

## Media Statement

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### **Minds over matter: AWARDS encourage quality research from students**

Ports North continues to challenge young minds through the annual BLA Environmental Awards, which it has sponsored for the past 12 years.

Some 14 entries from Year 11 and 12 students were accepted for the Awards for 2014, with analysis carried out on regional waterways as far afield as Tully and Mareeba.

“The efforts by students and their respective teachers have again demonstrated a great understanding of the local catchments that were studied,” Ports North chairman Brett Moller said.

“The results have been very encouraging.”

The Environmental Awards are a joint initiative of Education Queensland, North Queensland secondary schools and the Business Liaison Association.

The awards theme is Protecting Our Environment, and requires science students to carry out a field study of an estuarine or fresh water system at their local creek or river under the guidance of their teacher. They must include quality data, use their research to draw conclusions in a local and regional context, and present the information to the standard scientific reporting format.

“We had some excellent entries this year,” Mr Moller said. “The judging was tough, but fair, and all students who entered must be congratulated on taking on the extra work load to enter these awards during the most demanding years of their school life.”

Cairns High School Principal and BLA Chair Angela Toppin said the Environmental Awards represented new and exciting challenges for students at a grass roots level.

“It shows the students a more mature picture of how science and environmental studies work,” she said. “It provides them with out-of-classroom, hands-on experience.”

Mr Moller said the Ports North Environmental Awards were part of a commitment by the corporation to foster a greater awareness of issues affecting the local and regional coastal environment.

“We want to promote and encourage career opportunities for these students in the environmental and science industries,” he said. “There can never be a time when we stop looking for new ways to protect and improve our natural world.”

“Indeed, Ports North continues to sponsor vital research from seagrass studies and sedimentation analysis, to supporting turtle rehabilitation and fish habitats,” Mr Moller continued.

“Ports North is very proud to be part of these awards and we congratulate the winners and wish them well in their future endeavours.”

**The 2014 winners were:**

**1<sup>st</sup>** Brooke Burnett - Babinda - Yr11 Chemistry – Study of Babinda Creek

**2<sup>nd</sup>** Michi Hartnett – Cairns State High School – Yr11 Geography – Analysis of Freshwater Creek

**3<sup>rd</sup>** Rylee Griffin – Tully State High School – Yr11 Science 21 – Investigation of Banyan Creek

**QUICK FACTS:**

- The BLA Ports North Environment Awards began in 2002 and are held each year. They are open to all senior science school students in the Far North Queensland region.
- 14 entries from five schools were received and considered for the award this year.
- Entries came from: Babinda (Chemistry -yr11), Cairns State High School (Geography –yr11), Mareeba (Biology-yr12), Redlynch(Chemistry-yr11) and Tully (Science 21-yr11)
- Five entries stood out for the awards.
- Special mention goes to Carina Nixon (Redlynch State College) and Belinda Grundling (Mareeba State High School) for their quality work.
- First Prize winner was awarded a \$1,250 Bursary; Runner Up received a \$750 Bursary; and the Encouragement Award a \$500 Bursary.
- The awards were presented at the Pullman International Hotel on Thursday, December 4.

**Ends**

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