

Cleveland Bay – Environmental and Social Values

Photo credit: CBEL

A CONNECTED COASTAL ENVIRONMENT

Cleveland Bay is a regionally significant coastal environment that supports diverse marine habitats, wildlife and community values.

It's seagrass meadows, coral reefs, mangroves, wetlands and marine waters support wildlife, fisheries, Traditional Owner connections, recreation, tourism and community life.

Understanding these values is an important part of managing activities within and around the bay.

Framed by Cape Pallarenda, Cape Cleveland and Magnetic Island (Yunbenun), the bay supports a diverse network of seagrass meadows, coral reefs, mangroves, wetlands, estuaries and coastal habitats. Together, these environments support wildlife, fisheries, cultural values and community life.

The bay forms part of the Great Barrier Reef and contains a remarkable diversity of habitats within a relatively small area. These interconnected ecosystems support many species throughout different stages of their life cycles and contribute to the environmental significance of the Townsville region.

HABITATS THAT SUPPORT THE BAY

Seagrass meadows are among Cleveland Bay's most important environmental assets. They provide feeding habitat for dugongs and marine turtles, support fish and prawn nursery areas, help stabilise sediments and contribute to the productivity of the wider marine ecosystem. Extensive seagrass meadows occur throughout the bay, particularly around Cape Cleveland, Pallarenda, the Strand and Magnetic Island.

Coral reefs around Magnetic Island, Middle Reef and Virago Shoal support diverse marine communities adapted to Cleveland Bay's naturally turbid coastal waters. These reefs are closely connected with nearby seagrass habitats, mangroves and wetlands, creating an integrated coastal ecosystem.

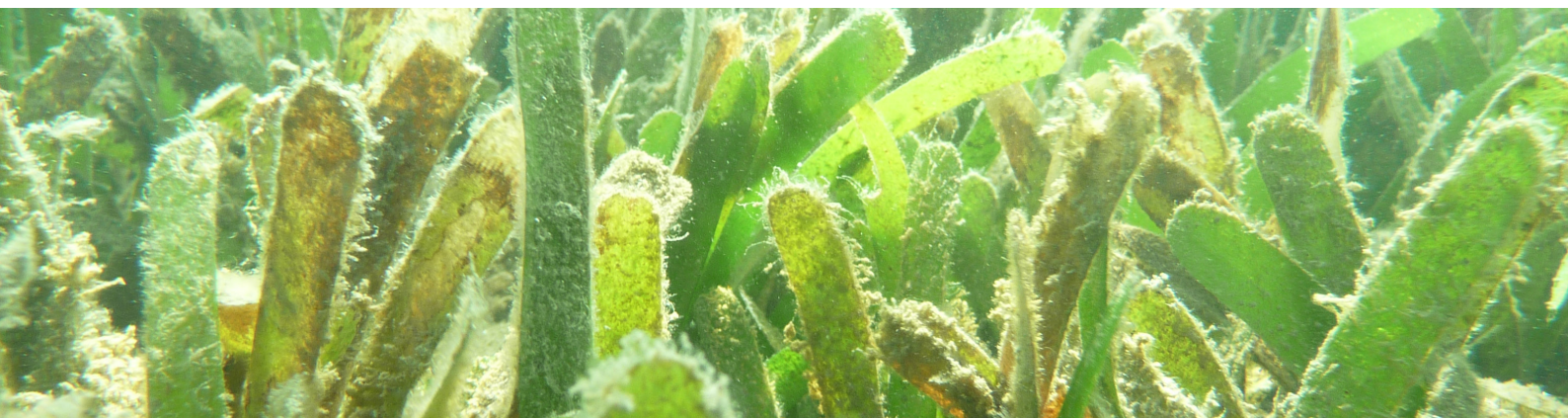
Mangroves, wetlands and saltmarshes are another defining feature of the bay. These habitats provide important nursery areas for fish, prawns and mud crabs, support migratory birds and wildlife, improve water quality and help protect shorelines from erosion and extreme weather.

SEA COUNTRY AND COMMUNITY VALUES

Cleveland Bay lies within the Sea Country of the Gurambilbarra Wulgurukaba and Bindal peoples. Traditional Owners have maintained cultural, spiritual and economic connections with the bay, its islands, waterways and marine resources for thousands of years, and these connections continue today.

The bay also supports important commercial, recreational and Traditional Owner fisheries. Its seagrass meadows, mangroves, estuaries and wetlands provide habitat for species including barramundi, threadfin salmon, flathead, mud crabs and prawns.

Beyond its environmental values, Cleveland Bay supports recreation, boating, tourism, transport, education, research and port activities that contribute to the region's economy and lifestyle.

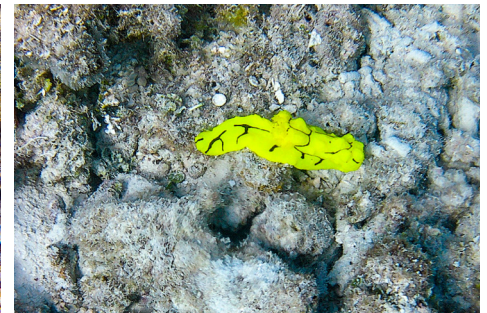


WILDLIFE OF CLEVELAND BAY

Cleveland Bay supports a diverse range of wildlife, including:

- Dugongs
- Marine turtles
- Dolphins
- Migratory birds
- Fish and invertebrates

These species depend on the bay's interconnected seagrass, reef, mangrove and wetland habitats throughout different stages of their life cycles.



A RECOGNISED AND PROTECTED ENVIRONMENT

The significance of Cleveland Bay is recognised through a range of environmental protections, including the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, Cleveland Bay Dugong Protection Area, Cleveland Bay Fish Habitat Area, Bowling Green Bay Ramsar Wetland and Magnetic Island National Park. These protections reflect the bay's importance for biodiversity, fisheries, cultural values and community wellbeing.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT

Understanding the environmental, cultural, economic and community values of Cleveland Bay is an important part of assessing and managing maintenance dredging and sea placement activities.

These values are considered through environmental studies, monitoring programs and regulatory assessments that support the Port's Sea Dumping Permit application.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Cleveland Bay is a highly connected coastal ecosystem that supports wildlife, fisheries, cultural heritage and community life. Its seagrass meadows, coral reefs, mangroves and wetlands work together to support a rich and diverse coastal ecosystem.

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