



Great Barrier Reef Region Strategic Assessment

Terms of Reference (August 2012)

The Great Barrier Reef is one of Australia's most treasured natural wonders and is internationally renowned for its outstanding biodiversity and beauty. It is recognised by UNESCO as a World Heritage Area.

The Reef is also recognised as a multiple-use area that supports a range of activities and industries, such as tourism, fishing, boating and shipping. Its adjacent catchments also support many communities and diverse industries that generate billions of dollars annually. The region is critical to the economic and social wellbeing of more than one million Australians.



The Australian and Queensland governments are committed to ensuring the Great Barrier Reef retains the values for which it was declared a World Heritage area and that it continues to be one of the best managed marine protected areas in the world.

Together we are working to undertake a comprehensive strategic assessment of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and adjacent coastal zone which will guide the Reef's management for the next 25 years.

The strategic assessment will identify, plan for and manage existing and emerging risks so the unique values of the Great Barrier Reef are protected into the future.

Two complementary strategic assessments

There are two parts to the comprehensive strategic assessment:

- The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) is leading the marine component which is looking at the arrangements in place to manage and protect the Great Barrier Reef Region.
- The Queensland Government is leading the coastal component which is looking at coastal development such as planning for urban, industrial and port development and the processes and management arrangements in place to ensure development occurs sustainably and does not impact unacceptably on the Reef's unique values.

As well as looking at environmental values, the strategic assessment will identify the important social and economic values of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

On 30 August 2012 the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities approved the GBRMPA and Queensland Government terms of reference.

What are the terms of reference and how were they developed?

The final terms of reference define the information that needs to be provided for the strategic assessment and how it will be gathered. They were developed by GBRMPA and the Queensland Government in consultation with the Australian Government Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities.

The draft terms of reference were available for public comment from February to April 2012.

A total of 363 submissions were received by GBRMPA on the marine component.

A total of 377 submissions were received by the Queensland Government on the coastal component.

Reports on how the public responses were taken into account in finalising the terms of reference are available on the GBRMPA and Queensland Government websites.

While most of the submissions came from respondents within Australia, submissions were also received from Europe, the United States of America, Canada, South Africa and New Zealand.



GBRMPA and the Queensland Government also considered the recommendations from the UNESCO Reactive Monitoring Mission Report following its visit to assess the state of conservation of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area during March 2012.

How was this feedback taken into account in finalising the terms of reference?

Both terms of reference have been revised to:

- provide greater detail and clarity on the intent of the assessment
- require independent review
- include criteria for choosing demonstration cases
- have more specific reference to Outstanding Universal Value and Ecologically Sustainable Development
- address other comments, including those from the UNESCO mission.

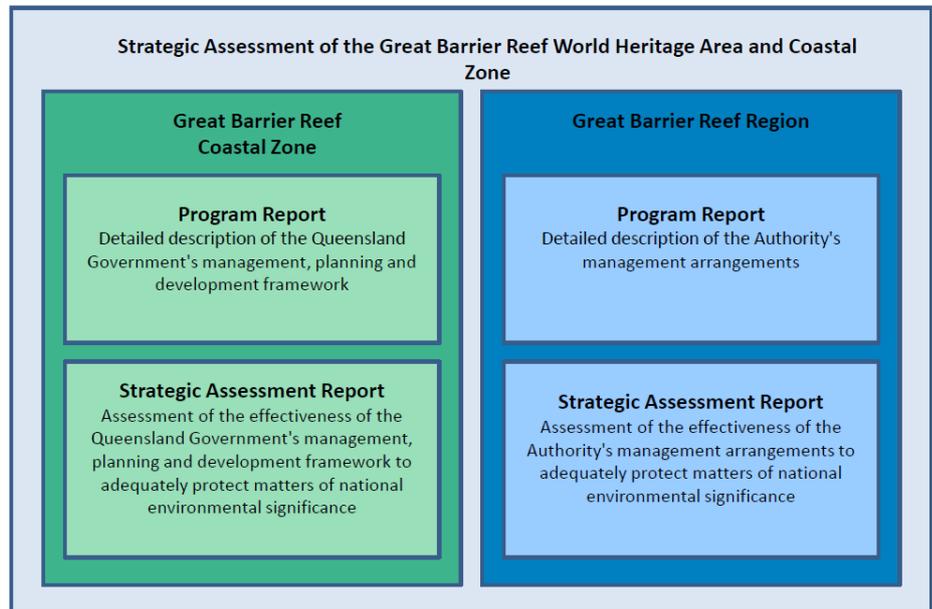
What are the reporting requirements?

The terms of reference require GBRMPA and the Queensland Government to each deliver two reports as shown above.

Joint management responsibilities will be addressed in both the GBRMPA and Queensland Government reports.

How do the terms of reference ensure independence and transparency?

The terms of reference require GBRMPA and the Queensland Government to base the strategic assessments on the latest peer-reviewed scientific evidence, expert opinions, Traditional Owner advice,



community knowledge and an independent review process.

Key knowledge gaps and critical information needs are being identified through the strategic assessment process. The Australian Government is funding regional sustainability planning projects to address a number of these gaps and to feed directly into the strategic assessments.

The terms of reference require the final draft Great Barrier Reef Region Strategic Assessment Reports to be peer reviewed.

Will I have another chance to have my say?

Consultation will continue throughout the strategic assessment process, providing the community with an opportunity to help shape future management of the Great Barrier Reef.

The Strategic Assessment and Program Reports are scheduled for public comment in early to mid-2013.

How do I find out more?

For further information on the Great Barrier Reef Region Strategic Assessment, including the full terms of reference and Submissions Report, visit www.gbrmpa.gov.au.

For further information on the Great Barrier Reef Coastal Zone Strategic Assessment, including the terms of reference and Consultation Report, visit www.qld.gov.au/GBRcoastalzone.