

cess algae die (usually due to changes with using the nutrient, water temperature turbidity) bacteria decomposes the plant results in oxygen depletion creating "dead

ould this local event change the wonders Bay and what can be done to help the Bay previous appeal to locals and keep all the healthy in it?

n view it as a "one off" it's probably this event as a small warning wound - a at if attended to with haste could become s example of responsibility and sustain- ment by a community with significant buck Bay.

s used extensively by visitors and locals recreational and food resource area.

communities may die, release massive riant that continue the cycle and result in tats and increased tidal action eroding flooding into Chinatown.

wellling fauna and flora that provide food ng wader birds and other creatures begin and also contribute to the cycle of decay loses its status as a RAMSAR wetland.

of business and industries begin to feel of the decay - hovercraft tours become less

ng industry fears for the health of spat oysters affected by the growing bloom. e tourist season the easterly winds clog th the stench of decay, beaches become ourism activities including fishing, sight- birding begin to suffer. Shire rates lean up activities pass \$500,000.

al association held by traditional owners and finger pointing from recent native ts drives a larger wedge into the reconcil- s.

lly nutrients have been flooding into the fore man came to the area - but we tend t problems due to our concentrated living

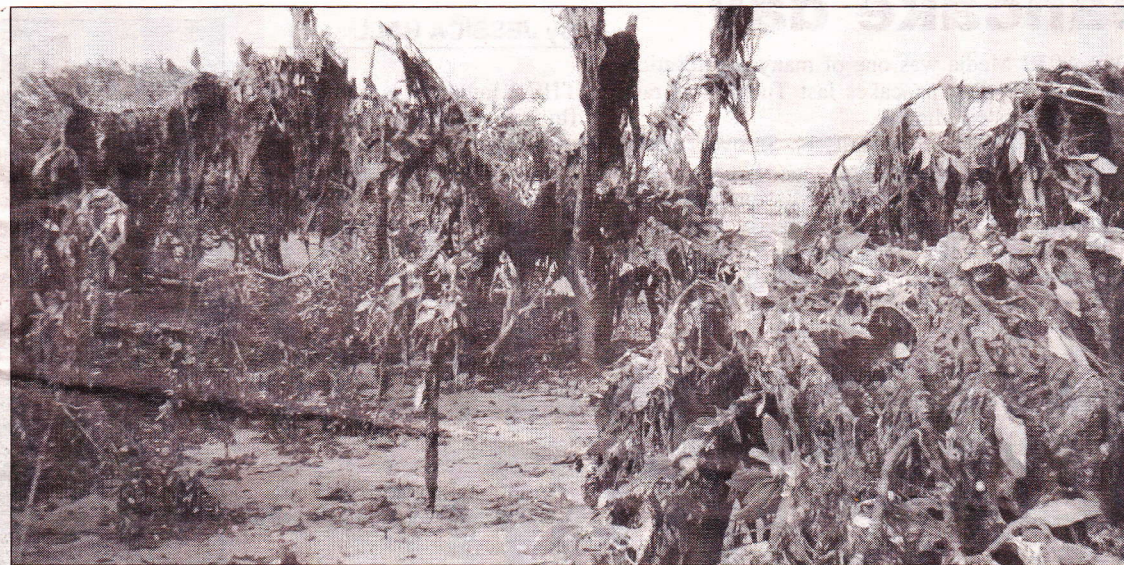
times the abattoir probably contributed nutrient to the Bay and the holding yards supply it at the 12 mile and port delivered deposits of nitrogen holding dung that ay via Dampier Creek.

e has grown there has been an exponen- f human waste. The use of excess waste golf course, town ovals and some parks ably contributing a significant nutrient Bay.

areas cleared of vegetation turned into ng and tourism developments affect eek through the constant addition of water to maintain the lawns and other

09-03-06 Lyngby a, nutrients

opinion



MARINE MESS: Mangroves smothered by the algae in Roebuck Bay.

Nutrient or nemesis?

Robbie Vaughan and I were having a quiet chat looking out over magnificent Roebuck Bay; renowned as an international wader bird habitat, home to dugong, marine turtles and an incredible diversity of other marine creatures.

We were speculating on what had become of the Bay given our combined experiences of several decades when a titbit of conversation about a recent algal bloom was overheard.

"It's an algal bloom, *Lyngbya majuscula* (also known as Mermaid Hair) - probably due to the increased nutrient flows into the Bay following this big wet season that we've been experiencing"

In a natural system, blooms are a part of the cycle of life and death and their penchant for occurring in bays and estuaries reflects the rhythm that allows rivers and creeks to flow in "good" years and nutrient to build up in "bad".

As many homeowners in search of lush green lawns know fertilizing with nitrogen will promote the lushness and greenness of the grass. Nitrogen also allows smaller numbers of farmers to produce the crops that feed the rest of the human population. Unfortunately, excess nitrogen in the water makes algae and other single celled plants (phytoplankton) grow excessive-

'aesthetics.' In the Bay there are pearling operations - oysters also produce waste and the heavy metals from outboard motor use and heavy marine engines contribute to weakening the resistance of the creatures in the system.

Dr Eva Abal from the Moreton Bay Healthy Waterways partnership says "It is imperative that a proactive approach is taken to manage algal blooms - identify the sources of pollution and seek sustainable solutions to deal with them. Planning to deal with these events should commence immediately they are identified before they develop to a level where the impacts are unmanageable."

The stakeholders of the Healthy Waterways Partnership are currently developing a strategy to manage algal blooms in Moreton Bay, specifically the Lyngbya blooms and the work being undertaken could help develop a model for our own Roebuck Bay.

The Bay is an integral part of all Kimberley residents and a source of wealth generation both financially and spiritually - surely our community can work together to solve this threat.

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