

SUMMARY

The first objective of this report is to present up-to-date information on financial and economic values of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. This area encompasses the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, which forms 95 per cent of the World Heritage Area (WHA), and also includes islands and some coastal waters within the boundaries of the Great Barrier Reef Region.

The Great Barrier Reef WHA is a multiple-use area. Its primary 'use' is conservation of outstanding natural environments. Tourism is the direct use which generates the greatest financial value, estimated at \$682 million in 1991-92. The financial values of other important uses for the same year were commercial fishing \$128 million, private boating and fishing \$94 million, and research \$19 million. Together, the value of these activities is estimated at close to \$1 billion directly spent and earned in the Great Barrier Reef WHA and adjacent mainland regions (see table 1).

Table 1. Gross Financial Values Great Barrier Reef WHA, 1991-92

Direct Use	Description	Financial value \$ million
Tourism	2.2 million visitors per year	682
Commercial Fishing	Around 16 000 tonnes catch	128
Recreational fishing and boating	24 300 private boats	94
Research	GBRMPA and AIMS	19
Total		923

The second objective of this report is to present financial and economic values of some other Australian protected areas, in order to place the characteristics of the Great Barrier Reef WHA into context. The other protected areas included in this report are the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, Kakadu National Park, Uluru National Park, the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, Kosciuszko National Park, Ningaloo Marine Park and the Solitary Islands Marine Reserve.

The primary purposes of all the protected areas included in this report are nature conservation, conservation of cultural features, and for some, the continuation of contemporary Aboriginal use. In most cases, no measures have been made of the economic values of conservation. Governments responsible for reserving these areas have implicitly judged the economic values arising from the protected area status as greater than the values that could be generated by alternative land use patterns.

Direct uses allowed under legislation and Zoning and Management Plans vary from area to area. Tourism and recreation are the most important direct uses, in terms of financial values generated, in all the protected areas. Other uses include, commercial fishing, research, provision of transport and communications facilities and the provision of water catchment services for hydro-electricity generation and consumption.

Findings for all eight protected areas are summarised in table 2. Financial value information is not available for all uses but it is believed that the major financial values have been included in this report (however the financial values of water catchment services have not been measured, and these may be significant). Financial values for tourism and recreation are shown separately. In some cases, these are order-of-magnitude estimates.

Also listed in table 2 are the management budgets and revenue raised from users for each protected area. All data in the table are for 1991-92.

Table 2. Gross Financial Values, Management Budgets and Revenue from Users 1991-92

	Tourism and recreation*	Other uses measured value**	Total measured value***	Manage- ment Budget	Revenue from users
	\$ million	\$ million	\$ million	\$ million	\$ million
Great Barrier Reef WHA.	776	147	923	18.1	0.75
Wet Tropics WHA.	377	25	402	12.1	0.30
Kakadu National Park.	122	not available	122	10.8	1.02
Uluru National Park.	38	not available	38	2.9	1.85
Tasmanian WHA.	59	0.2	59	4.8	0.20
Kosciusko National Park.	640	not available	640	11.4	10.85
Ningaloo Marine Park.	not available	not available	not available	0.5	nil
Solitary Islands Marine Reserve	not available	not available	not available	<0.5	nil
Total	1918	262	2174	61	14.97

* Gross expenditure by tourists and recreational visitors.

**Gross revenue. These include only values able to be measured.

***These include only values able to be measured.

The total measured financial value was over \$2.1 billion. This is a significant amount of economic activity, dependant on the natural resources of these protected areas. The Great Barrier Reef WHA contributed 42 per cent of this value, the largest amount for the protected areas studied. This arises from the significant tourism and recreation activity and the fact that the Great Barrier Reef WHA supports a sizeable commercial fishery.

Expenditure on tourism and recreation for the eight protected areas combined was significant. It was of the order of \$1.9 billion. This is expenditure made in the protected areas and on accommodation and expenses in adjacent regions associated with visiting the protected areas. It does not include the cost of travel from other parts of Australia or overseas.

Government expenditure on management of these protected areas combined was of the order of \$61 million in 1991-92, and the study reveals this is three per cent of tourist expenditure. This study did not investigate the adequacy of funding for management.

Revenue raised directly from visitors for park management was of the order of \$15 million in 1991-92, and this was less than one per cent of all expenditure by visitors. The relatively

small amount of revenue generated for park management points to a potential to capture more tourist expenditure for park management.

The report draws on published information and available unpublished information. No new data was collected for this report. Financial and economic values have been measured for the major uses of some of the protected areas. In other cases, order-of-magnitude estimates of financial values of major uses have been made for this report.

Financial values are the measurable flows of dollars generated by human use of the resources through industries including tourism and commercial fishing and expenditure on private recreation and research. The financial values reported are gross expenditure by tourists and recreational users, gross expenditure on research and gross revenue to commercial fishing and other extracted products. All activities which generate financial values have 'multiplier effects' or 'flow-on' financial values to other sectors of the economy.

Economic values measure the net benefits to society of resource uses. Economic values include those values of conservation of natural and cultural heritage that do not generate dollar values because they are not traded in markets. There is presently a paucity of economic information on non-market values of protected areas.

It is important to point out that the financial values reported are in almost all cases gross financial values. These really give no idea of the magnitude of any unpriced environmental costs arising as a consequence of producing these values or the sustainability of the level of production. For this reason, resource managers should treat financial values as important indicators of the magnitude of activities, but as less important than economic values as information for resource management decisions.