

## Progress and final reporting form

Grant reference number:	2014/ED/0081	Total grant amount:	\$ 43,850
Project title:	Community action blueprint to enhance estuarine habitat resilience		
Grantee organisation:	Solitary Islands Underwater Research Group (SURG) Inc.		
Person submitting this report:	Steven Dalton		
Contact number:	0432946782		
Are you the primary contact?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or No <input type="checkbox"/>		
If 'no', what is your role in the project?			
Report type:	Progress <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or Final <input type="checkbox"/>		
What stage of the project are you reporting on:	Stage 2 of 3 stages		
Actual period covered in this report:	From: 1/4/2016 to 18/4/2017		
<b>PLEASE NOTE:</b> final reports should cover the life of the project			

Use this template to complete your progress and final reports for grants under the following programs:

- Environmental Education
- Protecting our Places
- Restoration and Rehabilitation

If necessary, please provide additional information as an attachment to this report.

Along with this report, you must also submit the following:

- Project Measures Table updated based on your initially approved set of project measures
- [Financial Reporting Spreadsheet](#) select progress or final financial spreadsheet as appropriate, and if applicable
- Tax Invoice for the next instalment of your grant

Completed documents must all be submitted to the [Trust via email](#). (Emails cannot exceed 10MB)

Be sure to include your grant reference number in the subject line.

If you have questions or need help at any stage,  
please contact your Grants Administrator via (02) 8837 6093

**Note:** that the following text boxes will expand to the length required as you write your report.

## 1. Summary

Provide a summary of progress to date, approximately 200-500 words (cover the life of the project if this is your final report).

SURG has been very busy during 2016-17 collecting interesting information that relates to the conditions of local estuarine environment. During estuary searches we identified over 30 discarded traps in Coffs Creek and Boambee Creek. GPS marks were recorded and given to NSW Fisheries Compliance Officers who removed these traps.

During 2016-17 SURG members and local participants have completed strandline clean up at Corindi River, Coffs Creek, Boambee Creek and Moonee Creek and completed a clean-up Australia Day activity along Coffs Creek. During the Clean-Up of Coffs Creek 32 people were involved in the removal of rubbish, which included 11 community members. Approximately 500 kg of litter was removed from six sites adjacent to stormwater discharge points, covering 400 m of the Coffs Creek strandline. These sites were cleared of litter previously so this data shows the accumulation rate of litter that is entering the Coffs Creek from adjacent land area. Extrapolating these data to the area for Coffs Creek east of the Pacific Highway, it is estimated that 15 tonnes of litter accumulates along the Coffs Creek strandline every year. This estimate does not consider the litter the leaves the estuary and enters the marine environment, particularly during large storm events.

SURG members, temporary members and students participated in five organised estuary underwater video survey days, during which time they have completed an additional 58 baited remote underwater videos (BRUVs) of fish species that utilise specific estuarine habitats. Participation in seagrass search activity along Boambee Creek and Corindi River earlier this year identified sites where pipefish and flute nose pipefish.

Three field trips were conducted at Corindi River, Coffs Creek and Boambee Creek where SURG members used the side scan sonar to identify key fish habitat and found 15 discarded traps. A dead green turtle was found in a trap at Corindi River, and two estuary cods were observed in two traps found in Coffs Creek. Traps were either removed or decommissioned by removing brackets that hold the traps open.

During four field trips to each of the monitored estuaries, seagrass meadows have been GPS referenced and uploaded onto mapping software to assess changes in seagrass cover over time. Initial comparisons show that there has been a general decline and thinning of seagrass meadows in all the estuaries. Using ArcGIS, habitat maps (see Attachment 1 for example) have been constructed and estimates of current seagrass area has been quantified. A direct comparison of seagrass area will be compared with data from 2009 assessment to determine any loss of habitat between 2009 and 2016.

Baited remote underwater training was conducted at the National Marine Science Centre where 16 SURG members were instructed in assessing fish diversity and abundance from video footage. Presently 10 members are assessing video footage captured from the four monitored estuaries.

Two locations have been selected as remediation sites; one along Corindi River and one near a popular fishing platform on Boambee Creek. Both sites have significant erosion issues. A recent Habitat Action Grant application was submitted but unfortunately was unsuccessful. SURG has however been able to combine with Coffs Council, who will provide seedlings to be used to stabilise the river bank, North Coast Tourist Park Red Rock, Landcare and Sawtell Fishing club to develop a remediation strategy that will endeavour to remove threats of erosion at these sites. Coir logs will be placed along Corindi River in areas of high erosion and plants will be installed within and to land side of the logs to stabilise the banks. Exclusion barrier, mass planting and walking trail establishment will help to mitigate erosion issues from foot traffic along Boambee Creek.

SURG has engaged a graphic designer who will be developing and produce interpretive media/panels that will be installed at the four estuaries currently being monitored by SURG.

## 2. Activities and outputs

Based on your Monitoring and Evaluation Plan please fill out the following template (you can copy and paste from your Monitoring and Evaluation Plan) and provide comment on your progress against each objective. Please use one table for each of your objectives.