

Culture & Water

This image represents the Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef and its catchments, emphasising the crucial role of healthy water in sustaining a healthy Country and people. Encased within a handprint, the design features symbols of people sitting at the table, representing the active community ('mob') engaged in stewardship. The dots in the background symbolise those who work behind the scenes and in the Country, ensuring the preservation of the land and water.

The handprint signifies human responsibility in facilitating change and recognising the importance of Traditional Owners and their ongoing work in healing and maintaining healthy water ecosystems. This artwork serves as a call to action for all to acknowledge and support the vital contributions of Indigenous communities in preserving our natural heritage.

The diagram depicts:

- Women's business: an Elder teaching a young child and showcasing knowledge that is being passed down.
- Water quality testing as a method of measuring healthy water.
- A male spear fishing highlighting continual hunting practices. The ability to hunt depends on good water quality, if the water is too dirty to see through or for animals to live in, there is an immediate and direct loss of the ability to practice culture and pass on cultural knowledge resulting in a loss of culture.
- Sea turtle and yabby/blue claw which are important food sources and animals that rely on good water quality. Good water quality means healthy ecosystems which support a broad range of plant and animal species (biodiversity). This includes coastal ecosystems, wetlands, mangroves and seagrass habitats which are important fish and animal nurseries. The species depicted are therefore indicators of good water quality and thriving ecosystems with intact biodiversity.

This image is based on responses from Traditional Owner participants at the Great Barrier Reef Foundation's Healthy Water Forum 2022 when asked the question 'how does water quality affect culture?'.

