

# Technical Information Sheet #11

## >> Representative Areas Program background and history

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*The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority is implementing the Representative Areas Program to help ensure better protection of the Marine Park's biodiversity. This will involve a review of the existing zoning throughout the Marine Park. This information sheet is part of a package of materials that help explain various technical elements of the Representative Areas Program and the zoning review.*

### How we currently manage the Great Barrier Reef

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), a statutory authority established by the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*, is the federal agency responsible for overall planning and management of the Marine Park. The GBRMPA reports directly to the Commonwealth Minister for Environment and Heritage.

The GBRMPA goal is 'to provide for the protection, wise use, understanding and enjoyment of the Great Barrier Reef in perpetuity through the care and development of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park'.

GBRMPA's Board comprises a full-time Executive Chair and three part-time members:

- The Hon Virginia Chadwick, Chair of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority;
- Dr Evelyn Scott (appointed to represent the interests of adjacent Aboriginal communities);
- Ms Fay Barker; and
- Dr Leo Keliher (appointed on the nomination of the Queensland Government).

The Commonwealth Government and Queensland Government have a cooperative and integrated approach to management of the Great Barrier Reef, built on an agreement signed in 1979. This agreement also set up the Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Council, comprising two Ministers (Environment and Tourism) from each government.

The GBRMPA's staff are mainly based in Townsville and the agency is structured with the specific aim of focusing on four critical issues:

- water quality and coastal development;
- fisheries;
- tourism and recreation; and
- conservation, biodiversity and World Heritage.

Field-based, day-to-day management (DDM) of the Marine Park is jointly funded by both governments and conducted primarily by Queensland agencies within programs and guidelines approved by the Authority. DDM activities include enforcement, surveillance, monitoring and education, as well as the management of adjacent Queensland Marine Parks and island National Parks. The primary Queensland agency involved with day-to-day management is the Queensland Environment Protection Agency.

Other agencies that also assist in the management of the Marine Park include:

#### **Commonwealth government agencies:**

- Coastwatch;
- Customs National Marine Unit;
- Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA);
- Department of Defence; and
- Environment Australia.

**Queensland Government Agencies:**

- Queensland Boating & Fisheries Patrol (QBFP);
- Queensland Water Police (QWP);
- Queensland Fisheries Service (QFS); and
- Queensland Department of Transport (QDoT).

The Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area was declared in 1981. Today the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park comprises 99.25% of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area with the balance being islands under Queensland jurisdiction (most of these are national parks), State waters and internal waters of Queensland (many of which are State Marine Parks) and a number of small exclusions around ports and urban centres.

The *25-Year Strategic Plan for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area* was developed in 1994 and the primary legislation for managing the World Heritage Area is the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

The GBRMPA is working with Queensland agencies to ensure that any new planning for State Marine Parks is complementary to the Representative Areas Program.

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