
4 APPLICATIONS FOR ACCELERATED RECOLONISATION

There are many circumstances under which the accelerated recolonisation of damaged coral communities might be desirable. Such techniques would generally be applied to reefs frequently utilised for recreational activities (diving, snorkelling, fishing, reef walking) and in particular to reef areas that are the basis for commercial coral viewing or reef interpretative activities. Several examples of cases where accelerated coral regrowth might be desirable are:

1. In areas where coral viewing, glass bottom boats, or reef walking occurs and the coral community is damaged or even naturally depauperate, it could be desirable to increase coral cover to provide an aesthetic reef experience for tourists who pay for such activities.
2. The process of construction of tourist facilities might cause localised damage to the reef community to which the facility was providing access. The rapid recovery of these reef areas would be desirable.
3. If commercial activities (dredging, blasting, release of potential pollutants) damage reef communities, especially where the damage is the result of negligence or poor management, then the responsible agent might take steps to accelerate the return of the community to a healthy state, in a process similar to reforestation programs following mining.

The primary means by which coral regrowth could be accelerated is by transplanting corals from nearby areas with good coral cover. This process is discussed in chapter 5. Other options are theoretically possible but generally impractical, and these are mentioned in chapter 6.