

4 STUDY AREAS

4.1 Areas excluded from GBRMP

The project objective was to identify sources of carbonate sediments and deposits of silica and quartzose sands that are located within or adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef Region, but not within the GBRMP. Thus a preliminary step in the site selection procedure was to determine those areas of the Queensland coastline that have been excluded from the Marine Park.

When the Marine Park was established, a number of areas along the mainland coastline were excluded. Generally these extend to 5 km offshore and delimit areas considered to be of lesser environmental significance and/or potentially important development or harbour sites. The 26 areas that have been excluded from the Park cover approximately 1400 km, which is 40% of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park coastline. They are summarised in Table 1.

GBRMP Section	Number of areas excluded	Length of coastline	% of Section coastline excluded
Far Northern	11	197 km	23%
Cairns	3	335 km	62%
Central	7	328 km	36%
Mackay/Capricorn	5	533 km	46%
TOTAL	26	1386 km	40%) of GBR Region
TOTAL (accessible)	13	1189 km	51%) coastline

Table 1. Coastal areas excluded from GBRMP

The Far Northern Section areas and the two northernmost areas in the Cairns Section are largely inaccessible and have not been investigated in the field. The 13 areas excluded from the Cairns, Central, and Mackay/Capricorn sections of the Marine Park were the primary field areas assessed in this study.

4.2 Jurisdiction

The situation with respect to mining in the GBRMP is essentially quite simple as it cannot be allowed under the terms of the GBRMP Act. Outside the Park the situation is rather more complex. While mining is not specifically prohibited, many other organisations are able to exercise controls over the extraction of carbonate, silica and quartzose sediments from areas of the coastal zone within their jurisdiction.

Shire and City Councils have jurisdiction to high water mark, but not over the foreshore or intertidal lands. In areas gazetted as ports and harbours, Port Authorities or the Harbours Corporation have jurisdiction over tidal lands up to the level of the high water mark. In addition, recovery of sands from the seabed or tidal reaches of river channels is under the control of the Department of Harbours and Marine. Non-tidal river channel areas are under the control of the Water Resources Commission. Marine Parks, managed by the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Environment and Heritage, extend up to high water mark. Other intertidal lands are administered by the Premier's Department. The Queensland Beach Protection Authority has declared a number of Coastal Management Control Districts (CMCD) and has prepared Erosion Prone Area Plans for all the Local Authorities in the study area.

These jurisdictions are summarised in Table 2.

GBRMP Section	Shires	Cities	Port Autho- rities	Harbours Corpo- ration Ports	CMCD Number/ Length of coastline	Qld Marine Park Length of coastline
Cairns	3	1	1	4	2/47 km	170 km
Central	5	2	1	3	2/110 km	35 km
Mackay/Capricorn	7	2	3	3	7/137 km	244 km
TOTAL	15	5	5	10	11/294 km	449 km

Table 2. Summary of Local and Statutory Authorities and Queensland Marine Parks covering areas excluded from GBRMP

In addition, the Queensland Department of Primary Industries licenses the taking of Marine Products from Queensland waters (see below, Section 5.1).

4.3 Other sites investigated

Three sites well outside the GBR Region were also investigated. These were the coral sediment dredging operations in Moreton Bay, a coral cay in Flinders Reefs 240 km north-east of Townsville, and a coral cay on Holmes Reefs, 220 km east-north-east of Cairns.