

Hort360 Reef Certification

Introduction



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Growcom Australia

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Growcom Australia Ltd would like to acknowledge Freshcare Limited for making the resources available. In development of the Hort360 Reef Certification Hort360 has utilised Food Safety and Quality v4.2 and Environmental v3 Standards without change.

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Hort360 Reef Certification

Introduction

The purposes of a Hort360 Reef Certification is to provide a quality, credible certification pathway for horticulture growers to demonstrate their environmental stewardship and industry best practice standards in the Great Barrier Reef catchments.

The intent to establishing a Hort360 Reef Certification is to not add to but align and leverage current systems used by horticulture businesses which specifically provide a water quality outcome.

Our value:

- *Hort360 gives us confidence and certainty in managing our business.*
- *Being Hort360 Reef Certified demonstrates we meet community, customer and business expectations - it's ticking all the boxes.*

Growcom fully appreciates and understands the regulatory pressure placed on Queensland horticulture growers. There are increasing expectations on horticulture producers that they will manage their enterprises to reduce impacts on water quality both on and off farm. This is particularly important for those growers who live in the reef catchments or near other sensitive aquatic and marine systems. The Hort360 Reef BMP module focusses on 4 key management practice areas – Nutrient, Sediment, Pesticide and Water.

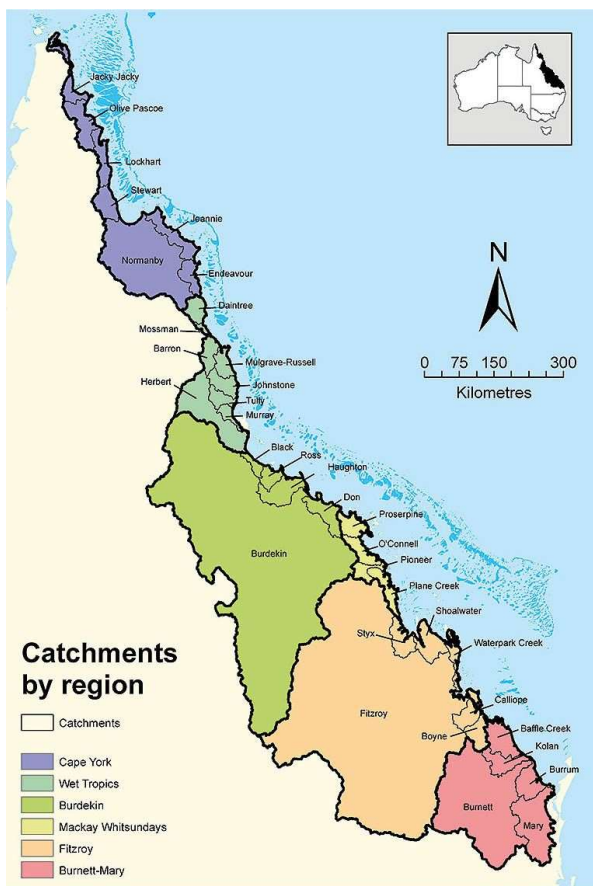
With the support of growers actively engaging in the Hort360GBR program, and the progressive uptake of Hort360 Reef Certification, Growcom has been successful in influencing the Queensland Department of Environment and Science to defer the onset of Reef Regulations to December 2024 to allow for further voluntary adoption of best practice standards across the industry.

Growcom will continue to oppose Reef Regulations being applied to horticulture and encourages growers to adopt voluntary best practice standards via the Hort360GBR program. To assist Growcom to best advocate on behalf of industry and continue to oppose Reef Regulations for Horticulture we need your help. Working together for the continued voluntary uptake of Hort360 Reef Certification provides a clear demonstration of industry owned water quality stewardship and is vital if we are to be successful in defeating Reef Regulations together.

It is recognised that the majority of horticulture businesses operate within a food safety quality assurance system/s and that some horticulture businesses also have an environmental certification. These independently audited systems are widely recognised across the horticulture industry supply chain.

Whilst these systems satisfy specific purposes they are far broader than what is required to achieving a Hort360 Reef Certification. The proposed framework specifically focusses on water quality outcomes whilst maintaining an alignment with existing food safety quality assurance and environmental systems.

The Reef Certification requirement relates to growers specifically located within the Great Barrier Reef Catchment as per Map 1: Great Barrier Reef Catchments.



Map 1: Great Barrier Reef Catchments

Growcom’s Hort360 is the leading best practice program for the horticulture industry. It is an online assessment tool, designed to give you a 360 degree view of your farm business operations. Hort360 assists you to identify potential risks, capitalise on business opportunities and highlight unnecessary farm expenses. Hort360 is a recognised, well developed and supported, horticulture industry best management practice framework primarily designed and delivered to benchmark production horticulture across environmental, social and governance practices within their business. It focuses on profitability and sustainability using a risk-based approach.

The Hort360 Reef BMP module can be completed as a self-assessment and or with a facilitator. To access Hort360 please follow the link below to login or register. This link also provides access to the available resources per module collated by Hort360.

<https://www.hort360.com.au/>

The Hort360 Reef BMP module as a framework is long established and specifically addresses those management practices that have a water quality outcome.

At time of developing the Hort360 Reef Certification there is no legislated minimum standard established for horticulture (exc. Bananas). The compliance criteria developed is an alignment between the Hort360 Reef BMP module and Freshcare Standards. Management practice standards evolve over time and hence it is expected that the compliance criteria set now will change.

The Freshcare Technical Steering Committee is responsible for the review and amendment of the Food Safety & Quality and Environmental Standards. Participating businesses are advised of all Standard updates and should ensure that they are always operating with the current edition of the Standard. Given the alignment, Hort360 Reef Certification will therefore be required to maintain currency with Freshcare.

The compliance criteria is compiled using Freshcare Food Safety & Quality v4.1 and Freshcare Environmental v3 and aligned with the Hort360 Reef BMP module.

- F – Food Safety & Quality
- E – Environmental

If your business uses a different auditing system the compliance items will set out the information required at audit.

The following *table 1 compliance alignment* provides a summary of the compliance items and which Freshcare standard it is derived from.

Compliance Item	Freshcare Alignment	
	Food Safety & Quality (v4.2)	Environmental (v3)
Management		
Property Map	M1.2 (partially)	M1.2 (partially)
Documents & Records	M2.2	M2.1
Internal Audit		
Internal Audit	M4.1	M4.1.1
CAR		
Corrective Action Record	M4.2	M4.2.1, M4.2.2, M4.2.3
Nutrient		
Test results and or crop monitoring records		E5.1.1
Fertiliser and soil additive application record	F5.1.9	E5.4.1
Hydroponic nutrient solution monitoring record		E5.4.2
Calibration Record (Fertiliser / Fertigation)		E5.3.2
Sediment		
Soil Conservation		E2.1.1, E2.2.1
Run-off Management		E6.3.3
Pesticide		
Preventive pest and disease control program		E4.1.3
Pest and Disease monitoring record		E4.1.3
Pre-harvest Spray / Chemical Application Record	F4.5, F4.8	E4.6.1, E4.6.2, 4.9.1
Calibration Record (Pesticide)	F4.6	E4.7
Water		
Maintenance and Service Record		E6.1.3
Water management program		E6.1.1

Table 1: Compliance alignment

It is recognised that majority of the horticulture industry has a Food Safety & Quality certification in place however, Environmental certification adoption is low. To assist you to address the compliance criteria and develop actions the Hort360 Reef Certification documents provided are as follows:

- Hort360 Reef Certification Introduction
- Hort360 Reef Certification Rules
- Hort360 Reef Certification Compliance
- Hort360 Reef Certification Interpretive Guideline
- Hort360 Reef Certification Forms
- Hort360 Reef Certification Action Planning
- Hort360 Data Privacy Consent Form
- Hort360 Reef BMP module Report – *becomes available once the module is completed*

Pathway to Certification

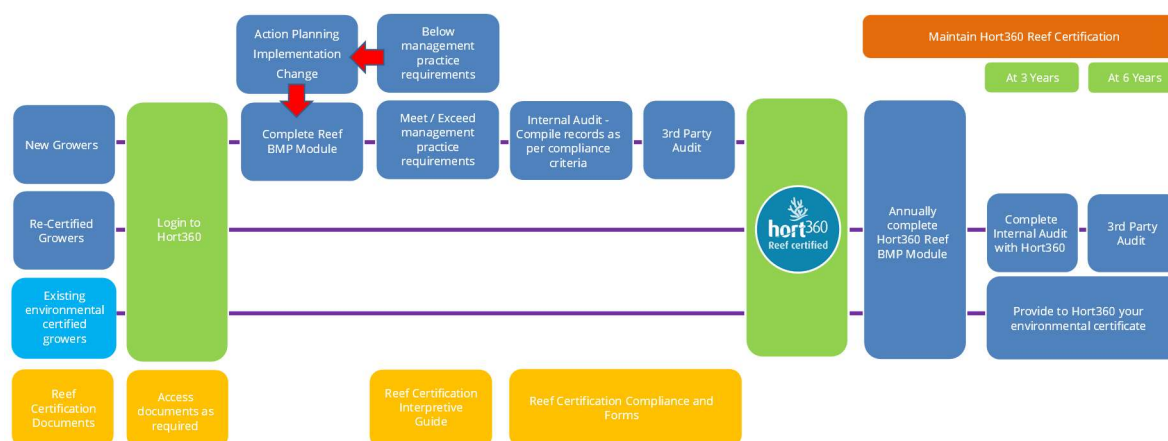


Figure 1: Hort360 Reef Certification Flow Chart – see appendix for larger image

Login or Register to Hort360

- Go to www.hort360.com.au
 - Hort360 Reef Certification documents are available on the Reef certification webpage
 - Click login (top right) – this will take you to the database system
- For new users please complete the Register / Expression of Interest form and click submit. A Hort360 Facilitator will contact you to establish a login.
- For current users enter your username and password and login, for others please register your expression of interest to access Hort360
- If required refer to the How To section to use Hort360 and or contact a Hort360GBR (Great Barrier Reef) facilitator <https://www.growcom.com.au/portfolio/hort360-great-barrier-reef-gbr-queensland/>

Generate a Report

- Complete the Reef BMP module and generate a report
- Report needs to indicate that your management practices **meet** or **exceed** reef certification requirements per question
 - If your report identifies you are performing **below** satisfaction please seek assistance to develop action plans and technical support from a Hort360GBR staff member - <https://www.growcom.com.au/portfolio/hort360-great-barrier-reef-gbr-queensland/>

Evidence / Records

- Collect and collate evidence / records as per the compliance criteria

Third party audit

- Hort360 Reef Certification is working with Freshcare to support the audit process
- AusQual and SciQual are the preferred certification bodies, CBs, as they both currently deliver Freshcare auditing – Freshcare Food Safety Quality Assurance and Environmental
- Preferred option is for growers to complete a Hort360 Reef Certification audit when completing a Food Safety and / or Environmental audit

Current certified growers

- To maintain certification, you are required to complete the Hort360 Reef BMP module annually

Existing environmentally certified horticulture businesses

For those that are currently environmentally certified (i.e. Freshcare Environmental / ISO14001):

- Complete the Hort360 Reef BMP module to satisfy the needs of Hort360 Reef Certification
- Please refer to the login and report process
- Provide a copy of your audit certificate at initial certification, at 3 years and at 6 years
- Continue to maintain records and practices that enable you to meet existing compliance criteria
- Continue meeting your existing audit schedule requirements

Maintaining Hort360 Reef Certification (Non environmentally certified)

1. Complete the Hort360 Reef BMP module, within Hort360, annually
2. Complete an audit as per the Hort360 Reef Certification compliance criteria
 - a. At 3 years complete an internal audit with a Hort360GBR Facilitator
 - b. At 6 years complete a 3rd Party Audit

Assistance

To assist you with interpretation of the Reef Certification documents, access to Hort360 and completion of the Reef BMP module please contact a Hort360GBR staff member -

<https://www.growcom.com.au/portfolio/hort360-great-barrier-reef-gbr-queensland/>

For assistance with addressing actions as identified via the Hort360 Reef BMP module report either:

- because you are interested in advancing at best practice to above or
- your report returns a below best practice result

please refer to the resources as indicated and contact a Hort360GBR staff member.

Recognition

Horticulture growers participating and progressing through the Hort360 Reef Certification process will be recognised for their efforts towards sustainable reef practices. As per the green boxes within the Hort360 Reef Certification Flow Chart there are 3 points where growers will be recognised.

Login or Register to Hort360

1. Login to Hort360
 - a. Grower will receive:
 - i. a welcome note
 - ii. assistance to progress through Hort360
 - iii. technical assistance to address actions

Complete Reef BMP module to satisfy compliance

2. Completion of Hort360 Reef BMP module
 - a. Grower will receive:
 - i. Hort360 logo for restricted use

- ii. Hort360 merchandise pack
- iii. technical assistance to address actions

Satisfy audit requirements

- 3. Satisfy a third party audit
 - a. Grower will receive:
 - i. Hort360 Reef Certified logo for restricted use
 - ii. Hort360 Reef Certified gate sign
 - iii. Assistance to progress through Hort360

The Hort360 logo and Hort360 Reef Certified logo will be provided electronically. Refer to Hort360 Reef Certification Rules for logo use conditions.

Appendix 1: Hort360 Reef Certification flow chart

