Heatley Secondary College

What Lies Beneath

Our artwork, *What Lies Beneath*, explores the threat that Crown-of-thorns starfish (COTS) pose to the Great Barrier Reef, the Torres Strait and Thursday Island.

We created the COTS from papier-mâché and the 3D coral from air-dry clay. We used tie-dye to represent the vibrant colours and diversity of the reef and the coral that lies beneath the ocean's surface. The COTS have been made larger than the coral pieces to symbolise the scale of the threat they can pose to coral reefs and the marine environments of the Torres Strait.

This issue is particularly important to us because we recognise how deeply Torres Strait communities depend on a healthy reef. The reef is essential to traditional ways of life, providing food, supporting families and communities, and connecting people to Sea Country and culture.

With active COTS outbreaks above sustainable levels, including in Erub and Mer (Murray) Sea Country, unmanaged outbreaks have the potential to cause significant coral loss. This can threaten the reef habitats that support the livelihoods, food security and cultural identity of Torres Strait communities for generations to come.

Through *What Lies Beneath*, we wanted to draw attention to what may be happening beneath the surface of the ocean and to the importance of protecting the reef for the future.

What Lies Beneath 2026

Paper, paper mâché, air-dry clay, calico, tie-dye, loofas, acrylic paint and masking tape