

## **Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership (GHHP) Independent Science Panel (ISP)**

### **Chair's report from ISP meeting #13 held on 3 February 2015**

The objectives of the meeting were to provide ISP members with an update on GHHP activities, review progress against the GHHP Science Program milestones, review the effectiveness of the science program contributions to the 2014 Pilot Report Card and endorse the science plan for 2015. The ISP also ratified out of session endorsement of the cultural benchmarking and coral monitoring scopes of works.

The Science Program is on track to deliver the required science inputs into the 2015 Pilot Report Card. Overall the milestones are on track. Although in consultation with the GHHP Management Committee there have been some revisions of deadlines for data agreements and contracting of projects.

In their review of the Pilot Report Card the ISP discussed the importance of statistical methods reviews of the Pilot Report Card and of all supporting projects. The ISP agreed the focus of the upcoming ISP/statistical project team workshop would be on indicators and measures, aggregation, indexation, baselines and thresholds. In addition there will be an assessment of decisions relating to flood events, QA/QC and dealing with missing data and outliers.

At this meeting the ISP progressed the science plan for 2015 noting it will be finalized at the next ISP meeting and once completed will be used to develop the budget request to be submitted to the Management Committee for endorsement. The ISP also noted the organisation of GHHP/FRDC Gladstone Harbour Fish Health Research Program workshop scheduled for the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2015. The ISP noted the need to have veterinary expertise at the workshop including an epidemiologist.

The ISP discussed access to mangrove data that will be collected as part of the Gladstone Ports Corporation's (GPC) Ecosystem Monitoring and Research Program (ERMP). Once a data sharing agreement can be finalized with GPC this data will be used to inform the GHHP mangrove indicators. The ISP also continued their discussions about the development of the mudflat biodiversity indicator. There are a number of difficult issues with this, including the expected high diversity and high variability of intertidal invertebrate assemblages. The ISP noted ecogenomic approaches (sequencing DNA from environmental samples to provide information on microbial assemblages) might yield useful information.

GREAN members joined the ISP for a lunchtime discussion focus on how water and sediment quality standards are set nationally and regionally. Discussions focused on the level and sources of aluminium in Gladstone Harbour and the setting of water and sediment quality guideline values, and the distribution of corals in the Harbour.

The ISP acknowledged the significant amount of work the science team had completed since our last meeting, thanked them for their dedication and noted the ongoing high quality of their work. The next ISP meeting is scheduled for the 4 May 2015 in Gladstone.