

NESP TWQ Hub enables GBR Traditional Owners to learn reef leadership and restoration techniques



Malik Thaiday (centre) on a field trip at the Reef Leadership and Restoration Workshop (image: Nathan Cook)

Traditional Owner (TO) groups operating on the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) will be better equipped to care for their sea country after attending a reef restoration workshop on Orpheus Island (*Goolbodd*i), north of Townsville.

The National Environmental Science Program's Tropical Water Quality Hub (NESP TWQ Hub) enabled seven representatives from Great Barrier Reef-operating TO organisations to attend the Reef Leadership and Restoration Workshop hosted by Reef Ecologic and James Cook University TropWATER at Orpheus Island Research Station (OIRS) in November 2019.

Great Barrier Reef (GBR) sea country's ecosystems are threatened by multiple health pressures including cyclones, coral bleaching, Crown of Thorns Starfish outbreaks, poor water quality and more.

Reef restoration is a rapidly developing area of marine environmental management, and TO organisations are well-placed to implement these new techniques for the health of the Great Barrier Reef and their sea country.

Over the course of four days the workshop's 31 attendees learned restoration and monitoring techniques through a combination of expert presentations (including those from [NESP TWQ Hub researchers Dr Ian McLeod and Associate Professor Adam Smith at Reef Ecologic](#)) and field snorkelling trips.

TO representatives said they had gained valuable knowledge from the workshop that they would take back to their organisations to help care for GBR sea country.

Malik Thaiday from Dawul Wuru Aboriginal Corporation in Cairns said what he had learned at the workshop would be shared with his colleagues.

"I wanted to try and find out as much as I can about coral reefs and hopefully take that knowledge back home and teach the rest of the rangers a little more about it," he said.

Peter Pryor from Bygerrah Ngaro Aboriginal Corporation in Bowen said the workshop showed how the combination of scientific theory and traditional knowledge could help the Great Barrier Reef.

"The scientists can come up with maybe 90 per cent of the solutions and they're missing just that little 10 per cent," he said.

"And that 10 per cent is us Traditional Owners."

[See a video about the TOs' experience at Orpheus Island Research Station here.](#)

NESP TWQ Hub is administered by the [Reef and Rainforest Research Centre](#).

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