of how many they find.

Community Education

Students provide reef guardianship and the importance of protecting the Great Barrier Reef through inclusions in the newsletter. As part of the Reef Guardian Schools program, Merinda State School is working towards developing education programs to raise awareness about protecting the Reef in the community.

