Chapter 3

Current management
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Cover page image: Vessel anchored offshore from Ellison Reef.
3 Current management

This chapter provides an overview of the current management arrangements of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (the Authority) in relation to the Great Barrier Reef Region (the Region).

The Queensland Government’s contribution to the management of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and the protection of matters of national environmental significance in the Great Barrier Reef coastal zone is outlined in the complementary Great Barrier Reef Coastal Zone Strategic Assessment.

3.1 Context

Through an intergovernmental agreement, the Australian and Queensland governments have been working together for the long-term protection and conservation of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park since its inception in 1975.

Management of the Region relies upon a number of Commonwealth and Queensland agencies to regulate access and to control or mitigate impacts associated with activities. These agencies use a combination of management tools, including zoning plans, plans of management, permits, policies and the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan (Reef Plan). They employ various management approaches including education, planning, environmental impact assessment, monitoring, stewardship and enforcement.

In this strategic assessment, the management arrangements under the jurisdiction of the Authority are considered. They include, but are not limited to:

- statutory instruments, including Regulations, zoning plans, plans of management and permits
- non-statutory mechanisms including policies, position statements and guidelines
- partnership and collaborative arrangements with other Commonwealth and Queensland government agencies
- partnerships with Traditional Owners in the management of marine resources
- partnership and stewardship programs, including education programs and engagement with local governments, communities, Indigenous persons and industry
- research and monitoring programs.
Based on the Authority’s statutory functions as set out in the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* (the Act), the Authority’s management focus is the protection and conservation of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (the Marine Park). The Authority also assists in meeting Australia’s international responsibilities in relation to the environment and protection of world heritage.

As the strategic assessment is being carried out under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), this chapter concludes with a description of how the Authority’s current management arrangements, established to protect the Marine Park and assist in the protection of world heritage, also protect the other matters of national environmental significance relevant to the Region.

The description of the Authority’s current management arrangements sets the basis for the assessments in later chapters including the examination of the effectiveness of the Authority’s current management.

### 3.2 Purpose

The purpose of the Authority’s current management arrangements is to achieve:

> The long term protection, ecologically sustainable use, understanding and enjoyment of the Great Barrier Reef for all Australians and the international community through the care and development of the Marine Park.

This is derived from the objects of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act.

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**Objects of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975 — Section 2A**

(1) The main object of this Act is to provide for the long term protection and conservation of the environment, biodiversity and heritage values of the Great Barrier Reef Region.

(2) The other objects of this Act are to do the following, so far as is consistent with the main object:

(a) allow ecologically sustainable use of the Great Barrier Reef Region for purposes including the following:

(i) public enjoyment and appreciation  
(ii) public education about and understanding of the Region  
(iii) recreational, economic and cultural activities  
(iv) research in relation to the natural, social, economic and cultural systems and value of the Great Barrier Reef Region;

(b) encourage engagement in the protection and management of the Great Barrier Reef Region by interested persons and groups, including Queensland and local governments, communities, Indigenous persons, business and industry;

(c) assist in meeting Australia’s international responsibilities in relation to the environment and protection of world heritage (especially Australia’s responsibilities under the World Heritage Convention).

(3) In order to achieve its objects, this Act:

(a) provides for the establishment, control, care and development of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park; and  
(b) establishes the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority; and  
(c) provides for zoning plans and plans of management; and  
(d) regulates, including by a system of permissions, use of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park in ways consistent with ecosystem-based management and the principles of ecologically sustainable use; and  
(e) facilitates partnership with traditional owners in management of marine resources; and  
(f) facilitates a collaborative approach to management of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area with the Queensland government.
In managing the Marine Park, the Authority must have regard to, and seek to act in a way that is consistent with, the objects of the Act, the protection of the world heritage values of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, and the principles of ecologically sustainable use as set out in the Act, namely:

(a) decision-making processes should effectively integrate both long-term and short-term environmental, economic, social and equitable considerations
(b) the precautionary principle
(c) the principle of intergenerational equity — that the present generation should ensure the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations
(d) the conservation of biodiversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration in decision making
(e) improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms should be promoted.

3.3 Strategic assessment area

In the Authority’s agreement with the then Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (Appendix 1), the strategic assessment area is defined as: the Great Barrier Reef Region and areas outside the Great Barrier Reef Region, to the extent that actions in those areas may affect the Great Barrier Reef Region.

Through its management arrangements, the Authority generally seeks to directly address activities that occur in the Marine Park and to influence activities outside this area that affect or may affect the Marine Park. Section 7(1A) of the Act states that a matter shall be taken to relate to the Marine Park if it relates to either the use or management of an area that would or might affect the Marine Park or the use of a place outside the Marine Park for a purpose relating to the Marine Park.

In regard to actions that may pollute water in a manner harmful to animals and plants in the Marine Park, Section 66(2)(e) of the Act provides the capacity to make a regulation to regulate or prohibit these actions, whether they are within the Marine Park or elsewhere.

3.4 Integrated management

3.4.1 Jurisdiction

Both the Australian and Queensland governments have direct legislative responsibilities within the World Heritage Area (Figure 3.1). Under Australia’s constitution, regulation of natural resource management and environment protection on land are primarily the responsibility of state governments — in this case, Queensland. However, matters of national environmental significance, including world and national heritage properties and their values, are protected through national regulation.

The Australian and Queensland governments work in partnership to protect and manage the Region. The Queensland Government’s role in the operation, management and regulation of the Region is based on:

- state title to Australia’s territorial sea to a distance of three nautical miles from the territorial sea baseline (low water mark along the coast including the coast of islands). However, Queensland’s rights over its coastal waters are subject to the operation of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act, resulting in the Commonwealth having jurisdiction to regulate, through the Act, all waters within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park in respect of matters relating to the Marine Park
- a role for the Queensland Government in management of the Marine Park, particularly permanent membership of the Marine Park Authority Board
- the ability for the Authority to delegate to Queensland Government officers or employees to act on the Authority’s behalf where an arrangement is in force with the Queensland Government to enable this to occur
- the Queensland Government being responsible for the management of fisheries in the waters adjacent to the Queensland coast (including within the Marine Park). The Authority has a regulatory role in the management of fishing through its Zoning Plan and Regulations, as well
as permit requirements for a limited number of commercial and developmental fisheries. The Authority has an advisory role to other agencies in relation to the management of fisheries in the Region. The Commonwealth Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities also has responsibilities relating to fisheries in the World Heritage Area through implementation of the EPBC Act. This requires the Australian Government to assess the environmental performance of those fisheries with an export component and promote ecologically sustainable management.

Figure 3.1 Jurisdictional boundaries for the Great Barrier Reef Region

The Great Barrier Reef encompasses both Commonwealth and Queensland jurisdictions. An agreement to jointly manage marine parks ensures integrated field management of both the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the adjacent Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park. Queensland territory extends from the land to the three nautical mile limit. Fisheries management, within the Region and beyond, is a Queensland Government responsibility. The assessment and approval provisions of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 apply throughout the Region; however, its Commonwealth marine area provisions apply only in Commonwealth Territory. Adapted from the Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2009.

The Queensland Government manages the Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park, established under the Marine Parks Act 2004 (Qld). This adjoins the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and covers the area between low water mark and highest astronomical tide and Queensland’s internal waters.

The State of Queensland has jurisdiction over approximately 980 islands. About 400 of these contain national parks under the Nature Conservation Act 1992 (Qld) and are managed as part of the joint Field Management Program (see Section 3.8). The remaining Queensland islands have a variety of tenures (freehold, leasehold and unallocated state land) and are not part of the Field Management Program. They are managed by a range of other Queensland Government agencies and local governments.

Approximately 70 Commonwealth islands are part of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Twenty-one of these include navigational lights or lightstations and in 1988 responsibility for management of those islands was transferred from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. The Australian Maritime Safety Authority remains responsible for the operation of the navigation lights and leases back this portion of land. The Authority manages Kent Island, Piron Island, Unnamed Island (Piron Island Group), Russell Island, North Reef Island, Low Isles, Pine Islet,

The Department of Defence is responsible for all the remaining Commonwealth islands in the Region, except for Little Fitzroy Island which is owned by the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

Development and land use activities in adjacent coastal and water catchment areas play a critical role in the health and resilience of the Great Barrier Reef. The Queensland Government is responsible for natural resource management and land use planning on Queensland islands, and the coast and hinterland adjacent to the Region, including through the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995.

Under the EPBC Act, the Australian Government is responsible for regulating activities having or likely to have a significant impact on matters of national environmental significance, whether they are undertaken in or outside of the Region.

### 3.4.2 Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement

The Australian and Queensland governments’ cooperative approach to management of the Great Barrier Reef was initially formalised by the Emerald Agreement in 1979 and was updated by the Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement in 2009.

The objective of this latest agreement is to ensure an integrated and collaborative approach is taken by the Australian and Queensland governments to manage marine and land environments within and adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area so as to:

- provide for the long-term protection and conservation of the environment and biodiversity of the Great Barrier Reef ecosystem, as encompassed by the World Heritage Area, and its transmission in good condition to future generations
- allow ecologically sustainable use of the Great Barrier Reef ecosystem subject to the overarching objective of long-term protection and conservation
- provide for meeting Australia’s international responsibilities for the World Heritage Area under the World Heritage Convention.

To achieve these objectives, the agreement includes each government’s ongoing commitment to:

- prohibit activities for the exploration and recovery of minerals or petroleum, and any drilling and mining within the World Heritage Area, including for the purposes of depositing materials
- maintain complementarity of relevant Commonwealth and Queensland management arrangements, in particular: marine park legislation and associated Regulations; zoning plans and plans of management; planning and development arrangements; environmental assessment and permit requirements; management of fishing activities
- continue a Commonwealth–Queensland Ministerial Council to facilitate implementation and achievement of the objectives of this agreement
- continue a joint program of field management, with shared funding on a 50:50 basis, for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and Queensland marine and national parks within the World Heritage Area
- continue joint action to halt and reverse the decline in quality of water entering the Reef
- continue joint action to maximise the resilience of the Reef to climate change
- address significant threats to the health and biodiversity of the Reef ecosystem, including pollution from the land and sea, the impacts of climate change, ecologically unsustainable fishing activities and other resource extraction activities
- periodically review the condition of the Reef ecosystem and any need for further action
- ensure that Indigenous traditional cultural practices continue to be recognised in the conservation and management of the Reef.
3.4.3 Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Forum

The Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Council was established under the 1979 Emerald Agreement and arrangements for the Council were updated through the Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement in 2009. From 1 July 2011, the Council has been called the Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Forum.

The Ministerial Forum is comprised of two ministers each from the Australian and Queensland governments, with responsibility for matters relating to the environment and marine parks, science, tourism and/or natural resource management. Ministers responsible for mining may not be members.

The Ministerial Forum’s role is strategic in that it facilitates and oversees implementation and achievement of the objectives of the intergovernmental agreement. The Ministerial Council met 32 times under the 1979 Emerald Agreement. Four meetings have been held under the 2009 intergovernmental agreement.

Key strategic initiatives of the Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Forum and Ministerial Council include establishment of the joint Field Management Program in 1979, implementation of zoning plans, the establishment of Dugong Protection Areas, endorsement of the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan, and agreement to conduct a comprehensive strategic assessment of planned and potential coastal development affecting the Great Barrier Reef.

Since the integrated governance and management model for the Great Barrier Reef has been in place it has facilitated development of complementary federal and state legislation, integrated management with relevant federal and state agencies, and guided the application of ecosystem-based management principles both inside and outside marine park boundaries. Indeed, it is considered by many to be the “gold standard” for large-scale marine protected area management. ²

3.5 Legislation and conventions


In addition, there is a range of other Commonwealth and Queensland legislation relevant to management of the Region. Management is also guided by Australia’s obligations under relevant international conventions.

The legislation and conventions relevant to the Region are listed below:

**Great Barrier Reef Marine Park legislation**

- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 1983 are the primary Regulations in force under the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*.
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (Aquaculture) Regulations 2000 regulate the discharge of waste from aquaculture operations outside the Marine Park which may affect animals and plants within the Marine Park.
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003 is the primary planning instrument for the conservation and management of the Marine Park.
Other Commonwealth legislation

- Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 regulates actions that have, will have or are likely to have, a significant impact on matters of national environmental significance.
- Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981 prohibits dumping of waste or other matter from any vessel, aircraft or platform in Australian waters unless a permit has been issued.
- Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976 prohibits certain activities in relation to historic shipwrecks and relics and requires discoveries to be notified.
- Native Title Act 1993 recognises and protects native title and includes a mechanism for determining claims to native title.
- Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983 gives effect to Australia’s commitments under the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships.
- Sea Installations Act 1987 regulates the installation of structures including tourism pontoons and power cables.

Queensland legislation

- Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995
- Environmental Protection Act 1994
- Fisheries Act 1994
- Local Government Act 1993
- Marine Parks Act 2004
- Marine Parks (Great Barrier Reef Coast) Zoning Plan 2004
- Native Title (Queensland) Act 1993
- Nature Conservation Act 1992
- State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971
- Sustainable Planning Act 2009
- Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994
- Transport Infrastructure Act 1994
- Vegetation Management Act 1999
- Water Act 2000

International agreements

- Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, 1972
- Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, 1979
- Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitats, 1971
- China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement, 1986
- International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973
- Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement, 1974
- Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement, 2007
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1992
Supporting community-based management of sea country — Lama Lama people

Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements are a management tool available to Traditional Owners which recognise traditional lore, customary rights and traditional ecological knowledge in managing sea country through a formal partnership arrangement with the Authority and the Queensland Government. The agreements are developed by Traditional Owners to conserve biodiversity and protect their cultural and natural heritage values. The process of developing a marine resources agreement is managed by Traditional Owners, with support from the Authority, involving extensive consultation and negotiation within the Traditional Owner group. Through the structured planning process, the group documents its structure, governance, history, lore, custom and aspirations for managing sea country.

The Authority supports implementation of Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements by helping communities to develop implementation and compliance plans. In some areas, such as the Girringun region and Port Curtis Coral Coast, these plans have been incorporated into and implemented on country through federally-funded Indigenous ranger programs.

After a three year development phase, Lama Lama Traditional Owners have recently had accredited a Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement developed with the Authority and the Queensland Government. The group looks forward to putting many of its plans into action through the partnership arrangement with the Authority.

This is an exciting time as we work to implement our ideas and thoughts to manage our sea country resources in the best possible way, not only for current Lama Lama people but for our future generations as well.

During the development of their agreement, the Lama Lama people outlined how they plan to manage sea country resources such as turtle and dugong, and identified and documented culturally important areas of their sea country. Community meetings provided opportunities for Lama Lama Traditional Owners to come together, reach consensus and discuss aspirations for management of their sea country including hunting, conservation measures, science partnerships, future priorities and economic opportunities.

Meetings on sea country provided an important opportunity for the group, as elders and children have been able to visit various culturally significant sites within Princess Charlotte Bay. Children were shown the Marrpa (Cliff) Islands and rock art on Ronganhu. They also explored the islands and talked about custom and culture.

The Authority supported the Lama Lama Traditional Owners’ recent successful application for a Fisheries Research and Development Corporation Indigenous Development Scholarship. The scholarship will sponsor a Lama Lama representative to visit a Pacific Island community to exchange information and learn about its ways of sea country management; traditional ecological knowledge; partnerships other communities have established with groups such as conservation volunteers; and how communities have established turtle and dugong ecotourism. Recognising the value of the knowledge exchange trip, the Authority is sponsoring an additional two Lama Lama Traditional Owners to join the trip. The information can then be shared with the broader Lama Lama community. The Authority will be the host organisation and will provide mentoring as well as technical and financial support. The scholarship will also sponsor five Lama Lama land and sea rangers to visit the Torres Strait Regional Authority’s Land and Sea Management Unit to complete their coxswain training, with technical and mentoring support from the Authority.

Establishing relationships with James Cook University researchers has also been identified as a priority for the Lama Lama Traditional Owners. The possibility of researching inshore dolphins has already been investigated and resulted in the university providing dolphin identification training to the group. It has also led to a plan to bring a research vessel to Port Stewart to work with the rangers to undertake research on Lama Lama sea country.
3.6 Management tools

The Authority uses a wide range of tools to manage the Region:

- Acts and Regulations
- Zoning Plan
- plans of management
- permits (including environmental impact assessment)
- fees and charges
- Traditional Owner agreements
- compliance
- site infrastructure
- policy (including strategies, policies, position statements, site management arrangements and guidelines)
- partnerships
- stewardship and best practice
- education and community awareness
- research and monitoring
- reporting.

Each of these management tools is described in detail in Table 3.1.

An emerging management tool is offsets. These are measures that compensate for the residual impacts of an action on the environment, after avoidance and mitigation measures are taken. Where appropriate, offsets are considered during the assessment phase of an environmental impact assessment under the EPBC Act. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations provide for permissions to be granted, subject to the provision of a security or financial guarantee for the recovery, restoration or removal of a structure and/or requiring the permission holder to make a financial contribution to undertake specified activities to protect the environment of the Marine Park.
Table 3.1 Management tools employed to protect and manage the Great Barrier Reef Region and relevant matters of national environmental significance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management tool</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Current components and activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Acts and Regulations             | The *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* and Regulations govern the protection and management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. They provide for the Zoning Plan and plans of management, and govern permitting decisions. The provisions are matched in areas of Queensland jurisdiction by the *Marine Parks Act 2004* and Regulations. Other Commonwealth and Queensland legislation also applies in the Region, for example the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. | • Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975  
• Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 1993  
• Providing advice, for example on projects assessed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*  
• Coordinating application of the Queensland *Marine Parks Act 2004* and Regulations, for example in relation to joint marine parks permits |
| Zoning Plan                      | Provides spatial control of use and, to a lesser extent, access within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Establishes the framework for extractive use and the need for permits for some uses, such as tourism, infrastructure and research. Zoning plans are developed under Part 5 Division 2 of the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*. Complementary arrangements are in place in adjacent areas under Queensland jurisdiction. | • Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003 |
| Plans of management              | Set out specific arrangements for activities, areas, species or ecological communities. They complement zoning and permitting arrangements. Some components are legally binding. Plans of management are developed under Part VB of the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*. There is the capacity for the Authority to enter into agreements or arrangements for management of an area, species or ecological community with a community group having a special interest in an area, including some form of native title. | • Cairns Area Plan of Management 1998  
• Hinchinbrook Area Plan of Management 2004  
• Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998  
• Shoalwater Bay (Dugong) Plan of Management 1997 |
| Permits (including environmental impact assessment) | Facilitate opportunities for sustainable use of the Marine Park. Permits are issued mainly for tourism, research, harvest fisheries, dredging and infrastructure (e.g. jetties and marinas) and include detailed risk-based environmental impact assessment. Matched in adjacent areas of Queensland jurisdiction, generally providing a joint permit. Fisheries licences are issued and managed by the Queensland Government. | • Permits granted under Part 2A of the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 1983* and under Queensland Marine Parks Regulations 2006 |
| Traditional Owner agreements     | Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements are formal agreements describing how Traditional Owner groups work with Australian and Queensland governments to manage traditional activities in sea country. They are made in accordance with Part 2B of the Regulations. They do not affect the operation of section 211 of the *Native Title Act 1993* and are not intended to extinguish native title | • Kuuku Ya’u People’s Indigenous Land Use Agreement  
• Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements for Girringun region; Dharumbal–Woppaburra section; Wuthathi region; Port Curtis Coral Coast; Lama Lama region; Yuku-Baja-Muliku region |
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<th>Management tool</th>
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<th>Current components and activities</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rights and interests. Indigenous Land Use Agreements are between one or more native title groups and other people or parties about the use and management of land and waters.</td>
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</tbody>
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| Compliance      | Activities that encourage adherence with legal requirements, both through education and enforcement. | • Eyes and Ears Incident Reporting program  
• Field Management Program jointly undertaken with the Queensland Government |
| Site infrastructure | On-ground infrastructure is installed to manage use and protect the values of individual sites. Implemented and maintained by the Authority and the Queensland Government through the Field Management Program. | • No-anchoring areas  
• Public moorings  
• Reef protection markers  
• Signs  
• Transit lanes |
| Fees and charges | Three main fees and charges apply in the Marine Park:  
• The cost of assessing an application for a permit for commercial activities is partly recovered through payment of a permit application assessment fee.  
• The environmental management charge applies to some commercial activities operating under a permit issued by the Authority. The revenue is applied to Marine Park management.  
• Bonds (usually as a bank guarantee) may be held by the Authority to cover the risks associated with a proposed activity. | • Permit application assessment fees are currently charged for activities of a commercial nature including tourist programs; vessel chartering; construction or maintenance of a facility; operation of a land-based sewage outfall; and the construction and operation of a mooring.  
• Most tourism visitors to the Marine Park pay the environmental management charge. For operations involving the hire of equipment, installation and operation of tourist facilities, and sewage outfalls, quarterly charges are paid by the operator.  
• Bonds are generally secured as part of a deed of agreement between the permittee and the Authority. |
| Policy          | Developed by the Authority, under section 7(4) of the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*, detailing the way in which the Authority intends to manage the Marine Park or perform its other functions. Policy documents are not legislative instruments. They are specific arrangements that guide decision makers and the public. Types of policy documents include: strategies, policies, site management arrangements, position statements and guidelines. | Strategies  
• *Great Barrier Reef Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2013*  
• *Great Barrier Reef Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan 2012–17*  
• *Great Barrier Reef Heritage Strategy 2005*  
• *Recreation Management Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park*  
Policies  
• Cruise shipping policy for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park  
• Dredging and spoil disposal  
• Environmental impact management  
• Managing activities that include the direct take of a protected species from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park  
• Managing bareboat operations in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park  
• Managing scientific research in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park  
• Managing tourism permissions to operate in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (including allocation, latency and tenure)  
• Marine tourism contingency plan for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park |
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management tool</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Current components and activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Current components and activities | • Moorings in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park  
• Operational policy on whale and dolphin conservation in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park  
• Sewage discharges from marine outfalls to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park  
• Structures **Site management arrangements**  
• Site plans for Raine Island, Moalter Cay and Maclellan Cay; Clump Point, Mission Beach; Low Isles, offshore from Port Douglas; Michaelmas Cay locality; Upolu Cay Reef; Bauer Bay; South Molle Island; Blue Pearl Bay, Hayman Island; Whitsundays Plan of Management setting 5 site plans; Tongue Bay; Hill Inlet and Whitehaven Beach; Fitzroy Reef; Keppel Bay and islands; Lady Elliot Island Reef; Lady Musgrave Island Reef **Position statements**  
• Aquaculture within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park  
• Conservation of dugongs in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park  
• Indigenous participation in tourism and its management  
• Management of commercial jet ski operations around Magnetic Island  
• Management of tourist flights in the vicinity of Magnetic Island  
• Management of memorials within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park  
• Managing access to the Restricted Access Special Management Areas surrounding Raine Island, Moalter Cay and Maclellan Cay  
• Marine tourism contingency plan for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park  
• No structures sub-zones  
• Translocation of species in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park **Guidelines**  
• Coral transplantation  
• Emergency disposal of foreign fishing vessels  
• Management of artificial reefs in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park  
• Managing visitation to seabird breeding islands  
• Permits Information Bulletin — no structure sub-zones  
• Use of hydrodynamic numerical modelling for dredging projects in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park **Partnerships** | Formal arrangements, often executed through a memorandum of understanding or an agreement, to enable a partnership approach to management of the Marine Park.  
• Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement 2009 between the Australian and Queensland governments  
• High Standard Tourism program with Ecotourism Australia  
• Management agreement with the Department of Defence on the implementation of the strategic environmental assessment of defence activities in the Marine Park.  
• Marine Strandings Hotline |
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<th>Management tool</th>
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<tr>
<td>Stewardship and best practice</td>
<td>Voluntary arrangements with stakeholders that provide the opportunity</td>
<td>• Memorandum of understanding with the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts relating to the integration and application of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975</td>
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<td></td>
<td>for contributions to protection and management. Provision of expertise</td>
<td>• Memorandum of understanding with Queensland ports on port activities in or adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (2009)</td>
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<td>and advice to stakeholders and natural resource management bodies.</td>
<td>• Local Marine Advisory Committees</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Reef Advisory Committees</td>
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<td>Education and community awareness</td>
<td>Programs to inform and motivate members of the community about the</td>
<td>• Eyes and Ears Incident Reporting program</td>
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<td>Great Barrier Reef and its protection and management, including ways</td>
<td>• Eye on the Reef monitoring program</td>
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<td>they can contribute.</td>
<td>• Low Isles Preservation Society</td>
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<td>• Marine Contingency Coordination Framework for Environmental Incidents</td>
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<td>• Marine monitoring program water quality monitoring volunteers</td>
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<td>• Pro-vision Reef Stewardship Action Plan</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Reef Guardian program, including schools, councils, fishers, farmers and graziers, and tourism (in development)</td>
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<td>• Responsible Reef Practices (for tourism and recreational users)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research and monitoring</td>
<td>Undertaken, commissioned or partnered by the Authority to better</td>
<td>• Commissioned research projects to address specific management issues</td>
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<td>inform decisions on protection and management of the Great Barrier</td>
<td>• Eye on the Reef monitoring program</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reef, guided by the Authority’s Scientific information needs for the</td>
<td>• Independent and partnered research by research institutions and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• National Environmental Research Program, Tropical Ecosystems Hub, 2011–2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting</td>
<td>Undertaken by the Authority to meet statutory, national and international obligations, and to provide direction for strategic planning within the agency.</td>
<td>• Field Management business strategy (annual)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority annual report</td>
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<td>• Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report (five-yearly)</td>
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<td>• World Heritage periodic reporting (six-yearly)</td>
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### 3.7 Management activities

The Authority’s management tools are designed to protect values and allow ecological sustainable use. The current management activities of the Authority are grouped into 15 topics covering the major uses and the most serious areas of risk to the Region. The groupings are based on the management topics considered in the *Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2009*, with amendments to reflect emerging issues.

The management topics addressed by the Authority are:

**Values**
- biodiversity protection
- heritage (Indigenous and historic)
- community benefits

**External impacts on values**
- climate change and extreme weather
- water quality protection (catchment run-off)
- coastal development (protection of coastal ecosystems)

**Direct use**
- tourism (marine-based)
- fishing – commercial
- fishing – recreational
- recreation
- port activities
- shipping
- defence activities
- research activities.

Management tools are applied as appropriate to each management topic. The tools applied to each topic are summarised in Table 3.2.

| Table 3.2 Management tools used to address management topics in the Great Barrier Reef Region |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Management tool | Biodiversity protection | Indigenous heritage | Historic heritage | Community benefits | Climate change and extreme weather | Water quality protection | Coastal development | Tourism | Fishing – commercial | Fishing – recreational | Recreation | Port activities | Shipping | Defence activities | Research activities |
| Acts and Regulations | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Zoning plans | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Plans of management | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Permits | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Traditional Owner agreements | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Compliance | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Site infrastructure | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Fees and charges | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Policy | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Partnerships | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Stewardship and best practice | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Education and community awareness | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Research and monitoring | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Reporting | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

*commercial harvest fisheries only*
3.8 Partners in management

In addition to the Australian and Queensland governments’ partnership established through the intergovernmental agreement, the Authority has partnership arrangements or stewardship programs with Traditional Owners, industry sectors, community groups and individuals who directly participate in protection and management of the Great Barrier Reef. The main contributors to protection and management are listed below:

**Australian Government**
- **Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority**
  Protects and manages the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.
- **Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities**
  Develops and implements national policies, programs and legislation to protect and conserve Australia's natural environment and heritage. Responsible for implementing the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.
- **Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency**
  Leads the development and coordination of Australia’s climate change policies and programs.
- **Australian Customs Service**
  Enforces a range of Commonwealth laws at sea and at various international entry points, including ports. Coastwatch provides aerial surveillance of Australian coastal waters.
- **Australian Maritime Safety Authority**
  Manages shipping activities throughout the Great Barrier Reef Region. Coordinates emergency responses to marine emergencies and marine pollution, for example oil spills.
- **Australian Quarantine Inspection Service**
  Responsible for quarantine inspection services for all vessels entering Australian waters.
- **Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**
  Develops and implements policies and programs to ensure Australia’s agricultural, fisheries, food and forestry industries remain competitive, profitable and sustainable.
- **Department of Defence**
  Responsible for all defence activities within the Great Barrier Reef Region, including the management of defence activities in designated defence training areas.
- **Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism**
  Develops and delivers policies to increase Australia's international competitiveness in relation to resources, energy and tourism, consistent with the principles of environmental responsibility and sustainable development.
- **Australian Institute of Marine Science**
  Undertakes research that supports management of tropical marine environments — the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area is a primary focus.
- **CSIRO**
  Australia’s national science agency.

**Queensland Government**
- **Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing**
  The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service is responsible for day-to-day field management in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the adjacent Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park, as well as island and mainland national parks.
- **Department of Environment and Heritage Protection**
  Responsible for management of Queensland’s environment, including water, salinity, native title and threatened species. It is the Queensland Government’s lead agency on environmental management matters including the assessment and approval of works in intertidal areas, internal waters and the Great Barrier Reef catchment.
- **Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**
  Responsible for management and research on fisheries and fisheries habitat in the Great Barrier Reef Region. The Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol enforces fisheries regulations, and marine parks and transport legislation.
• **Department of Premier and Cabinet**
  Provides overall coordination and direction for Queensland Government involvement in Great Barrier Reef matters. Within the department, the Reef Secretariat provides leadership for the *Reef Water Quality Protection Plan*.

• **Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning**
  Delivers major infrastructure, economic development and planning services, this includes developing regional plans along the Great Barrier Reef coast.

• **Department of Transport and Main Roads**
  Provides policy and strategic advice relating to Queensland's ports system. Within the department, *Maritime Safety Queensland* is responsible for licencing, registration and the safe navigation of vessels. It is the lead response agency for oil and chemical spills.

• **Queensland Water Police**
  Enforces marine parks legislation and investigates crimes on the water.

Other partners

• **Traditional Owners**
  Traditional Owners have inherent rights and interests over their sea country in the Region. They work with the Authority to protect cultural and heritage values, conserve biodiversity and enhance the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef.

• **Native title bodies**
  Assist in the permit referral process for applications for activities in the Marine Parks.

• **Local government**
  Responsible for local planning and development decisions and providing public services such as local roads, waste removal and water treatment within the Great Barrier Reef catchment.

• **Natural resource management bodies**
  Support natural resource management activities in the Great Barrier Reef catchment.

• **Research institutions**
  Provide improved knowledge about the Great Barrier Reef and advice on its implications for management.

• **Industry groups and individual operators**
  Organise and participate in programs that contribute to protection and management (for example, tourism operators, commercial fishers, farmers, graziers, Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators and other tourism associations, Queensland Seafood Industry Association, Growcom, Queensland Cane Growers Association and ports corporations).

• **Community groups**
  Organise and participate in community activities that help people to understand and protect the Great Barrier Reef.

• **Environmental non-government organisations**
  Raise public awareness about the state of the Great Barrier Reef and advocate for its increased conservation and protection.

• **Schools**
  Educate and engage students in marine activities and conservation.
Fishers work with government to protect dugongs in Bowling Green Bay

Between July 2010 and September 2011, there were seven dugong deaths reported in Bowling Green Bay. This was of particular concern as it is considered that recovery of the severely depleted dugong population south of Cooktown requires mortality from human causes to be as close to zero as possible. The deaths were understood to be associated with incidental capture in fishing nets. Fishing representatives from the Burdekin Sustainable Fisheries Alliance — a local stewardship initiative — worked to address this issue in partnership with the Authority, Queensland Government agencies and the Queensland Seafood Industry Association as part of the Burdekin Regional Management Project.

Alliance members developed substantial modifications to the type of large mesh net used in the high-risk areas, making the nets shorter with a shallower drop and lead core rope weighting to further reduce the risk of catching dugongs. The group also suggested that an adjacent high-risk area where dugongs were known to inhabit should be closed to mesh netting.

In 2011, following public consultation, the Authority introduced amendments to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 1983 in relation to commercial netting rules, designating:

- the No Netting Area where no netting activities (other than small mesh bait netting) are allowed
- the Restricted Netting Area where limited lower-risk netting activities are allowed.

The large mesh nets now allowed are restricted to the type developed by the Burdekin Sustainable Fisheries Alliance. The areas within Bowling Green Bay where the rule changes apply are shown in Figure 3.2.

Since the changes were introduced, no dugong mortalities have been reported from the area.

A group of net fishers is now working with researchers to trial a new net design that may further reduce the likelihood of fatal interactions with species of conservation concern, while improving safety and maintaining fishing efficiency for target species such as barramundi. The modified net has a collapsible panel that allows large animals to push through the net rather than becoming entangled. The panels are readily refitted therefore minimising any impact on fishing efficiency. A preliminary study, conducted by the Moreton Bay Seafood Industry Association, provided ‘proof of concept’. The net is now being tested through a research project funded by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation.
3.9 Field Management Program

The Field Management Program is established under the Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement. It is at the frontline of efforts to manage the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. While various initiatives deal with external threats to the Reef at their source, the Field Management Program — jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland governments — is about protecting and strengthening the resilience of the ecosystem on a day-to-day basis.

The program aims to achieve effective compliance with relevant Commonwealth and Queensland laws among Marine Park users. It also seeks to attain public use that is ecologically sustainable, with a focus on fishing, shipping, tourism, and traditional use of marine resources. In addition, the program works to protect and, where feasible, recover species of conservation concern and vulnerable habitats.

On a practical level, this work entails daily activities such as monitoring compliance of zoning rules through patrols, maintaining marine and island facilities such as camping grounds and moorings, fire and weed control on islands, engaging Traditional Owners on their sea country, and responding to boating or shipping incidents such as fuel spills. It also involves protecting key, and often remote, seabird and turtle rookeries in the 348,000 square kilometre World Heritage Area.

A joint Field Management Strategy Group, comprising representatives of the Australian and Queensland governments, oversees the Field Management Program. This group is responsible for preparing a five-year business strategy which identifies priority areas, high-level strategies, budgets and outcomes.

3.10 Management priorities

3.10.1 Current priorities

To address the challenges the Reef is facing while achieving the greatest value for the available resources, the Authority’s management must be well-targeted, knowledge-based, scientifically robust and measurable.

The Authority regularly reviews its management priorities and arrangements to ensure its resources are applied most effectively to achieve the long-term protection, ecologically sustainable use, understanding and enjoyment of the Great Barrier Reef. The four current priorities and their intended effect are listed in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Strategic Plan 2012–2016 (Table 3.3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic priorities</th>
<th>Intended effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address the key risks affecting the outlook for the Great Barrier Reef</td>
<td>• The declines in coastal ecosystem health, particularly in water quality and biodiversity, are halted and reversed; and where time scales for this change are long, then plans are in place to achieve it as soon as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Coastal communities and Reef users understand and have capacity to adapt to pressures of climate change and prevent damaging practices threatening Reef health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure management of the Marine Park supports ecologically sustainable use</td>
<td>• The natural functions and resilience of the Reef’s ecosystems are maintained, or if necessary restored, through effective decisions governing natural resource management and environmental protection and working in partnership with Traditional Owners, coastal communities, Reef users and local government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The protective legal measures built into the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975 and related laws are effective and supported by a comprehensive field management program delivered jointly with the Queensland Government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage stewardship of the Great Barrier Reef by educating others, drawing on the best available scientific information</td>
<td>• Management and all activities contributing to the health and resilience of the Reef are underpinned by the best available science.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communities and Reef users demonstrate a high level of participation in activities that contribute to the health and resilience of the Marine Park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain a high performing, effective and efficient organisation</td>
<td>• The Authority’s workplaces are safe, positive and supportive of its staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Authority is an accountable, responsive and adaptive organisation that complies with all obligations to the government and the Australian public.</td>
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3.11 Applying the tools to achieve the priorities

The following is a summary of how the Authority applies its management tools to achieve its four current management priorities.

3.11.1 Addressing the key risks

The Outlook Report 2009 identified climate change, continued declining water quality from catchment run-off, loss of coastal habitats from coastal development and remaining impacts from fishing and illegal fishing and poaching as the priority issues reducing the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef. The Authority is working in partnership with other agencies and stakeholders to reduce the magnitude of these risks and build the resilience of the Reef ecosystem to withstand and recover from their effects.

The identified key risks principally arise beyond the boundaries of the Region and their management is jurisdictionally complex. As a result, partnership arrangements (such as through the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan), stewardship programs (such as Reef Guardian programs for councils, farmers and fishers, and tourism and fishing industry actions on climate change), and education (such as through the Reef Guardian Schools program, Reef HQ Aquarium and the Authority’s communications program) are key management tools.

The Authority also works in collaboration and plays a key advisory role in environmental impact assessment processes — both Commonwealth and state — for proposed developments that have the potential to affect the Great Barrier Reef environment, for example major port expansions. This work includes processes under the EPBC Act and the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971 (Qld). The Authority also provides comment and advice on catchment planning and management relevant to protecting the health of the Reef environment.

The Authority works in close collaboration with the Queensland Government on fisheries management. Of particular importance are strategies to address the remaining impacts from fishing, with an emphasis on illegal fishing and poaching, reducing incidental catch of species of conservation concern, reducing death of discarded species, addressing issues associated with any unsustainable extraction of top predators, and fishing of fish spawning aggregations.

The Zoning Plan plays a key role in managing the location of fishing activities in the Region and building the resilience of the Reef ecosystem. In addition, fishing activities must comply with Marine Park Regulations and Queensland fisheries legislation. Harvest (dive-based) fishery operations within the Marine Park require a Marine Park permit, as do netting activities (other than bait netting) in the Special Management Area within Princess Charlotte Bay. Any developmental fishery program will also require a permit from the Authority. The joint Field Management Program plays a key role in compliance activities in the Region, including in relation to fishing.

Partnerships with Traditional Owners — formalised in Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements — address issues such as the sustainable take of culturally significant species and supporting Traditional Owner cultural practice in the conservation and management of the Great Barrier Reef. The agreements incorporate traditional and contemporary scientific knowledge and environmental management for the ongoing protection of the Great Barrier Reef and are used by Traditional Owners as a formal tool to conserve and protect species and ecosystems critical to the health of people, culture and country. They can incorporate specific management strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of key species, as well as habitats. Other management activities that Traditional Owners may identify in their agreement implementation plan include restoring and maintaining waterways and coastal ecosystems; maintaining and protecting significant heritage values including sites; sharing and documenting traditional ecological knowledge, culture and language; and research and monitoring of sea country including through partnerships with managing agencies and leading scientific institutions.

Research to improve understanding of the risks facing the Reef and their likely effects is supported in a range of research programs, including in the National Environmental Research Program Tropical Ecosystems Hub, the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies, the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS), CSIRO, the Fisheries Research Development Corporation, the Australian Marine Mammal Centre, James Cook University, University of Queensland and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation. Monitoring of impacts (such as the marine monitoring program which samples water quality) and the state of the Reef ecosystem itself (such as field management monitoring surveys, the Eye on the Reef program and the AIMS long-term monitoring
program) provide scientific evidence to support assessments of management effectiveness. Monitoring of social and economic drivers and activities is being developed.

**Policy** arrangements such as the Great Barrier Reef Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan 2012–2017 and the Great Barrier Reef Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2013 explain the way in which the Authority intends to manage the Marine Park or perform its other functions, and the way in which the Authority considers the Act or other legislative instruments apply. Policies are not legislative instruments.

Regular reporting on the condition of the Great Barrier Reef and on the factors affecting it helps track the progress being made towards reducing risks. This reporting includes five-yearly Outlook Reports, annual Paddock to Reef reporting by Reef Plan partners and the one-off report *Informing the outlook for Great Barrier Reef coastal ecosystems*.

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**Benefits of zoning**

The Authority’s Great Barrier Reef Zoning Plan 2003 substantially increased protection for biodiversity in the Marine Park, in particular the increase in no-take zones from less than five per cent to 33 per cent of the Marine Park. The Zoning Plan set a global benchmark for marine conservation, providing protection from extractive uses for at least 20 per cent of every bioregion, while allowing for a range of ecologically sustainable uses and the continuation of traditional activities.1,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13

The benefits of the Great Barrier Reef zoning were synthesised by a group of 21 leading scientists in 2010 in the international journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.14 Their conclusions are summarised below.

*Overall, the available evidence suggests that the large-scale network of marine reserves on the Great Barrier Reef is proving to be an excellent investment in social, economic, and environmental terms.15*

**More, bigger fish:** The network of no-take marine reserves is providing significant, long-term benefits for the species of coral reef fish that are targeted by fishers (especially coral trout), with not only more fish, but bigger fish in reserves — some reserves having around twice as much fish biomass.14,15

**Improved fish recruitment:** Larger fish contribute disproportionately more larvae than smaller fish. Recent research in the Keppel Islands suggests increased reproduction by the more abundant, bigger fish in reserves is not just benefitting populations within those reserves, but the benefits are ‘spilling over’ to other reefs, including reserve and fished reefs.16 Therefore, the reserve areas are having flow-on benefits to the entire ecosystem, not just the reefs within the reserve network.16

**Improved resilience:** The spillover effects also mean the connectivity between reserve reefs is intact.16 Spatial analysis shows most reserve reefs are within the dispersal range of other reserve reefs, so they are able to function as a network.14 Networks are more resilient than isolated components, meaning the Zoning Plan is contributing to the resilience of the overall system.

**Sharks, dugongs and turtles:** These species are harder to protect because they are slow growing and slow breeding. They are also highly mobile, moving in and out of protected zones. Despite this, available evidence shows zoning is benefitting these species.14,17,18 For effective management of mobile species, zoning needs to be complemented by measures to protect populations outside the reserve zones.14,19,20,21

**Reduced crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks:** Outbreaks of crown-of-thorns starfish appear to be less frequent on reserve reefs than fished reefs.14,22 This is particularly important as crown-of-thorns starfish have been the greatest cause of coral mortality in the Region in recent decades.23

**Zoning benefits for seabed habitats:** Zoning has improved protection of seabed habitats, with at least 20 per cent of most habitat types protected from trawling.14,24

**The benefits of zoning depend on compliance:** A relatively small amount of illegal fishing can rapidly reduce the benefits of marine reserves.14 It is therefore important to have good enforcement and compliance to ensure the ecosystem benefits of zoning are maintained.
3.11.2 Ensuring use is ecologically sustainable

The Authority has a direct management responsibility to ensure use of the Marine Park is ecologically sustainable.

The Zoning Plan defines the activities that can occur in various locations and provides the framework for extractive use within the Marine Park. Generally, applications are assessed and permits issued jointly with the Queensland Government. A range of uses of the Marine Park, such as tourism, infrastructure, some fisheries and some research activities, require a permit from the Authority. Permits enable the Australian and Queensland governments to reduce impacts on high use and sensitive areas, separate potentially conflicting activities, collect data for planning of Marine Parks and monitor potentially damaging activities. During 2011–12, 625 permissions were granted, 36 permissions were varied and 70 were transferred to another permit holder. A permit application assessment fee generally applies for all commercial activities.

There is a formal environmental impact assessment process under the Act for evaluating the likely possible risks or impacts to the environment from a proposed activity or development. Common activities where a detailed assessment process is undertaken include, but are not limited to, the construction and operation of pontoons, jetties, moorings, pipelines and marinas as well as dredging. The assessment criteria include ecological, social and economic considerations, Traditional Owner interests, as well as current and future use of the proposed location.

As most ports in the Region are located outside the Marine Park, their activities are mostly managed by the Queensland Government, unless those activities are deemed to affect matters of national environmental significance under the EPBC Act, for which the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities has responsibility. As part of environmental assessments under the EPBC Act, the Authority provides specialist advice on the impacts of development in, and adjacent to, the Marine Park to ensure consistency of decision making and environmentally sustainable outcomes. It also provides advice on assessments of fisheries under the EPBC Act.

The Zoning Plan establishes a designated shipping area for the Marine Park so coastal and international shipping traffic follow lower risk routes through the Reef. The Authority is a member of the North-East Shipping Management Group, which addresses the risks shipping poses to the Great Barrier Reef, Torres Strait and the Coral Sea region.

Plans of management for the Cairns Area, the Whitsundays and Hinchinbrook set out detailed management arrangements applying to all users of these areas. The plans focus on protecting key natural values and allowing a range of uses. Site infrastructure such as moorings, no-anchoring areas and transit lanes support sustainable use of popular sites within planning areas and elsewhere.

The Authority’s activities are guided by a series of policy documents supporting sustainable use. Examples include a recreation management strategy, and policies on the management of tourism permits and on moorings.

Tourism visitors and some other users pay the environmental management charge. All funds received are applied directly to management including education, research, ranger patrols and policy development.

All these formal management arrangements are supported by a compliance program conducted under the joint Field Management Program. The Field Management Compliance Coordination Unit coordinates vessel and aerial surveillance activities across the Marine Park. A cooperative multi-agency approach allows a broad range of legislation and compliance tools to be used.

3.11.3 Fostering stewardship

The Authority recognises the Marine Park plays an important role in the lifestyles and livelihoods of Queenslanders. Engaging Traditional Owners, stakeholders and local communities through positive and constructive relationships is essential in successfully managing activities within the Region.

With its main office in Townsville and other offices in Cairns, Mackay and Rockhampton, the Authority is able to closely connect with the Region’s coastal communities.

The Authority places a strong emphasis on fostering stewardship with Marine Park users by encouraging and supporting them to play a role in protecting the area, and to achieve best practices in
all their activities. Examples include the High Standard Tourism program which is a formal partnership with Ecotourism Australia and the tourism industry; the Eye on the Reef monitoring program predominantly with tourism operators; crown-of-thorns starfish control undertaken by the Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators; climate-related initiatives with the tourism and fishing industries; the Pro-vision Reef Stewardship Action Plan for coral and aquarium fishers and the Reef Guardian program.

The Authority’s Reef Guardian program recognises the good environmental work undertaken by communities and industries to protect the Reef. It involves a hands-on, community-based approach to make the Reef healthier and more resilient by working closely with those who rely on the Reef or live in its catchment.

A number of projects are underway to trial regional stewardship approaches, for example a National Environmental Research Program funded project focused on the Mackay and Bowen–Burdekin Local Marine Advisory Committees.

**Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements** provide a mechanism for close collaboration with Traditional Owners.

A series of voluntary Responsible Reef Practices provide a best practice guide to recreational and tourism users on sustainable practices that can be voluntarily adopted when visiting the Marine Park, in the office and at home.

The Authority has four **Reef Advisory Committees**: Catchment and Coastal; Ecosystem; Indigenous; and Tourism and Recreation. One of their key roles is to advise the Authority on actions that can be taken to address the risks to the Marine Park identified in the Outlook Report 2009. They are competency-based committees comprising a cross-section of stakeholder interests.

The Authority is advised at a local level by voluntary community-based **Local Marine Advisory Committees**. Established in 1999, there are now 12 committees from Cooktown to Bundaberg. Members are appointed by the Authority and offer a wide range of perspectives. The committees enable local communities to have effective input into managing the Marine Park, while providing a forum for interest groups, government and the community to discuss issues around marine resources. They also help in communications between the public and the Authority.

**Education and communication** are recognised as essential to managing the Reef and preserving it for future generations. The Authority communicates through its website, traditional media outlets, social media, its regional offices, awareness campaigns, community events and a range of other avenues. Through Reef HQ Aquarium — the Australian Government’s national education centre for the Great Barrier Reef — thousands of people each month receive messages about the Reef, risks to its resilience and what can be done to protect it. The aquarium is located in Townsville and managed by the Authority.

### 3.11.4 Effective and efficient organisation

The Authority recognises that being a high performing, effective and efficient organisation is central to achieving its goals and objectives. The Authority places strong emphasis on maintaining and developing effective knowledge management systems, services and processes.

The Authority’s governance framework is based on the legislative requirements of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act, as well as the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*, the *Public Service Act 1999* and a focus on engaging the community in management of the Marine Park.

An audit committee has been established in compliance with section 46 of the Financial Management and Accountability Act and Regulation 22C of the Financial Management and Accountability Regulations 1997. This committee provides independent assurance and assistance to the Chief Executive Officer and the Marine Park Authority Board on the Authority’s risk, control and compliance framework, and its financial statement responsibilities.

### 3.11.5 Current resources for management

The Authority’s budget for 2012–13 was $53.96 million. This included a direct appropriation from the Australian Government; the Australian and Queensland governments’ contribution to field management; revenue from the environmental management charge; and targeted funding from the Caring for our Country program for the Reef Rescue initiative and the Ensuring the Resilience of our
Protecting the Great Barrier Reef — a priority for the nation
A number of Australian and Queensland government investments contribute substantially to protection and management of the Region. For example, in addition to the Authority’s resources, the Australian Government has provided the following resources over recent years:

- more than $7.53 million for a new initiative to control crown-of-thorns starfish in the Great Barrier Marine Park
- more than $200 million through the Reef Rescue initiative over the five years to June 2013 to reduce the discharge of sediments, nutrients and pesticides from agricultural lands to the Great Barrier Reef lagoon. There is a government commitment to invest a further $200 million in the Reef Rescue program to 2018
- $52.7 million in regional base funding to the six reef catchment natural resource management regional bodies (2008–09 to 2012–13)
- $12.5 million over four years from 2013 to the Great Barrier Reef Foundation to coordinate research in areas such as reef resilience and climate change
- $2.8 million for projects to inform the comprehensive strategic assessment and long-term sustainable development planning for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and adjacent coastal zone
- $12.4 million over four years for reef ecosystem research through the National Environmental Research Program, including $3.68 million over four years for water quality research aimed at better understanding the drivers and impacts of water quality on the biodiversity of the Great Barrier Reef
- more than $11.25 million for 14 projects in catchments that flow into the Great Barrier Reef lagoon for activities which restore, manage and better protect biodiversity
- $61.9 million for the four years to December 2014 for research relevant to the Great Barrier Reef through the National Environmental Research Program Tropical Ecosystems Hub. This aims to address issues of concern for the management, conservation and sustainable use of the Great Barrier Reef, tropical rainforests including the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, and the terrestrial and marine assets underpinning resilient communities in the Torres Strait
- science and monitoring associated with the Australian Institute of Marine Science and the CSIRO

The Queensland Government invests in a range of activities designed to protect the Reef. This includes:

- $35 million a year spent on Reef water quality initiatives
- more than $8 million a year for joint field management for the Marine Park which includes compliance, management of visitor facilities and education
- more than $21 million a year for fisheries management, as well as an additional $9 million for a buy out of the net fishery on the east coast of Queensland which is expected to have profitability benefits for the fishery, as well as conservation benefits
- $12 million (statewide) over three years for Everyone’s Environment Grants which will provide funding to community-based groups to tackle environmental degradation. A number of the successful grants will directly contribute to improvements in Reef health, for example through community Coastcare and waterway clean ups
- $500,000 a year to the Queensland Wetlands Program which provides a number of tools to help restore the function of important wetlands adjacent to the Reef
- about $3 million a year to support on-ground activities through its natural resource management program in Reef catchments
- an investment of $1 million to control crown-of-thorns starfish through the Skilling Queensland program. This program provides a range of activities including job preparation, work placement and accredited training to assist local long-term unemployed jobseekers. Work placement participants assist in small scale control of the crown-of-thorns starfish infestation on selected and popular coral reefs.
3.12 Involvement in other planning and management frameworks

3.12.1 National

A further layer to the Authority’s operating environment is the broad range of national policies and programs that intersect with regulation and management of the Marine Park. The key policy areas relevant to the Marine Park relate to its major uses and pressures. These include environment protection, biodiversity conservation, fisheries management, natural resource management, coastal development, tourism and climate change. Other policy areas of relevance include customs, maritime safety, Indigenous affairs, resources and energy. Table 3.4 provides examples of how the Authority is involved in implementing or contributing to a range of national planning and management frameworks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portfolio area</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>* Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 — as set out in a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Reef Water Quality Protection Plan — a collaborative program to ensure that run-off from broadscale land use has no detrimental impact on the health and resilience of the Great Barrier Reef by 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Caring for our Country: crown-of-thorns starfish control; Ensuring the Resilience of our Reef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Caring for our Country — Reef Rescue: Land and Sea Country Indigenous Partnerships program; marine monitoring program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* National Environmental Research Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* National Representative System for Marine Protected Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* National working groups: marine biodiversity decline; national partnerships approach to the sustainable harvest of marine turtles and dugongs; national plan of action for the conservation and management of sharks; Oceans Policy Science Advisory Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>* National Landscapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* National Long-term Tourism Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>* Australian Research Council — Linkage programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Australian Research Council — Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Integrated Marine Observing System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Fisheries Research and Development Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous - Closing the Gap</td>
<td>* Caring for our Country — Reef Rescue Land and Sea Country Indigenous Partnerships Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>* Development of teaching units that cover key issues for the Reef and which meet the Australian Curriculum national requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>* AusAID funding — managing Caribbean coral reefs in a changing climate; co-hosting the International Coral Reef Initiative with Belize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate Change</td>
<td>* National Climate Change Adaptation Framework — a Council of Australian Governments initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Participation in the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility’s Marine Biodiversity and Resources Adaptation Research Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>* Chairman of the Authority is on the board of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* North–East Shipping Management Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.12.2 State

The Authority is involved in a range of Queensland Government initiatives relevant to the Great Barrier Reef and its catchment. Table 3.5 provides examples of how the Authority is involved in implementing or contributing to a range of Queensland Government initiatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portfolio</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>• Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership for the ongoing monitoring and improvement of Gladstone Harbour and surrounding catchments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Queensland Wetlands Program governance group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reef Protection Package research and development program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries</td>
<td>• Review of trawl management arrangements (Trawl Plan Review)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>• Development and implementation of state management plans — for example Green Island, Michaelmas Cay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>• Draft Queensland Ecotourism Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Relevant national park and coastal marine park management plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Great Barrier Reef experience audits and product development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Superyacht itineraries and information about marine park management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.12.3 Regional

The Authority partners with natural resource management bodies to achieve planning and management outcomes within the Great Barrier Reef catchment. Examples include the Reef Catchments’ Urban Think Tank and Healthy Waterways Alliance.

3.12.4 Local

The Authority works collaboratively at a local level with councils, schools, researchers, Traditional Owners, stakeholders and other government agencies to achieve a wide range of management outcomes. It is represented on a wide range of formal committees such as local government groups and informal, issues-based working groups. The Authority’s Local Marine Advisory Committees also play a role in information exchange between the community and the Authority.

3.13 Protecting matters of national environmental significance

The current management program contributes to the protection of each matter of national environmental significance. By virtue of protecting the values of the Marine Park, the associated matters of national environmental significance are also afforded protection.

A number of management tools, including the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act and Regulations, the Zoning Plan, plans of management and the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan 2009 afford protection to all matters of national environmental significance. Other tools, such as Dugong Protection Areas, are designed to protect specific matters of national environmental significance.

The Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement underpins collaborative joint management arrangements between the Authority and the Queensland Government, relating to the protection and management of the Great Barrier Reef. This includes joint arrangements for field management, climate change adaptation and management of fisheries resources.

The values of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area are protected and conserved by the Authority under the Act and the EPBC Act. In addition to its obligations to protect and conserve the
environment, biodiversity and heritage values of the Region, the Authority has an obligation under section 2A(2)(c) of the Act to ‘assist in meeting Australia’s international responsibilities in relation to the environment and protection of world heritage (especially Australia’s responsibilities under the World Heritage Convention)’. It fulfils this obligation by providing advice to the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities on activities (within or outside the property) likely to have a significant impact on the world heritage values of the property. The Authority’s advisory role is critical as many of the threats to the Great Barrier Reef ecosystem (such as coastal development and catchment land use practices) are the result of activities occurring outside the Region and for which the Authority has no jurisdictional control.

Additionally, more than 99 per cent of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area is located within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park for which the Authority has direct management responsibility in collaboration with the Queensland Government and its partner agencies. Impacts to the property’s outstanding universal value arising from activities within the Great Barrier Reef Region are managed through the Authority’s suite of regulatory and non-regulatory management tools. The Authority seeks to reduce impacts on the property’s outstanding universal value from activities occurring outside the Region through its partnership, stewardship and education programs and in its advisory capacity as described above.

Obligations under the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage also include a duty of presentation and giving the heritage values of the property ‘a function in the life of the community’ (Articles 4 and 5). The Authority assists in meeting these obligations by working closely with the tourism industry to promote the presentation of the property’s outstanding universal value. This includes the development of interpretive material and the High Standard Tourism program associated with marine parks permits. The Authority’s Reef Guardian program and its multiple-use management approach are central to ensuring the property’s values are given a function in the life of the community.

The Authority also contributes to periodic reporting to the World Heritage Committee on Australia’s international responsibilities for the environment and protection of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is a matter of national environmental significance and the Authority is responsible for its protection and management under the Act. Legislative management tools, such as the Regulations, the Zoning Plan, plans of management and permits, set out requirements for the protection of biodiversity and management of ecological sustainable use. The objects of the Act encourage community engagement in the protection and management of the Region and there is strong focus on engagement with Traditional Owners, primarily through the Authority’s Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement program, and stakeholders more broadly through the Authority’s partnerships, education and stewardship activities, including its Reef Guardian program. These tools are important as they have the capacity to influence actions outside the Marine Park but which affect the Marine Park (such as catchment management).

The Great Barrier Reef was listed as a national heritage place in 2007. The place has the same boundary as the World Heritage Area, and its listing is based on the world heritage values identified by the World Heritage Committee. The Authority contributes to the protection and management of the national heritage place using the same tools and approaches as described above for the World Heritage Area.

The Commonwealth marine area includes all parts of the Great Barrier Reef Region beyond Queensland state waters (that is, greater than three nautical miles from high water) extending beyond the Region into the Torres Strait, Coral Sea and to the south of the Region. Within the Region, the Commonwealth marine area is a subset of the Marine Park. Management tools that relate to the Marine Park deliver protection to the Commonwealth marine area. Other initiatives, to which the Authority is a party, such as the North-East Shipping Management Plan and Reef Plan, will provide benefits to species and habitats within the Commonwealth marine area.

All listed migratory species are protected under Regulations, which means they cannot be taken or interfered with, unless a permit has been obtained. The policy Managing activities that include the direct take of a protected species from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park informs the permitting process. In addition, the following management measures are in place to protect and manage listed migratory species:
Sharks and rays
- shark and rays spatial protection via inshore habitat conservation areas such as dugong protection areas
- vulnerability assessment for sharks and rays under the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2013.

Marine turtles
- position statement on managing access to the Restricted Access Special Management Areas surrounding Raine Island, Moulter Cay and Maclennan Cay
- Raine Island Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2010–2070
- Indigenous Land and Sea Country Partnerships Program, including Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements and Indigenous Land Use Agreements, that can include provisions for the traditional use of marine resources
- code of practice for the sustainable management of dugong and marine turtle tourism in Australia
- population model for the southern Great Barrier Reef green turtle stock
- monitoring of foraging green turtles in Shoalwater Bay
- spatial and temporal closures of some islands and/or surrounding waters to protect nesting activities
- rehabilitation facilities for sick and injured marine turtles (Reef HQ Aquarium)
- vulnerability assessment for marine turtles under the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.

Estuarine crocodiles
- signage warning the public of estuarine crocodile sightings, for example Low Isles.

Seabirds and shorebirds
- position statement on managing access to the Restricted Access Special Management Areas surrounding Raine Island, Moulter Cay and Maclennan Cay
- guidelines for visitation to seabird breeding islands
- coastal bird monitoring and information strategy
- prohibition on fishing with more than six hooks in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park
- seasonal closures of islands and intertidal areas to protect important breeding and feeding areas.
- vulnerability assessment for seabirds and shorebirds under the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.

Whales
- operational policy on whale and dolphin conservation in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park
- Regulations for managing vessel and aircraft interactions with whales and dolphins (Part 4A of the Regulations).
- Whale Protection Area in the Whitsundays to protect calving grounds.
- vulnerability assessment for dwarf minke whales under the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.

Australian snubfin dolphin and the Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin
- operational policy on whale and dolphin conservation in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park
- Regulations for managing vessel and aircraft interactions with whales and dolphins (Part 4A of the Regulations)
- Dugong Protection Areas provide some protection to inshore dolphin habitats
- vulnerability assessment for inshore dolphins under the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.

Dugongs
- position statement on the conservation of dugongs in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003 (dugongs were explicitly considered in its development)
- Indigenous Land and Sea Country Partnerships Program — Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements
• Indigenous Land Use Agreements (these can include provisions for the traditional use of marine resources)
• code of practice for the sustainable management of dugong and marine turtle tourism in Australia
• vulnerability assessment for dugongs under the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.

All listed threatened species are protected under Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations, which means they cannot be taken or interfered with, unless a permit has been obtained. Permits are not required for traditional use. The policy Managing activities that include the direct take of a protected species from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park informs the permitting process. Specific management tools for listed threatened species are the same as those specified above for relevant listed migratory species.

The Shoalwater and Corio Bays Area is a listed wetland of international importance and is partly within the Region. The Authority, through its Field Management Program, undertakes dedicated management activities including patrols, engagement activities with Traditional Owners, supporting marine turtle and dugong monitoring, and monitoring shorebird populations. The Shoalwater Bay (Dugong) Plan of Management and Dugong Protection Area were designated to support the most important dugong seagrass habitat in the southern region of the Marine Park. Other management initiatives, such as Reef Plan, also indirectly address broader impacts that may affect the area.

3.14 Timeframe and review

The Authority has been responsible for the protection and management of the Great Barrier Reef since the introduction of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act in 1975.

In recognition of the need to continually adapt its work to emerging issues, the Authority regularly reviews it management programs and priorities. An important part of the Authority’s management approach is ensuring that work programs reflect current priorities and that decision making is transparent and accountable. A number of reviews of various aspects of the Authority’s business have been conducted over the past 20 years, resulting in changes to organisational structure, legislative arrangements and work programs.

The five-yearly production of an Outlook Report, including an assessment of management effectiveness, provides the foundation for cyclical business planning and decision making by the Authority. The Outlook Report 2014 will use the best available science and build upon the information presented in the Outlook Report 2009 and the strategic assessment to assess the current state of the Reef, commercial and non-commercial use, factors influencing its condition, management measures, risk, current resilience and the long-term outlook. It will form an important part of the ongoing adaptive management cycle by reviewing and evaluating the information and outcomes of both reports and resultant management changes.

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