



Australian Government

Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority

Managing Scientific Research in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park

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let's keep it great



POLICY ON MANAGING SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN THE GREAT BARRIER REEF MARINE PARK

29 July 2004

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POLICY

Summary: To promote scientific research in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (the Marine Park) and provide a framework for the consistent and effective management of scientific research in the Marine Park.

DISCLAIMERS

1. This Policy should be read in conjunction with, and subject to, the **Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975** and to the extent relevant, all instruments made thereunder, for example, in the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 1983* and the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Amendment Regulations 2004* (No. 2).

Research plays an important role in the management of the Marine Park and World Heritage Area, as the GBRMPA is committed to ensuring that management decisions are based on the best scientific information available. The GBRMPA also appreciates that researchers contribute to the public good through building on society's knowledge base.

General

1. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (the Authority) will consider research activities in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (the Marine Park) following an environmental assessment in accordance with the Regulations and based on the precautionary principle¹.
2. Research proposals that identify sampling numbers greater than those listed in the *limited research sampling* table in the Regulations will require the written permission of the Authority and further detailed information including;
 - the relative abundance of the species or habitat;
 - the species conservation status or vulnerability to over-collecting and local depletion; and
 - the level of environmental impact that may result from the activity.
3. The Authority will continue to support cooperative approaches with the research community to managing scientific research.

Umbrella & Institutional Permits

4. The Authority will further streamline the research permits process by considering the granting of institutional or umbrella permits to be granted where the issue of such a permission may facilitate improved flexibility for research to occur.

Permit Duration

5. The Authority may grant permits for a research program not normally longer than six (6) years. However, the Authority may further limit the maximum duration of

¹ defined in the *Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment* (1992), which states that in the application of the precautionary principle, public and private decisions should be guided by:
(i) careful evaluation to avoid, wherever practicable, serious or irreversible damage to the environment; and,
(ii) an assessment of the risk-weighted consequences of various options.

the permit for pilot studies, the use of new research techniques, or research that may represent an unknown risk to the Marine Park.

Permit Fees

6. In line with Australian Government Cost Recovery Guidelines and in relation to permissible activities in the Marine Park, the Authority may introduce permit application assessment fees for research activities. In doing so, the Authority will have regard to the level of assessment required and the public good of the research and will consult with the research community.

Scientific Research in Buffer Zones, Marine National Park Zones or Preservation Zones

7. The Authority, in considering the grant of a permit for research in the Buffer Zone, the Marine National Park Zone or the Preservation Zone, will have regard to the level of environmental impact associated with the activity and the issues raised in the *Guidelines for Research in Buffer, Marine National Park and Preservation Zones* (Appendix 1), as amended from time to time.

Institution Accreditation

8. A pre-requisite for a research and/or educational institution being accredited will be the institution entering into a Memorandum of Understanding. If the Authority is satisfied that an institution has adopted appropriate environmental practices and standards (including instruction and training of personnel) and has an ongoing commitment to improve those practices and standards relating to research being undertaken in the Marine Park, the Authority will accredit the institution by publication of a notice in the Gazette.

Other Issues

9. The Authority will encourage researchers to maximise opportunities to liaise with other users of the Marine Park to create awareness of the benefits of research, to minimise conflict with other users and to foster partnerships where possible.
10. The Authority will encourage the research facilities to maximise opportunities to liaise with other users of the adjacent Scientific Research Zone and coordinate and manage activities in this Zone through an approved Environmental Management Plan.
11. The Institution will encourage researchers and other personnel to learn more about the tradition, culture and heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and to respect the values and many special cultural and heritage sites of Traditional Owners throughout the Marine Park.
12. The Authority expects all researchers conducting research activities in the Marine Park to adopt best environmental practices and standards.

BACKGROUND

TITLE

Managing Scientific Research in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park

PREFACE

Policy maker and empowerment

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

Timing

MPA 192 – July 2004

Editor's note

This policy places all current policies regarding management of scientific research into a reef wide context for the Marine Park. This policy also formalises current research permitting practices, includes new policy on managing scientific research in the Buffer and Marine National Park Zones ('green zones'), and implements a new management regime for research activities in the Marine Park that is consistent with the new Zoning Plan and associated regulations.

Head notes

Accreditation: Conservation: Education: Environmental Impact Assessment: Impacts Of Use: Management Guidelines: Permit Matters: Research.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set out the Authority's framework for the management of scientific research activities in the Marine Park.

The issues covered by this policy include: umbrella and institutional permits, permit duration, native title, permit fees, scientific research in the Scientific Research Zone, the Buffer Zone, the Marine National Park Zone, and the Preservation Zone.

Relevant statute law, or other Authority policy, Ministerial decisions

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975

- Section 3: contains interpretation, including that "this Act" includes the regulations.
- Section 5: states the object of this Act, which is to make provision for and in relation to the establishment, control, care and development of a marine park in the Great Barrier Reef Region in accordance with the provisions of this Act.
- Section 7: states the functions of the Authority and provides that the Authority is responsible for the management of the Marine Park.
Specifically, subsection 7(1)(b) states that among the functions of the GBRMPA, the need to carry out, by itself or in co-operation with other institutions and persons, research and investigations relevant to the Marine Park.
- Section 8: empowers the Authority to do all things necessary or convenient to be done for or in connection with the performance of its functions.
- Section 32: the mandatory requirement for the GBRMPA to have regard to the objective of preserving some areas of the GBR in their natural state and undisturbed by human activities except for the purposes of scientific research in the preparation of zoning plans.

- Section 38B: prohibits a person from using or entering a zone for a purpose requiring the Authority's permission unless authorised by such a permission.
- Section 38C: prohibits contravention of permission conditions.
- Section 61: empowers the Authority to delegate any of its powers under this Act, other than this power of delegation.
- Section 66: empowers the Authority to make regulations including, but not limited to, regulations that provide for the collection of specimens and the pursuit of research in the Marine Park for scientific purposes.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 1983

- Regulation 7 states the process from accreditation of an educational or research institution
- Regulation 19 defines limited impact research (extractive), including limited research sampling and minor research aids.
- Regulation 20 defines limited impact research (non-extractive)
- Regulation 74, 75, 76, 77 states how an application must be made, information required, additional information required for research applications and what the Authority must consider in applications for permission to use or enter into a zone in the Amalgamated Great Barrier Reef Section.
- Regulation 110 states that the Authority may suspend a permission if it appears to the Authority that the permission holder is failing to comply with a condition of that permission.
- Regulation 112 states that the Authority may revoke a permission if, 60 days after suspension of the permission, the permission holder continues to fail to comply with the condition.
- Regulation 17 states that the Authority must not grant a permission to use or enter or carry on an activity in the Marine Park unless the Authority has made an assessment of the impact the use, entry or activity is likely to have on the Marine Park and the Great Barrier Reef.

25 Year Strategic Plan for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area

The 25 Year Strategic Plan recognised the importance of research as a strategic management tool, and is identified as one of the main objectives: *'To obtain and disseminate accurate and timely information which will help decision makers and maximise community confidence in decisions made regarding the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWHa).'*

Existing relevant MPA policy

Key relevant MPA policies are summarised below:

- Policy 2000/35: To protect the scientific values and ensure that access for permitted research is not inhibited, the Authority will limit the impacts that may affect the values of Low Island Locality as a long-term research site, by
 - prohibiting waste discharge;
 - limiting manipulative research to that likely to complement research conducted by the 1928-1929 Great Barrier Reef Expedition; and
 - permitting only research that will directly assist the management of the Low Island Locality, or contribute to understanding of nutrient levels in the Marine Park.
- Policy 2000/101: Michaelmas Reef and Cay will be managed for the purposes of conservation of natural resources (protection of the local seabird population in particular), tourism, recreation, education and scientific research. This policy provides for appropriate scientific research, particularly that relevant to the area's natural resources and their management.

- Policy 2000/147: One of the revised aims of the Authority is to achieve competence and fairness in the care and development of the Marine Park through the conduct of research, and the deliberate acquisition, use and dissemination of relevant information from research and other sources.
- Policy 2000/193: This policy concerns research permits within the Marine Park, including
 - structures put there for research are 'fixed structures', as per the 'Fixed Structures on the Great Barrier Reef: Proposed Policy Statement';
 - the streamlined assessment of applications for permits to conduct research which would use a set of limited standard permit conditions; and
 - specific definitions of 'research' and 'scientific research' to be used in the assessment process.
- Policy 2000/243: The use of moorings, pontoons and permanently moored facilities for research purposes are not limited under the Cairns Area Plan of Management, subject to the permission process.
- Policy 2000/265: The policy specifies when the Authority or the Chair can accept and/or publish reports.
- Policy 2000/284: This policy concerns research into cultural and heritage matters, in particular research priorities, the need for collaborative projects that involve Indigenous people and protocols to guide research (and information sharing) with Indigenous people.
- Policy 2000/322: Concerns the development of policy on the appropriateness and conduct for extractive or manipulative research within the Marine Park and provides an interim strategy for the assessment of permit applications. The Policy also states that extractive or manipulative research will be discouraged in Florence Bay, and will be directed to other locations around Magnetic Island.
- Policy 2000/336: An ethics committee will be established to guide permits for manipulative or extractive research within the Marine Park.
- Policy 2000/569: Ensures that as far as possible, research facilities should be located at sites where there is minimum impact on use and amenity.
- Policy 2000/570: Ensures that the Authority has strategies under Cairns Plan of Management to conserve the scientific values of the Planning Area (particularly at Low Isles and Lizard Island), and to ensure that areas of high scientific research value are protected, and access for permitted research that is consistent with the values of the Planning Area is not inhibited.

Justification for policy

The justification for this policy on managing scientific research is based on the fact that research in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is of long-standing importance to managers of the Marine Park. This policy aims to support and streamline the management and conduct of research activities in the Marine Park. Detailed justifications of each part of the policy are at Attachment A.

DEFINITIONS

Limited impact research (extractive)

In the zoning plan, **limited impact research (extractive)** means:

- (a) research that involves:
 - (i) the taking of an animal, plant or marine product by limited research sampling; or
 - (ii) the installation and operation of minor research aids:
 - (A) that do not pose a threat to safety or navigation; and
 - (B) are installed and used in accordance with the limitations set out in subregulation (5); and
- (b) research that is a component of:
 - (i) an educational program; or
 - (ii) a research project; conducted by an accredited educational or research institution; and
- (c) if the research is conducted in the Scientific Research Zone, and the Authority has approved an environmental management

plan in writing for the research station adjacent to the area — research that is conducted in accordance with that plan.

Note *Limited research sampling* is defined in subregulation (3); *minor research aids* is defined in subregulation (4), and subregulation (5) specifies limitations for the installation and use of minor research aids. For *accredited educational or research institution*, see the Zoning Plan and regulation 7.

**Limited impact research
(non-extractive)**

In the Zoning Plan, **limited impact research (non-extractive)** means:

- (a) research that does not involve the taking of animals, plants or marine products, but includes:
 - (i) visual surveys, other than of cetaceans; or
 - (ii) research that does not involve an activity that would, if it were not part of a research activity, require permission; and
 - (iii) social research that does not involve the conduct of archaeological excavations; and
- (b) research that is a component of:
 - (i) an educational program; or
 - (ii) a research project; conducted by an accredited educational or research institution; and
- (c) if the research is conducted in an area in the Scientific Research Zone, and the Authority has approved an environmental management plan in writing for the research station adjacent to the area — research that is conducted in accordance with that plan.

Note For *accredited educational or research institution*, see the Zoning Plan and regulation 7.

CONSULTATION

Two phases of consultation has occurred on a reef-wide basis:

- (1) as part of the initial development for the proposed Draft Zoning Plan, meetings were held with all key research providers and institutions (e.g. AIMS, JCU, UQ, Queensland Museum, Australian Museum, CRC Reef) that use the Marine Park for research, including representatives from the five research stations (Lizard, Green, Orpheus, Heron, One Tree). These discussions assisted with reviewing and refining the proposed Draft Zoning Plan; and
- (2) as part of the Representative Areas Program for developing the Draft Zoning Plan. Of the 21,300 submissions received during that process, 57 responded to the Draft Zoning Plan regarding proposed research provisions and/or specifically to the draft policy and associated provisions for managing scientific research in the Marine Park.

SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS

Not applicable.

PROVISION FOR REVIEW

It is intended that the policy be reviewed as required.

REFERENCES

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 1983

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003

ATTACHMENT A

JUSTIFICATION

The aim of the Representative Areas Program (RAP) was to help protect biodiversity through protecting 'representative' examples of all the different habitats and communities in the Great Barrier Reef (the Marine Park). This program involved rezoning the entire Marine Park, and provided an opportunity to develop consistent reef wide frameworks for managing use and entry, including research.

The aim of this document is to outline the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's (GBRMPA) approach to scientific research and the policy framework for managing research in the Marine Park.

Science and Management

Research plays an important role in the management of the Marine Park and World Heritage Area, because the GBRMPA is committed to ensuring that management decisions are based on the best scientific information available. The GBRMPA also appreciates that researchers contribute to the public good through building on society's knowledge base. The GBRMPA, as the management agency with statutory responsibility for the Marine Park, has chosen to obtain this information primarily from external research agencies, consultants and institutions. To manage this process, the GBRMPA's Research and Monitoring Co-ordination Unit is comprised of scientists who act as information brokers between scientists and managers. Their role is to identify information needs for management, co-ordinate relevant tasks, ensure that scientific results are presented in a way that is useful to managers, and to assist managers in the interpretation of scientific issues (Appendix 2).

Scientists play an important role in highlighting threats to the Marine Park and are also an important stakeholder group, whose requirements need to be considered in the context of a multiple use Marine Park.

Management Framework

- The impetus for the proposed management changes resulted from a desire to streamline the permitting process for research activities in the Marine Park and to bring equity to the research community.

The objectives of the General Use, Habitat Protection, Conservation Park and Scientific Research Zones in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003 (as from 1 July 2004) will provide for some low impact extractive research to occur, and research activities may be allowed with or without permission in those zones (refer Table 1).

Other initiatives associated with managing scientific research in the Marine Park include:

- Zoning the waters in the vicinity of the six major research facilities in the Marine Park part of the Scientific Research Zone (SRZ).
- Revising the provisions of the SRZs to allow activities other than research in those zones.

- Continuing Restricted Access Area provisions to the two areas that are currently in the SRZ (One Tree Island Reef and adjacent to AIMS). This maintains the current situation where access to these locations is restricted to allow for research to be carried out without the possibility of disturbance of experiments by other users (eg. One Tree Island Research Station) and provides for the ongoing protection of research infrastructure at AIMS.

Table 1 Research permit requirements for each Zone.

	Zone						
	General Use	Habitat Protection	Conservation Park	Scientific Research	Buffer	Marine National Park	Preservation
Limited impact research (non-extractive)	No permit required	No permit required	No permit required	No permit required*	No permit required	No permit required	Permit Required
Limited impact research (extractive)	No permit required	No permit required	No permit required	No permit required*	Permit required	Permit Required	Permit Required
All Other Research	Permit Required	Permit Required	Permit Required	Permit Required	Permit Required	Permit Required	Permit Required

*If an approved Environmental Management Plan (EMP) is in place, 'as of right' research must be conducted in accordance with the relevant EMP

'As of right' research activities are restricted to accredited educational or research institutions. The process for accreditation is dealt with above.

The result is a streamlined research management regime, which will be beneficial to both the GBRMPA and researchers, because the process will be more consistent and transparent, and the requirement to obtain permits will be reduced for low impact activities. However, this regime will ensure that activities that represent some risk to the Marine Park (or involve extractive activities in zones that generally prohibit extractive uses) will still require a permit.

General

- The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (the Authority) will consider research activities in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (the Marine Park) following an environmental assessment in accordance with the Regulations and based on the precautionary principle.*

All applications for permissions to conduct research in the Marine Park must be assessed in accordance with *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 1983*. Regulations 10(4), 18(4) and 32D(5) list the matters that the GBRMPA must have regard to in considering applications for research activities. Regulation 61 states that assessment of the impact of activities in the Marine Park must be made before granting a permission.

In undertaking an assessment where the potential impacts of an activity are not known, the "precautionary principle" should be considered. The precautionary principle is defined in the *Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment (1992)*,

which states that in the application of the precautionary principle, public and private decisions should be guided by:

- (i) careful evaluation to avoid, wherever practicable, serious or irreversible damage to the environment; and
- (ii) an assessment of the risk-weighted consequences of various options.

2. *Research proposals that identify sampling numbers greater than those listed in the limited research sampling table in the Regulations will require the written permission of the Authority and further detailed information including:*
 - *the relative abundance of the species or habitat;*
 - *the species conservation status or vulnerability to over-collecting and local depletion; and*
 - *the level of environmental impact that may result from the activity.*

The Authority's legislative responsibility extends to managing the environmental impacts of all uses of the Marine Park. Therefore, this management framework deals with any particular research activity depending upon:

- the type of research to be conducted (particularly the level of impact, whether it includes extractive activities, and its value to management); and
- the objectives of the zone where the activity is proposed.

In general, low impact activities cause fewer concerns. In contrast, higher impact activities require a higher level of scrutiny and therefore further information is required from the proponent to support their application for permission.

Research activities are managed through zoning, policies and a permit process where researchers are required to consider ways of minimising the potential impacts of their research on the Marine Park. Some proposals may require referral to the Environmental Research Ethics Advisory Committee (Appendix 1) and/or the Authority's critical issues groups (particularly, Conservation, Biodiversity & World Heritage Group and the Fisheries Issues Group).

3. *The Authority will continue to support cooperative approaches with the research community to managing scientific research.*

The Authority supports research in the Marine Park and recognises the important role that research plays in contributing to our understanding of the Great Barrier Reef, and providing a scientific basis for management. This includes all fields of study that are relevant to the Marine Park, including biological, physical, social, cultural and economic research.

The Authority uses zoning as a tool to manage the protection and wise use of the Marine Park. This includes using zoning to manage scientific research activities and to separate conflicting use. The Authority supports ecologically sustainable research in the Marine Park, and it is possible for researchers to gain access to all zones in the Marine Park (subject to additional requirements in the case of the Buffer, Marine National Park, and Preservation Zones), and permits being required in certain situations.

Umbrella & Institutional Permits

4. *The Authority will further streamline the research permits process by considering the grant of institutional or umbrella permits where the grant of such a permission may facilitate improved flexibility for ecologically sustainable research to occur.*

Research permits will be further streamlined to allow for institutional and umbrella permits where permits are required. This will reduce the number of individual research permits required and increase the flexibility for research activities, to be conducted at short notice where the opportunity arises or allow for changes to the species collected due to abundance at particular locations. These permits will be designed to cover the range of activities undertaken by a research institution e.g. a university (institutional permits), or research programs led by a senior researcher (umbrella permits). A few of these permits have already been issued and are being audited/reviewed by the Authority. Where possible, the activities of students (particularly honours students) should be covered under a permit held by their supervisor or host institution, or their research should be consistent with the 'as of right' research requirements under the Zoning Plan and associated regulations.

Permit Duration

5. *The Authority may issue permits for a research program for the period of the research program, not normally longer than six (6) years. However, the Authority may further limit the maximum duration of the permit for pilot studies, the use of new research techniques, or research that may represent an unknown risk to the Marine Park.*

The Authority may issue permits for a research program for a maximum of six (6) years. Generally, research programs run for a maximum funding term of three (3) years, although often a project will run slightly longer than this term. However, where research proposals are longer than 6 years and the research is considered to be of low risk to the marine environment, a longer-term permit may be granted. Pilot studies, the use of new research techniques, or research that may present a risk to the Marine Park may be limited to a lesser period.

Permit Fees

6. *In line with Australian Government Cost Recovery Guidelines and in relation to permissible activities in the Marine Park, the Authority may introduce permit application assessment fees for research activities. In doing so, the Authority will have regard to the level of assessment required and the public good of the research.*

The Australian Government has adopted Cost Recovery Guidelines for government activities. The GBRMPA in adopting these guidelines may introduce permit application assessment fees for research permit applications. Currently, research of a commercial nature is already charged a permit application assessment fee.

In the application of a permit application assessment fee for research the Authority will have regard to:

- the funding arrangements for the research; ie if the funding is provided by the Authority

- the level of assessment required for the research
- the public good of the research eg. monitoring of management effectiveness.

Fees will only be implemented following consultation with the research community and a full review of permit application assessment fees, including the time taken to assess a range of research permit applications of varying complexity.

Scientific Research in Buffer Zones, Marine National Park Zones or Preservation Zones

7. *The Authority, in considering the grant of a permit for research in the Buffer Zone, the Marine National Park Zone or the Preservation Zone, will have regard to the level of environmental impact associated with the activity and the issues raised in the Guidelines for Research in Buffer, Marine National Park and Preservation Zones (Appendix 1), as amended from time to time.*

The Buffer Zone and the Marine National Park Zone are more highly protected. In both of these zones, extractive activities are **generally** considered inconsistent with the objectives of the zone. However, in recognising the important contribution that scientific research makes to the effective management of the Marine Park, the Authority considers that where there is demonstrated justification for the research, permission may be granted to use or enter these Zones for research (with the written permission of the Authority). In the case of both of these Zones, the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003* provides for research (other than limited impact research (non-extractive)) (with the written permission of the Authority) provided that it can be demonstrated to the Authority that:

- (a) the research is relevant to, and a priority for, the management of the Marine Park; or
- (b) the research cannot reasonably be conducted elsewhere.

The Preservation Zone has been established to provide for the preservation of the natural integrity and values of areas of the Marine Park, generally undisturbed by human activities. The *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003* provides for research (including limited impact research (non-extractive) and limited impact research (extractive)) (with the written permission of the Authority) provided that it can be demonstrated to the Authority that:

- (a) the research is relevant to, and a priority for, the management of the Marine Park; and
- (b) the research cannot reasonably be conducted elsewhere.

The conduct of limited impact research (extractive) and limited impact research (non-extractive) in Commonwealth Island Zones will require written permission of the Authority. Guidelines for research in these zones are found at Appendix 1.

Institution Accreditation

8. *The mechanism for accrediting research and/or educational institutions will be through publication of a notice in the Gazette once the Authority is satisfied of certain things.*

The *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003* (the Zoning Plan) provides for 'as-of-right' research to be conducted in the Marine Park without written permission of the Authority providing certain conditions are satisfied. One such condition is that the research being undertaken is a component of a research project conducted by an accredited educational or research institution.

In accordance with Part 3 Division 3.2 Regulation 6E of the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Amendment Regulations 2004* (No. 2), the Authority may accredit a research or educational institution, by notification in the *Gazette*, if it is satisfied that the institution;

- (a) has adopted appropriate environmental practices and standards (including instruction and training of personnel); and
- (b) has an ongoing commitment to improve those practices and standards.

Generally, throughout the Marine Park, researchers from accredited research and/or educational institutions will be allowed to conduct:

- any research that does not involve an activity that would require permission;
- social research that does not involve the conduct of maritime archaeology excavations;
- limited impact research (extractive and non-extractive) in the General Use, Habitat Protection, and Conservation Park Zones; and
- limited impact research (non-extractive) in the Buffer and Marine National Park Zones.

A pre-requisite to the Authority considering the accreditation of a research or educational institution will be the institution entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Authority.

Other Issues

9. *The Authority will encourage researchers to maximise opportunities to liaise with other users of the Marine Park.*

The Marine Park was established in 1975 as a multiple use marine park and as such, a number of varied and potentially conflicting uses may occur side-by-side. In order to minimise the potential for conflicts to occur and to allow for greater awareness amongst the public, the Authority will actively encourage researchers to maximise opportunities to engage with other users in the areas in which they are undertaking field work and to promote the outcomes of research that is relevant to the Marine Park. This may be done through discussions with the research community opportunistically or at appropriate forums such as conferences and through the publication of Fact Sheets and research outcomes.

10. *The Authority will encourage the research facilities to maximise opportunities to liaise with other users of areas adjacent to the Scientific Research Zone (SRZ) through an approved Environmental Management Plan (EMP).*

Under the Zoning Plan, limited impact research (non-extractive) and limited impact research (extractive) is allowed as-of-right in the SRZ by researchers from accredited research and/or educational institutions; provided all other requirements in the Zoning Plan and associated regulations are satisfied. If the research is being conducted in an area of the SRZ and the Authority has approved an EMP for that area, then an additional requirement of 'as of right' research in that area is that research be conducted in accordance with that EMP.

The EMP is established to provide site based guidelines and codes of conduct for research to occur in parts of the SRZ adjacent to research facilities/stations. EMPs may be approved following consideration of *Criteria for Approval of Environmental Management Plans* (Appendix 4).

11. *The Institution will encourage researchers and other personnel to learn more about the tradition, culture and heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and to respect the values and many special cultural and heritage sites of Traditional Owners throughout the Marine Park.*

The Marine Park includes many areas of interest to registered native title claimant groups, Traditional Owners and/or Native Title Representative Bodies, and all researchers should have regard to the rights and interests of indigenous people who use, and live adjacent to, the Marine Park. **Native Title Notification is required prior to the grant of all permits for use or entry of the Marine Park.**

Under the *Native Title Act 1993*, the Authority is required to notify, and provide an opportunity to comment, to all relevant registered native title claimants and representative bodies prior to the grant of any permit to conduct activities in the Marine Park. A period of 31 days is allowed for comment. Any comments received are considered in the assessment process. An application cannot be fully assessed or a permit should not be issued **until this notification period has elapsed, and any comments received have been taken into account.**

The Authority encourages researchers to contact relevant registered native title claimant groups, Traditional Owners, and/or Native Title Representative Bodies if conducting research in the Marine Park that does not require a permit.

12. The Authority expects all researchers conducting research activities in the Marine Park to adopt best environmental practices.

In recognition of the environmental significance and World Heritage status of the Marine Park, the Authority encourages all researchers to adopt best environmental practices when conducting all activities in the Marine Park. Best environmental Practice guidelines have been prepared for a range of activities and also apply to research activities. These include:

- Anchoring
- [Bird Watching](#)
- [Boating](#)
- [Collecting](#)
- [Diving and Snorkelling](#)
- [Dugong Watching](#)
- [Fishing](#)
- [Moorings](#)
- [Motorised Water Sports](#)
- [Reef Walking](#)
- [Spear Fishing](#)
- [Turtle Watching](#)
- [Waste Disposal](#)
- [Whale and Dolphin Watching](#)
- [Yachting](#)

References

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Appendix 1 - Guidelines for Research in the Buffer, the Marine National Park and the Preservation Zones

Buffer & Marine National Park Zones

- *Is important to and a priority for management of the Marine Park;*
 - This means that the proposed research has been identified as one of the GBRMPA's research priorities (Green et al. 2001), as amended from time to time
http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/info_services/science/research_priorities/index.html
- or
- *Cannot reasonably be conducted elsewhere*
 - This means that the research:
 - is in proximity to research stations (e.g. within a 20km radius or the distance a small vessel can travel); or
 - is part of a long-term ongoing monitoring program for which permission had been granted prior to 1 July 2004; or
 - is/ has been specifically identified in the Basis for Zoning of the Marine Park; or
 - must, by its nature, logically require work in these zones.

*Note: research in particular areas of the SRZ may have some additional restrictions - see the relevant Environmental Management Plan.

Preservation Zones

- *Is important to and a priority for management of the Marine Park and cannot reasonably be conducted elsewhere*
 - This means that the proposed research:
 - has been identified as one of the GBRMPA's research priorities (Green et al. 2001²) as amended from time to time
http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/info_services/science/research_priorities/index.html, and
 - is part of long term monitoring program for which permission was granted prior to 1 July 2004; or
 - is necessary as part of new monitoring program that is considered of highest priority by the Authority; or
 - must, by its nature, logically require work in this zones.
- *Is low impact*
 - This means that the proposed research is non-extractive, unless the nature of the long-term monitoring program is for extractive purposes and is demonstrably of negligible impact.

² Green, A., Oliver, J. and Wachenfeld, D. (Editors), 2001, Research Priorities for the Management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and World Heritage Area, Research Publication 73, GBRMPA, Townsville.

Appendix 2 – GBRMPA’s Research Priorities

The Authority has taken a proactive approach to setting the research agenda for management. In 1999/2000, the GBRMPA undertook a detailed process aimed at clearly identifying and prioritising research needs for the management of the Marine Park and protection/preservation of its world heritage values (GBRMPA does NOT manage the GBRWHA). This represented a new direction in management-driven research where the Authority took the initiative of proactively informing scientists of its information requirements³.

Research priorities were determined through an interactive series of workshops between the Authority, the CRC for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, industry and senior research scientists aimed at identifying high priority management issues, and the information needs required to address those issues (including specific research tasks). This process focussed on identifying research tasks for critical issues management of the Marine Park (see *Background* above).

The identification of research priorities for such a large and complex area as the Marine Park is not a trivial task and had not been attempted by Authority previously in such a comprehensive manner. To assist in this process, representatives from other government agencies and scientists who have extensive knowledge of the Great Barrier Reef, its management issues, and relevant scientific fields, were invited to participate. Substantial support was provided by the Co-operative Research Centre for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (CRC Reef Research Centre) of which GBRMPA is a partner.

The outcome was a comprehensive list of more than 300 of the Authority’s high priority research tasks across all of its critical issue and major support groups. This information was made widely available by publishing the priorities in an interactive, searchable format on the GBRMPA’s website (http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/info_services/science/research_priorities/index.html) and in the Marine Park Research Publication Series (Green et al. 2001).

These research priorities will be reviewed on a regular basis.

³ These priorities are kept under review and are updated from time to time.

Appendix 3 – Environmental Research Ethics Advisory Committee Referral Criteria for Research Permits

Objective

The Committee provides advice to the Authority in regard to the appropriateness of the conduct of manipulative research proposals in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park where the proposals trigger one or more of the referral criteria.

Some applications may require review by the Environmental Research Ethics Advisory Committee (EREAC). Note that this is not the equivalent of a university ethics approval, since the EREAC considers whether the proposed activity is appropriate in the Marine Park. Some applications may also require referral to GBRMPA's Conservation, Biodiversity & World Heritage Group and/or Fisheries Issues Groups or other internal referees.

Criteria for Referral

The Authority shall refer to the Committee research permit applications that involve one or more of the following:

1. Rare or threatened species or populations.
1. Introduction into the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park of biological material of a type not already present in the area.
2. Relocation or release within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park of biological material in or to areas in which it is not normally found (e.g. individuals of a different genetic stock).
3. Introduction or release of genetically modified material.
4. Habitats of particular importance to the biology of rare, threatened or commercially important species.
5. Destruction and/or intrusion of the following nature:
 - deliberate damage,
 - taking of plants and animals, and
 - behaviour manipulation or use of intrusive techniques,at a significant scale in space and/or time and relative to the size of populations and habitats affected, and ecological and geophysical processes applying in the area.
6. Use of toxic/radioactive/cumulative/persistent chemicals.
7. Use of a preservation zone.
8. A significant impact on use(s) and value of area concerned and would require new or changed zoning provisions and regulations.
9. Controversial or sensitive issues (culturally/socially), or seen to be cruel, or to involve the infringement of privacy and property rights.

Appendix 4 – Criteria for Approval of Environmental Management Plans

Environmental Management Plans should be assessed against the following elements to determine their suitability for approval by the Authority.

Aim

Roles and responsibilities (clear reporting mechanism to the research facility manager and to the GBRMPA)

Environmental elements

- Site information (general description)
- Identification of surrounding uses
- Identification of potential impacts on
 - local areas or resources (overuse)
 - other users of the area (including amenity & conflict of use)
 - other researchers or research programs

Performance Objectives and Indicators

- what are the performance outcomes that the station hopes to achieve
- Criteria against which the implementation of the actions and the level of achievement of the performance objectives will be measured.

Monitoring / Reporting

Management Actions And Strategies

- The actions to be undertaken to achieve the performance objective, including any necessary approvals, applications and consultation.
- Notification requirements before accessing area, who will be notified and how (e.g. email, fax, telephone).
- Researchers required to sign EMP, stating they understand the terms and conditions of operating in the SRZ
- Education handouts, induction procedure at research facility

Monitoring And Auditing

- Formal annual audit to allow review and modification of EMP

Corrective Action And Review

- Compliance – who would be responsible
- Procedure for managing non-compliance
- Ensuring researchers are from an accredited institution
- Process for review and amending EMP including periodicity and mechanism for review of EMP