Coral Reef Recovery

Five years after the 2021 bleaching event

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What we found in 2021

- 62% coral cover lost across the survey sites
- Staghorn and plate corals hit hardest
- Massive corals (brain, boulder) showed higher tolerance

Cover by site, 2021 vs. 2026

Site	2021	2026
North Reef	14%	41%
Lagoon Wall	22%	55%
Outer Slope	9%	28%

Lagoon Wall recovered fastest, likely due to lower wave exposure during regrowth.

Two interventions compared

Coral gardening

- Nursery-grown fragments
- Faster initial cover

Natural recruitment

- No intervention cost
- Better genetic diversity

Five years in, natural recruitment sites now match gardened sites on total cover.

What we recommend

1. Continue monitoring through the next bleaching-risk season
2. Prioritise gardening only where natural recruitment is measurably slow
3. Publish the site-by-site recovery curves for other reef programs to compare against