



## **Monitoring Fish Habitat Areas = better management**

### **Contributing to Improved Monitoring and Managing of Moreton Bay Fish Habitat Areas through the Reef Check Volunteer Program**

*Proponent: Reef Check Australia*

Reef Check Australia is monitoring and reporting on ten Moreton Bay Reef Check sites, including six sites in Fish Habitat Areas and surrounding locations. One of the aims is to identify and document the Fish Habitat Areas that are impacted by water quality issues, habitat destruction, biodiversity loss or marine debris.

Conducting underwater clean-ups reduces a known stressor for fish populations and highlights that rubbish is “often out of sight, out of mind”. By fostering new partnerships to enhance Fish Habitat Areas through cost-effective programs with diverse stakeholders, Reef Check Australia hopes to facilitate a long-term monitoring program that helps to identify and document Fish Habitat Areas and connected habitats.

Reef Check’s project has partnered with University of Queensland’s UniDive, Australian Marine Conservation Society, Stradbroke Wildlife Rescue, Tangaroa Blue and Manta Lodge in a clean-up at Amity Point for World Ocean Day on June 9. Eight volunteers collected 28 kg of underwater debris from the site. An additional benefit is that the activity contributes to sea turtle and marine debris research taking place on NSI.

Data has been shared with stakeholders via the public online Reef Health Database, which is improving management and increasing public awareness. Higher levels of data access are available for Reef Check Data Users, facilitating data applications and providing another tool to monitor, manage and protect Moreton Bay’s reef systems as well as opportunities to incorporate Reef Check data into other studies. Reef Check data are also shared with stakeholders through an annual Season Summary Report that highlights key findings.