

Technical Information Sheet - Introduction

>> Representative Areas Program background and history

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What you should know

It is clear that the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (Marine Park) is under pressure from the increasing impacts of coastal development, agriculture, pastoralism, shipping, tourism and fishing. In some areas, the effect is of particular concern. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) has a comprehensive suite of management arrangements in place. However, more needs to be done.

Currently, less than 5% of the Marine Park is in Green Zones, sometimes called no-take areas. The GBRMPA considers the current level of protection of the Marine Park to be insufficient and incomplete, because the focus was limited to threatened species, high-profile habitats like coral reefs, and unspoiled areas in remote localities. Without an increase in the number and scale of Green Zones in the Marine Park, this unique Australian icon could be irreparably damaged.

To take some of the pressure off, the GBRMPA is planning to further protect the Marine Park. However, we now intend to take a different and more complete approach by protecting examples of the entire range of the Marine Park's biodiversity (that is, examples of the immense variety of all the plants and animals, the places they live and the natural processes that keep them alive).

To do this, the GBRMPA is implementing the **Representative Areas Program** which, put simply, is a more systematic way to protect examples of all the Marine Park's biodiversity. This means more Green Zones. Everyone is able to access Green Zones and activities such as boating, snorkelling and diving are allowed; all types of fishing, including trawling, and all collecting and extractive activities are prohibited.

To implement the Representative Areas Program, the GBRMPA needs to rezone the entire Marine Park. Current zones, such as General Use Zones ('Blue' Zones), will remain but more 'Green' Zones will be identified. To rezone the Marine Park, the GBRMPA must consult with interested stakeholders and the public and take into consideration all comments provided in either of the two formal community participation phases. As far as possible, the GBRMPA will try to reflect your views and the views of the local and wider communities when producing a draft zoning plan.

You will have further opportunities during the Representative Areas Program to provide more comments, such as commenting on the draft zoning plan, before any existing zoning plans are changed.

We have provided this technical data booklet for those who want more indepth scientific data or planning details. It is not essential reading.

If you need more information after reading this booklet, please contact the Representative Areas team at the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority on (07) 4750 0700.