



TANGAROA BLUE
FOUNDATION

2020 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

www.tangaroablue.org

The background features a dark, textured area at the top with several black hands reaching upwards. Below this is a bright yellow wavy line, and the bottom section is a solid orange color.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

**Tangaroa Blue Foundation acknowledges
the Traditional Owners of the Lands and
Sea Country on which we live and work.**

**We pay our respect to their Elders past,
present and emerging. And acknowledge
their continuous relationship to this land
and the ongoing cultures of Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander peoples across
Australia.**

**Through respectful relationships we will
work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islanders to achieve shared goals.**



Susan 'Sioux' Campbell

DIRECTOR AND CHAIR

A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

Nga mihi nui te whanau o Tangaroa!

Many greetings to the family of Tangaroa, Maori god of the oceans and our namesake.

It has been a remarkable year of achievements and changes within the Tangaroa Blue Foundation and I'm very proud to be associated with our considerable successes. They are, of course, due to all of you in an ongoing collective effort to rid our fresh and saltwater country of marine debris. The statistics in this year's annual report are testimony to the power of the people in working individually, but together, to make a lasting difference to the health of our "wet" environments.

A major boost in financial resources through specific tenders has enabled Tangaroa Blue Foundation to grow significantly as an organisation. This year we finalised a formal structure which saw Heidi Tait placed formally in the CEO's role with the supporting management positions of GM and ReefClean Project Coordinator. My thanks to interim GM Peter Olsen and Mike Fitzpatrick for their efforts in helping establish these positions respectively as well as to Fiona Brown for her wise, no-nonsense financial oversight during this time. Sadly we said "haere ra" to one of Tangaroa Blue Foundation's founding members and AMDI Senior Database Manager - Wally Smith. While thousands of people are familiar with the AMDI, most will be unaware of the very clever but equally reserved Wally, who established our signature database. Wally has retired from his directorship and job with the foundation after 17 years. I will particularly miss his quietly delivered but targeted advice and complete dedication to Tangaroa Blue Foundation. Wally, kia kaha! Stay strong.

We have also farewelled Jo Karam, ReefClean Coordinator and Operations Manager, Carmen Torraca. Your engagement in our organisational development and popularity with employees and volunteers alike is deeply appreciated.

I am stepping down as Chair at this year's AGM – although will remain as a director moving forward. It's nearly 10 years since I moved to Cairns and looked around for "something to do in the marine environment"! Many clean-ups, project plans, strategies, grant applications and director's terms later ... I'm still here. But it's time for someone else to pick up the leadership role and I'm looking forward to providing support at a different level as well as hitting more beaches. I am indebted to our directors for their intelligent, dedicated contribution during sometimes challenging times.

Tangaroa Blue Foundation is a unique organisation in its focus on tracking to source, robust citizen science approach, data management, sustainable long-term ethos and – its people. Our inspiring volunteers, employees, contractors, partners, and stakeholders are an outstanding example of what collaborative engagement for a clear purpose can achieve. I do trust that you all feel a similar commitment to this purpose and continue to be involved at whatever level.

Tangaroa needs you!



AUSTRALIAN
MARINE DEBRIS INITIATIVE





OUR STORY SO FAR

Tangaroa Blue Foundation is dedicated to the removal and prevention of marine debris: one of the major environmental issues worldwide.

Through collaboration with an extensive network of local communities, organisations, indigenous rangers, industry and government across Australia we create change to protect the environment through removing debris, recording data, working to stop the flow and reducing the amount of waste produced.

This network of over 2,000 partner organisations records data in the Australian Marine Debris Initiative (AMD I) Database, hosted by Tangaroa Blue Foundation. The database has extensive records dating from 2004 of marine debris across Australia, providing evidence to inform decisions and actions to monitor the impact of change.

We empower people to become stewards in their own communities, sharing their local knowledge and supporting the continual growth of the national AMD I framework. This approach has kept us on track to continue work during the recent COVID-19 lockdowns and social distancing requirements.

*If all we do is clean-up,
that is all we'll ever do.*



"In what has been an unpredictable and challenging year, creativity and collaboration have enabled Tangaroa Blue Foundation to continue to meet our goals and targets.

I am so proud of our team, volunteers and AMD I partners, who have adapted to a new normal around our activities, and thank everyone for contributing ideas to deliver outcomes in new and exciting ways.

We look forward to the coming year as an organisation who has grown in capacity to deliver impactful actions that remove and prevent marine debris and plastic pollution, improving the long-term health of our marine environment."

Heidi Tait
CEO



AUSTRALIAN
MARINE DEBRIS INITIATIVE





THE FACTS

Since 2004 volunteers and partners have been hard at work cleaning our marine and estuarine environments.

200,976

Number of volunteer occasions

1,546

Number of tonnes removed

19,190,552

Number of items removed

25,647

Number of clean-ups

4,168

Number of clean-up sites

587,135

Number of volunteer hours

2,000+

Contributing partners



AUSTRALIAN
MARINE DEBRIS INITIATIVE





FAREWELL TO THE LEGEND WALLY SMITH

This year we say farewell, but not goodbye, to the incomparable Wally Smith. Wally has announced his retirement from the Tangaroa Blue Foundation as our AMDI Senior Database Manager.

Wally met Heidi at the inaugural Tangaroa Blue Foundation Cape to Cape Beach Clean-up in 2005. The birth, it turns out, of what Wally would help to create, and is many years later a successful, national program called the Australian Marine Debris Initiative (AMDI). From that first day until now, Wally has dedicated himself to Tangaroa Blue Foundation's mission of the removal and prevention of marine debris in all our earth's oceans and has been fully immersed in marine debris, beach clean-ups, data and research from around the country.

He first started supporting the organisation by tracking data on all the marine debris items collected around the country through excel spreadsheets. These spreadsheets grew into what we know today as the Australian Marine Debris Initiative Database. Wally's patch in Southwest of Western Australia is the longest monitoring site in the database with over 17 years of continual monitoring. This sits within his role of overseeing every one of the 19 million data entries that have been submitted from around the country into the AMDI Database. Wally further contributed as a Director of Tangaroa Blue Foundation for 12 years.

Wally's impact will be lasting and now as he retires it is our time for us to acknowledge his incredible contribution.

Thank you Wally!



AUSTRALIAN
MARINE DEBRIS INITIATIVE





DR. GRAEME CLARK | UNSW



UNSW
SYDNEY

CITIZEN SCIENCE VITAL TO MAPPING MARINE DEBRIS

Dr Graeme Clark and a team from UNSW have created an interactive web-based visualization (viz) of the Australian Marine Debris Initiative Database. The viz tool allows users to explore the marine debris data in an immersive 360 degree environment, which will assist with environmental research, management, and science communication.

The viz tool sheds light on the extent of the Australian Marine Debris Initiative data, which was collected by more than 2,000 organisations and 150,000 volunteers. Data are the result of collecting and sorting almost 20 million pieces of discarded plastic, glass, rubber, metal, and paper.

“plastic waste accounts for more than 80% of all rubbish found across Australian beaches”

An article describing the tool was published in an academic journal and picked up by multiple media outlets. In the article, Dr Clark gives the example of the data's use in generating hypotheses regarding processes driving the distribution of marine debris, identifying source reduction opportunities, and communicating science to the public and stakeholders. He suggests this is a model for utilising other latent environmental data sets, some of which are collected by citizen scientists.

“The collaboration between UNSW and Tangaroa Blue Foundation has gone from strength to strength, with 2 PhD students and a Masters student now working with the AMDI Database. Together with other collaborators, they have created software for visualising AMDI data in an immersive environment (Clark et al. 2021) and a data-filtering pipeline to increase the reliability of data for scientific research (Gacutan et al. in press). More outputs are on the way in coming months.”

The researchers also noted that the abundance of plastics dwarfed other waste items, and about 42 per cent of the plastic debris could not even be accurately identified due to having broken up into small fragments.

Tangaroa Blue Foundation CEO Heidi Tait, who co-authored the study, said the findings would be an effective way to monitor if international efforts to reduce plastic were working.

“We need to be really targeted in what changes are put in place to mitigate marine debris, and we need to monitor to make sure we are actually solving the problem,”



AUSTRALIAN
MARINE DEBRIS INITIATIVE





REEFCLEAN



Funded by the Australian Government's Reef Trust, ReefClean is a 5-year project bringing together partner organisations, community groups and individuals from along the length of the Great Barrier Reef to not only remove marine debris, but also prevent more debris impacting the iconic Reef. The Reef Trust is the Australian Government's flagship investment program to support the delivery of the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan – the Australian and Queensland Government's long-term framework for protecting and managing the Great Barrier Reef.

This year, with our partners Reef Check Australia, Capricornia Catchments, Eco Barge Clean Seas, Oceanwatch Australia, South Cape York Catchments and AUSMAP, along with community groups and volunteers, Tangaroa Blue Foundation facilitated over 200 community clean-up events, removed over 20 tonnes of debris and regularly monitored 79 sites between Bundaberg and the Torres Strait Islands.

Our citizen science collaboration is vital to help inform and manage our Reef. The greatest threats to the Reef are climate change, coastal development, run off and human activities such as illegal fishing and pollution.



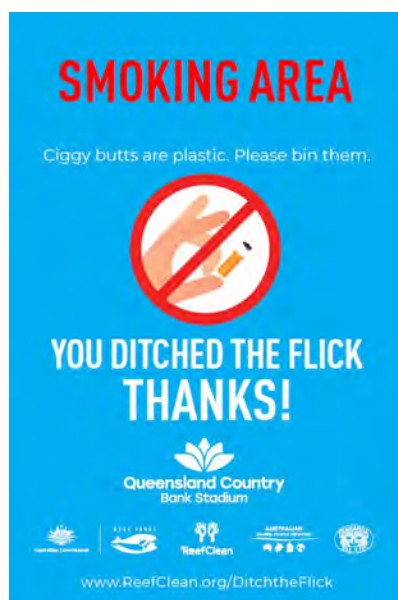


DITCH THE FLICK KICKING BUTT

A campaign to drive behavioural change among smokers has kicked butt at Queensland Country Bank Stadium in Townsville, with a decrease in cigarette butt litter of 71%.

The five game 'Ditch the Flick' trial aimed to reduce the amount of cigarette butt litter created around the stadium during events to avoid it ending up in the adjacent Ross Creek, which runs into the Great Barrier Reef.

Installing directional signage, cigarette butt bins and designated smoking areas had made a huge impact on smoker behaviour.



"We were really impressed with the success of the Ditch the Flick trial and we were pleased to have Tangaroa Blue onboard for the rest of the year to keep up the good work."

"In addition to Ditch the Flick, Tangaroa Blue will also be assisting with other waste collection strategies, including plastic poncho collection for recycling and also monitoring the riverbank at the edge of the stadium site for illegal dumping."

"Being a good neighbour is important to us and we're committed to finding more sustainable solutions to the way we conduct business as well as educating our fans to help us limit the impact we have on our environment."

Queensland Country Bank Stadium Manager Tom Kimball



16 YEARS LOOKING AFTER WA



The 2020 WA Beach Clean-up marked the 16th year of this special event in the Tangaroa Blue Foundation calendar, with support from Keep Australia Beautiful WA.

Over 1,200 people from the WA community spent 2,780 volunteer hours participating, from dedicated environmental groups to Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers, workplace teams, businesses and groups of families and friends.

Thank you to this year's events supporters from Ocean Conservancy, Sun Butter, Plastic Free July and Onya.

Since 2005, around the middle weekend of October, beaches, estuaries, and coastal areas across Western Australia have been cleaned up and vital data submitted to the Australian Marine Debris Initiative Database. The region covered is vast, extending this year from the Eyre Bird Observatory in the Great Australian Bight, northwards 1800 kilometres to the remote coasts of Yampi Sound and the Anjo Peninsula in the Kimberley region, and completing the circuit south then east along the West Australian coastline.

Statistics from the 2020 WA Beach Clean-up

	Clean-ups	Items	Bags	Weight Kg	Volunteer/occasions	Hours	Distance m	Sites cleaned
South Coast	11	13,248	60	257	83	215	27,300	11
South West	24	15,089	94	898	302	741	66,900	22
Peel-Harvey	3	3,873	32	352	143	246	5,700	3
Perth	29	28,773	100	393	367	958	46,210	25
Northern Agricultural	30	9,240	108	846	149	142	24,875	27
Rangelands North	9	5,981	89	429	15	474	12,050	9
Rangelands South	1	276	7	35	4	4	1,500	1
WABCU2020	107	76,480	490	3,209	1,203	2,780	184,535	98



Photo by - Gary Stokes

OBJECTIVE: ZERO PELLET LOSS



OPERATION CLEAN SWEEP ACTIONED IN THE NATIONAL PLASTICS PLAN

This year marked another milestone for Tangaroa Blue Foundation and our Australian Marine Debris Initiative (AMDI) partners in our fight against plastic pollution, with the release of the Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment's National Plastics Plan.

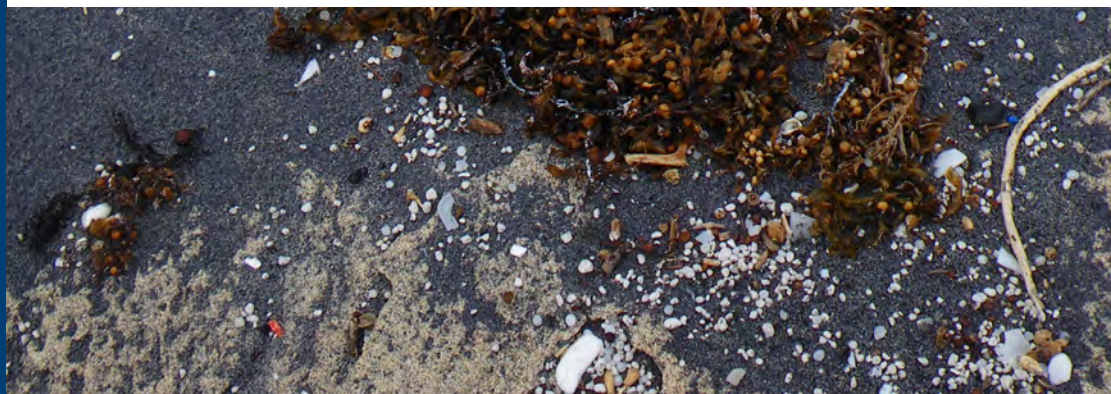
The plan aims to increase plastic recycling, find alternatives to unnecessary plastics, and reduce the impact of plastic on the environment.

With the inclusion in the National Plastics Plan of the plastic industry source reduction program "Operation Clean Sweep" (OCS), the loss of plastic pellet feedstock during manufacturing and transportation has now been highlighted at a national level.

Tangaroa Blue Foundation has been coordinating the Operation Clean Sweep program in Australia with our industry partners at Chemistry Australia since 2015.

We hope this acknowledgement will assist in engaging all parts of the plastics value chain in this program which aligns with industry best practice and the plastic industry's social licence to operate.

We thank our philanthropic donor who has again this year supported our work to build OCS into a nationally recognised program.





AUSTRALIAN
MARINE DEBRIS INITIATIVE



A DECADE CLEANING UP CHILI BEACH



To celebrate 10 years of cleaning up together Tangaroa Blue Foundation gifted the community a story board, which will be displayed in the school, at the Kuuku Ya'u Aboriginal Corporation office and the art gallery in town.

What started as a day-long school clean-up with Lockhart River school students in 2011 has grown into an annual event where the community gets together to clean-up a beautiful portion of the Kutini-Payamu National Park coastline in Cape York. .

The Chili Beach clean-up has a great history of community working together on Caring for Country.

Over 10 years, the support from the community continued to grow with involvement every year from Kuuku Ya'u and QPWS Rangers, Traditional Owners, Lockhart River locals and school students, Biosecurity officer, Border Force Australia and of course many volunteers.

36.2 TONNES
of marine debris have been removed from Chili Beach
SINCE 2011



**AUSTRALIAN
MARINE DEBRIS INITIATIVE**



RANGER GROUPS AND COMMUNITIES

We are grateful for the opportunity to work with so many ranger groups and communities across Australia



1. NPARC Apudthama Land & Sea Rangers partnered with Tangaroa Blue at the annual 5 Beaches Loop Clean-up.
2. Banjal Beach and Truscott Barge Landing Clean-up with the Unguu Rangers in WA.
3. AMDI data collection with the students on Iama Island.
4. Tangaroa Blue working with the Poruma Island community during the GBR Clean-up.

**“YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE,
TOGETHER WE MAKE THE CHANGE”**

Kuuku Ya'u - Land Trust Rangers



John and Jenny Edmondson



IN THE SAME BOAT WITH WAVELENGTH REEF CRUISES

We would like to say thanks to owners John and Jenny Edmondson and the crew at Wavelength Reef Cruises for helping us over the years to visit remote locations in the Northern Great Barrier Reef that would otherwise be too logistically challenging for us to reach for monitoring.

"I have been a volunteer with TB for many years, and as a businesses we began collaborating with Tangaroa Blue back in 2015 with a beach clean at Snapper Island in our old boat Wavelength 3.

At Wavelength we are all passionate about reef conservation and part of that involves reducing the amount of plastic in the area adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef.

In the last 18 months tourism has been very hard hit by lack of visitation both domestic and international due to border closures. However, as we have been less busy and have had a boat free to do other work it has meant we have been more available to do TBF clean-ups during 2021.

We have an excellent working relationship with the TBF staff both in Cairns and the main office, and it has given us the opportunity to take advantage of last minute good weather windows to do mulitday, offshore island clean-ups between Port Douglas and Lizard Island.

We give TBF a special rate to charter our boats as it's a cause we are keen to support, however the extra revenue this has provided us has been very helpful in keeping us solvent during the worst times we have ever had.

A number of Wavelength staff have also been actively involved in all the clean-ups this year, and they have commented how it's helped them cope with the strain of all that's happened this year.

We remain committed partners of Tangaroa Blue and hope very much that we will be able to continue to work with their team well into the future."

Jenny Edmondson
Co-owner Wavelength Reef Cruises



Thanks to the Wavelength staff



AUSTRALIAN
MARINE DEBRIS INITIATIVE





HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR WORKING ACROSS THE COUNTRY

K'GARI CLEAN-UP

Over 6135 kg of debris removed from K'Gari / Fraser Island the 4WD QLD Association member clubs at their annual clean-up event in May 2021!

Tangaroa Blue supported the event by providing a data team to capture the all important statistics for the AMDI Database! Big thanks to Motorama_4x4xmore for providing a vehicle for our data team, they truly travelled in style!



CHILI BEACH CLEAN-UP

A little bit of history was unearthed during the annual Chili Beach clean-up in Cape York.

A Drift Card estimated to be over 30 years old was found amongst the debris. In 1980, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority released close to 100,000 cards from an aircraft flying over the Torres Strait and the Capricornia Channel to measure water movements on the Queensland Continental Shelf.



FOREIGN BOTTLE CAPITAL

The Dhimurru Rangers spent a week collecting vital data to be logged into the Australian Marine Debris Initiative (AMDI) Database. Of the 1 tonne removed during their annual beach clean-ups, they logged over 1000 squid jigs, 1000s of icy pole wrappers with fish bites in them, over 500m of rope and 750 plastic drink and water bottles from more than 12 countries.



2.1 TONNES FROM DARWIN

The Larrakia Rangers coordinated the eleventh Darwin Harbour Clean-up, which saw a massive turnout of nearly 200 volunteers from 27+ groups.

In total approximately 2.1 tonnes of rubbish was collected filling over 180 bags. All this data was entered into the AMDI Database.





HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR WORKING ACROSS THE COUNTRY

WARRNAMBOOL AUDITS

The Drain Buddies are in! 10 stormwater drain traps were installed in Warrnambool in mid-2020 in order to better understand what type and quantities of litter escapes into the stormwater system. The Let's Strain the Drains project is funded through a Coastcare Victoria Community Grant, delivered by Tangaroa Blue Foundation & Cleanwater Group with support from the Warrnambool City Council.



GBR CLEAN-UP

The Great Barrier Reef Clean-up took place with events ranging from multi-day clean-ups in the Torres Strait and the remote shores of Hinchinbrook Island, to day-long events targeting local beaches across Queensland's coast. Over 200 volunteers registered for these flagship events, with over 280 bags and 2.7 tonnes of marine debris pulled off these beaches.



TBF OVERSEAS

Eva Borges from Timor Leste heard about the AMDI Database and Tangaroa Blue and recognised how important it is to contribute to the regional marine debris data story.

The data sheet was translated into the local language (Tetun) and Eva kicked off the first AMDI clean-up in Dili, the Capital of Timor Leste.



GOLDEN BEACH

The Visionary Ocean Warriors clean the beach and parklands at Golden Beach every single month. They know the importance of collecting data, and after each clean-up they enter their finds into the Tangaroa Blue's AMDI Database to help stop rubbish at the source.





HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR WORKING ACROSS THE COUNTRY

KLIS IN MERIMBULA

As part of the long-term Key Littered Items Study coordinated by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Tangaroa Blue staff member Alexis Farr headed down to our allocated sites in Merimbula in southern NSW for quarterly monitoring events with support from Karen Joynes from No Balloon Release Australia.



#KNOWYOURKNOTS

Well-known fishing influencers and personalities are taking part in the social media challenge to encourage recreational fishers to look after their tackle and tie better knots to help reduce fishing litter from entering our waterways. This is the #KnowYourKnots Social Media Challenge, hosted by OzFish Unlimited and Tangaroa Blue where recreational fishers are challenged to see if they can beat the tying times of their favourite fishing personalities.



BAIT BAG REDUCTION

We collaborated with Oceanwatch Australia to develop two Source Reduction Plans focused on fishing-related bait bags and professional fishing-related light sticks as part of the ReefClean Program.

Both projects have been designed through conducting a source analysis approach. This approach was used to allow for the adoption of new innovations which can work alongside traditional behaviour change mechanisms to do the right thing reducing the incidence of bait bags and chemical light sticks recorded on waterways.





HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR WORKING ACROSS THE COUNTRY

2.3 TONNES FROM MACKAY

A team of 9 dedicated volunteers, Tangaroa Blue staff and Blue Planet Marine crew pulled off 2.3 tonnes from 6 islands in the Mackay Region, including Penrith, Digby and Prudhoe Islands as part of ReefClean. Operating a beach clean-up via boat can be logistically challenging, but this massive haul of debris is testimony to the hard work of committed volunteers and everyone on the vessel working as a team.



2,882 FLOATS FROM CAPE YORK

The fourth annual aerial audit of marine debris supported by the Morris Family Foundation took part with GBR Helicopters. Two staff onboard scanned 810kms of remote coastlines from Cooktown to the tip of Cape York as part of the ReefClean program to help identify areas for future clean-ups. The items revealed by this survey included 2,882 plastic floats, 211 ghost nets, 147 long line beacons and 234 fish attracting devices, amongst millions of other items of plastic ocean pollution.



CAIRNS IRONMAN

Cairns Airport IRONMAN Cairns have proudly teamed up with Tangaroa Blue through our ReefClean project to minimise litter and improve the sustainability of the event over the next two years.

Their focus is to raise awareness around the impact of litter and to help protect the environment that makes IRONMAN in Cairns and the Cairns region so spectacular.

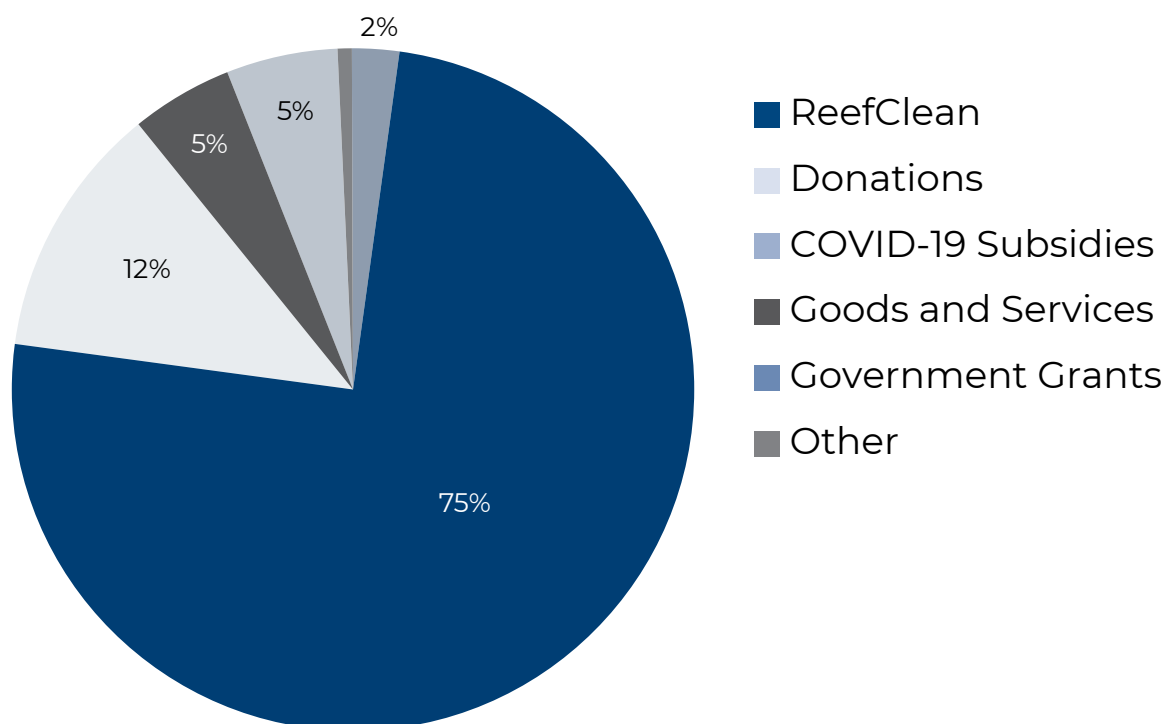




INCOME & EXPENSE BREAKDOWN

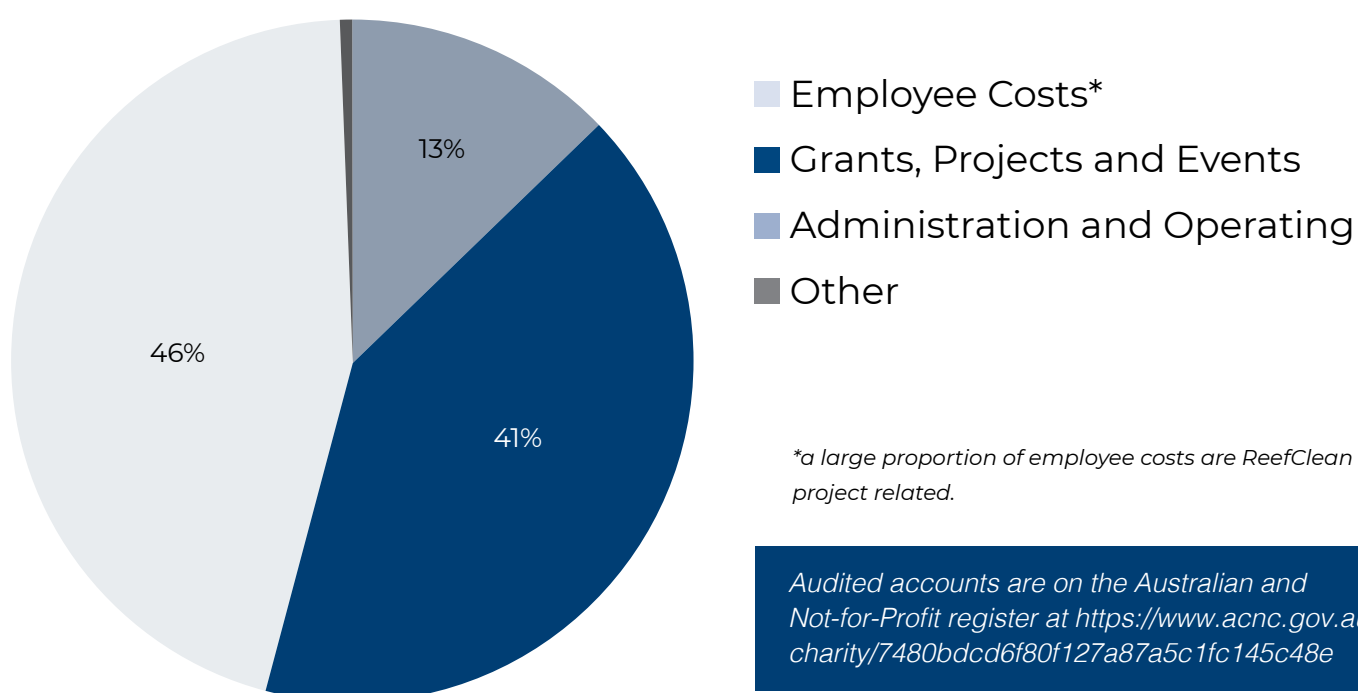
INCOME 2020 - 2021

\$1,617,164.72



OPERATING EXPENSES 2019 / 2020

\$1,191,547.53



Audited accounts are on the Australian and Not-for-Profit register at <https://www.acnc.gov.au/charity/7480bdcd6f80f127a87a5c1fc145c48e>

“YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE,
TOGETHER WE MAKE THE CHANGE”



Follow us on



www.tangaroablue.org