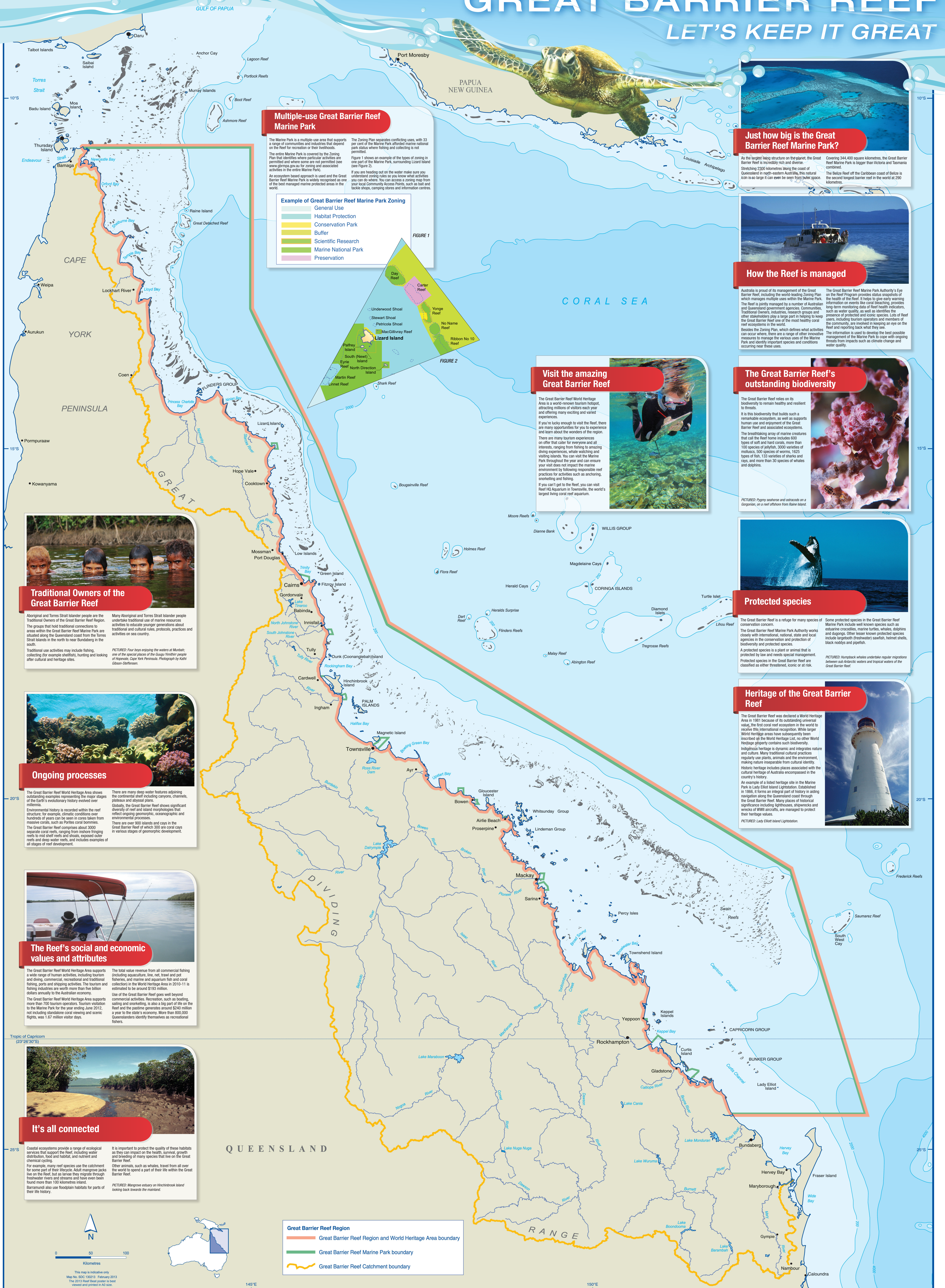


# REEF Beat THE AMAZING GREAT BARRIER REEF

LET'S KEEP IT GREAT



## Multiple-use Great Barrier Reef Marine Park

The Marine Park is a multiple-use area that supports a range of communities and industries that depend on the Reef for recreation or their livelihoods. The entire Marine Park is covered by the Zoning Plan that identifies where particular activities are permitted and where some are not permitted (see www.gbrmpa.gov.au for zoning and associated activities in the entire Marine Park). An ecosystem based approach is used and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is widely recognised as one of the best managed marine protected areas in the world.

- Example of Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning**
- General Use
  - Habitat Protection
  - Conservation Park
  - Buffer
  - Scientific Research
  - Marine National Park
  - Preservation

The Zoning Plan separates conflicting uses, with 33 per cent of the Marine Park afforded marine national park status where fishing and collecting is not permitted. Figure 1 shows an example of the types of zoning in one part of the Marine Park, surrounding Lizard Island (see Figure 2). If you are heading out on the water make sure you understand zoning rules so you know what activities you can do where. You can access a zoning map from your local Community Access Point, such as bait and tackle shops, camping stores and information centres.



## Just how big is the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park?

As the largest living structure on the planet, the Great Barrier Reef is incredibly rich and diverse. Stretching 2300 kilometres along the coast of Queensland in north-eastern Australia, this natural icon is so large it can even be seen from outer space. Covering 344,400 square kilometres, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is bigger than Victoria and Tasmania combined. The Belize Reef off the Caribbean coast of Belize is the second longest barrier reef in the world at 200 kilometres.

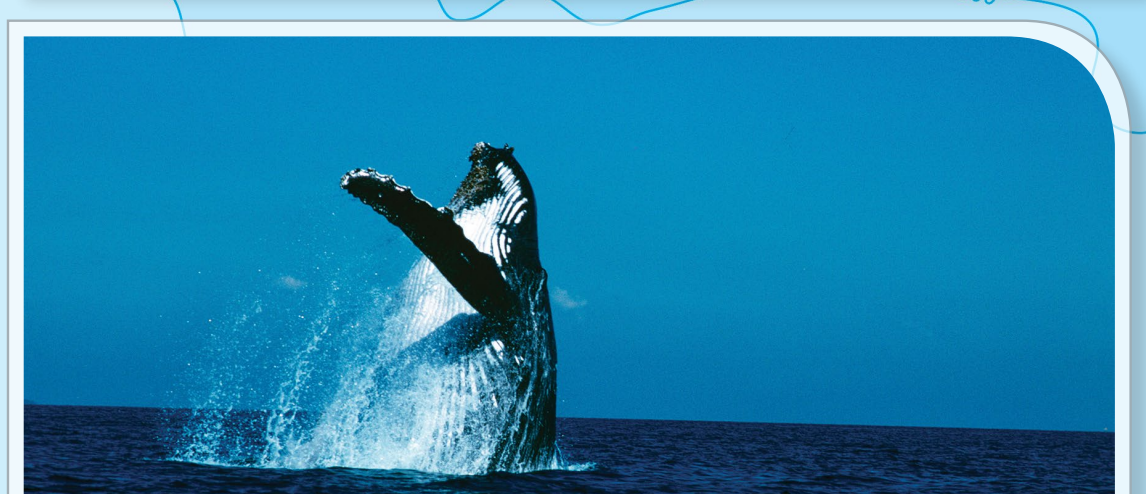


## How the Reef is managed

Australia is proud of its management of the Great Barrier Reef, including the world-leading Zoning Plan which manages multiple uses within the Marine Park. The Reef is jointly managed by a number of Australian and Queensland government agencies, Communities, Traditional Owners, industries, research groups and other stakeholders play a large part in helping to keep the Great Barrier Reef one of the most healthy coral reef ecosystems in the world. Besides the Zoning Plan, which defines what activities can occur where, there are a range of other innovative measures to manage the various uses of the Marine Park and identify important species and conditions occurring near these uses. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Eye on the Reef Program provides status snapshots of the health of the Reef. It helps to give early warning information on events like coral bleaching, provides long-term monitoring data of Reef health indicators, such as water quality, as well as identifies the presence of protected and iconic species. Lots of Reef users, including tourism operators and members of the community, are involved in keeping an eye on the Reef and reporting back what they see. The information is used to develop the best possible management of the Marine Park to cope with ongoing threats from impacts such as climate change and water quality.

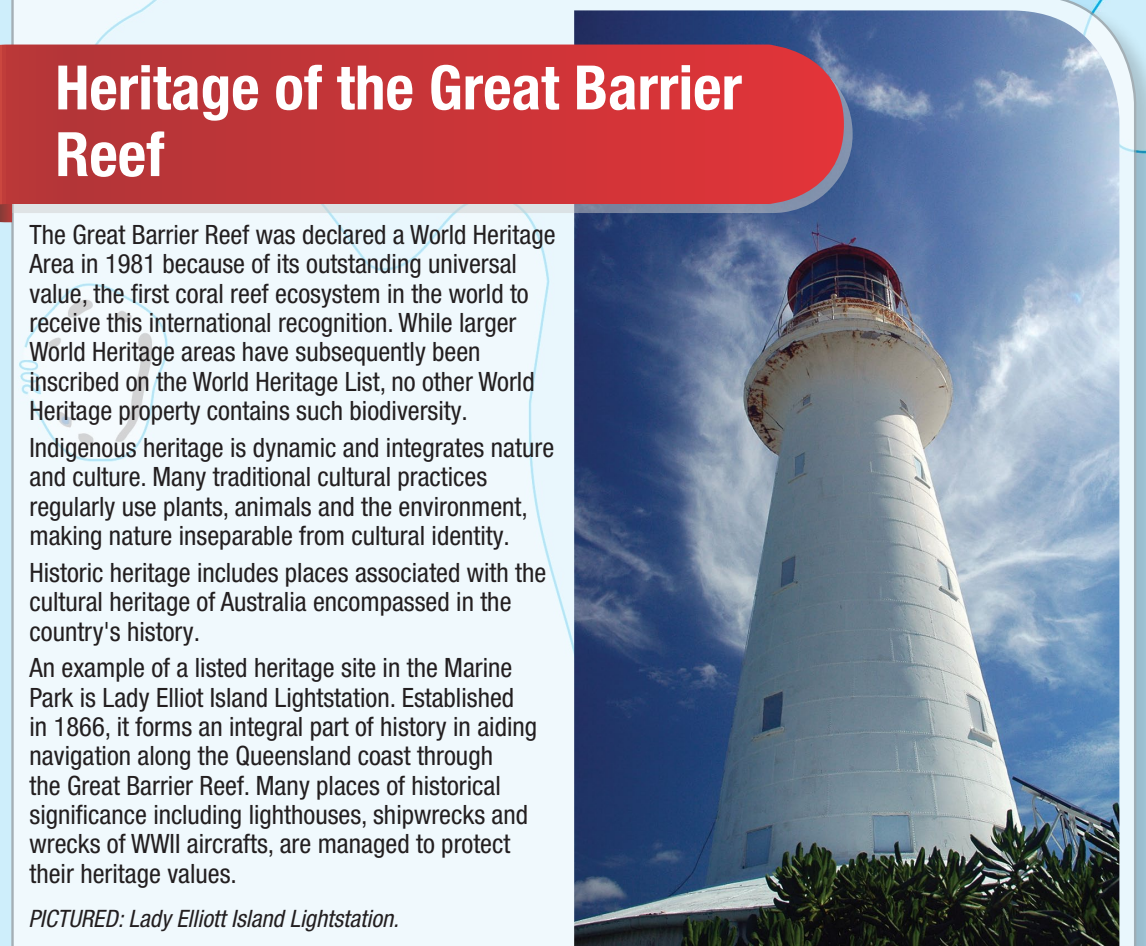
## The Great Barrier Reef's outstanding biodiversity

The Great Barrier Reef relies on its biodiversity to remain healthy and resilient to threats. It is this biodiversity that builds such a remarkable ecosystem, as well as supports human use and enjoyment of the Great Barrier Reef and associated ecosystems. The breathtaking array of marine creatures that call the Reef home includes 600 types of soft and hard corals, more than 100 species of jellyfish, 2000 varieties of molluscs, 200 species of worms, 1625 types of fish, 133 varieties of sharks and rays, and more than 30 species of whales and dolphins. PICTURED: Pigmy seahorse and octopus on a Gorgonian on a reef offshore from Cairns Island.



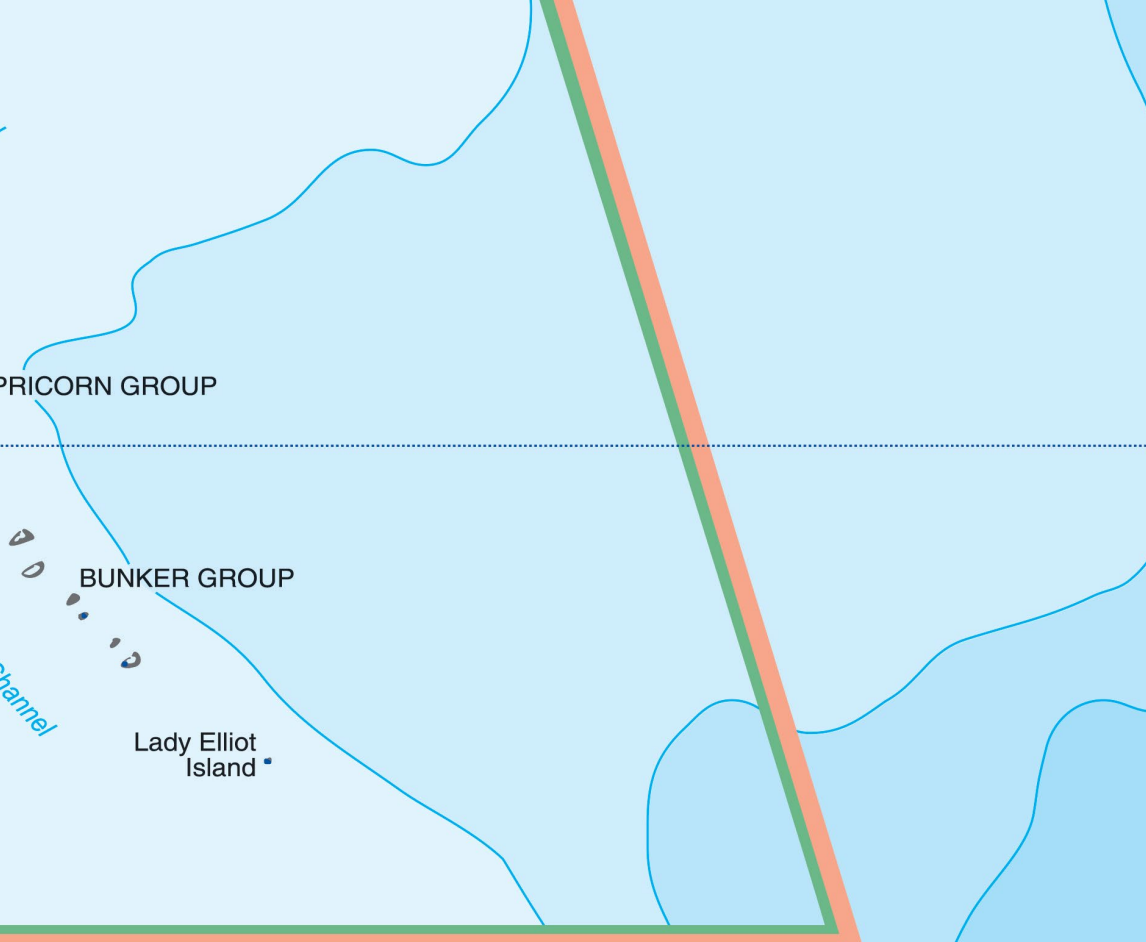
## Protected species

The Great Barrier Reef is a refuge for many species of conservation concern. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority works closely with international, national, state and local agencies in the conservation and protection of biodiversity and protected species. A protected species is a plant or animal that is protected by law and needs special management. Protected species in the Great Barrier Reef are classified as either threatened, iconic or at risk. Some protected species in the Great Barrier Reef include estuarine crocodiles, marine turtles, whales, dolphins and dugongs. Other lesser known protected species include largemouth (freshwater) sawfish, helmet shells, black noddies and pipitfish. PICTURED: Humpback whales undertake regular migrations between sub-Antarctic waters and tropical waters of the Great Barrier Reef.



## Heritage of the Great Barrier Reef

The Great Barrier Reef was declared a World Heritage Area in 1981 because of its outstanding universal value, the first coral reef ecosystem in the world to receive this international recognition. While larger World Heritage areas have subsequently been inscribed on the World Heritage List, no other World Heritage property contains such biodiversity. Indigenous heritage is dynamic and integrates nature and culture. Many traditional cultural practices regularly use plants, animals and the environment, making nature inseparable from cultural identity. Historic heritage includes places associated with the cultural heritage of Australia encompassed in the country's history. An example of a listed heritage site in the Marine Park is Lady Elliot Island Lighthouse. Established in 1886, it forms an integral part of history in aiding navigation along the Queensland coast through the Great Barrier Reef. Many places of historical significance including lighthouses, shipwrecks and remnants of WWII airfields, are managed to protect their heritage values. PICTURED: Lady Elliot Island Lighthouse.



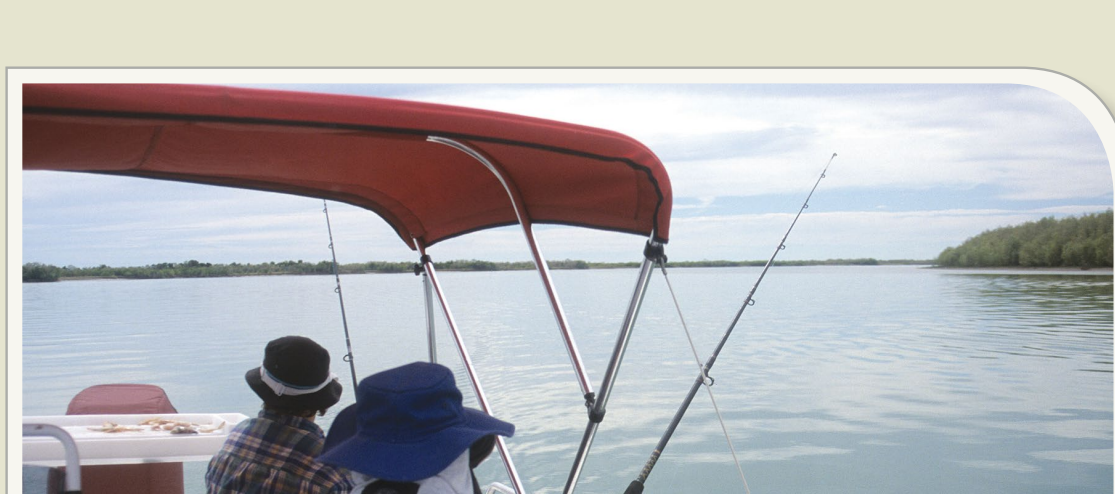
## Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef Region. The groups that hold traditional connections to areas within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park are situated along the Queensland coast from the Torres Strait Islands in the north to near Bundaberg in the south. Traditional use activities may include fishing, collecting (for example shellfish), hunting and looking after cultural and heritage sites. PICTURED: Four boys enjoying the waters at Musabai, one of the special islands of the Gugu/Minjari people of Arnhemland, Cape York Peninsula. Photograph by Kathy Gibson-Stammers.



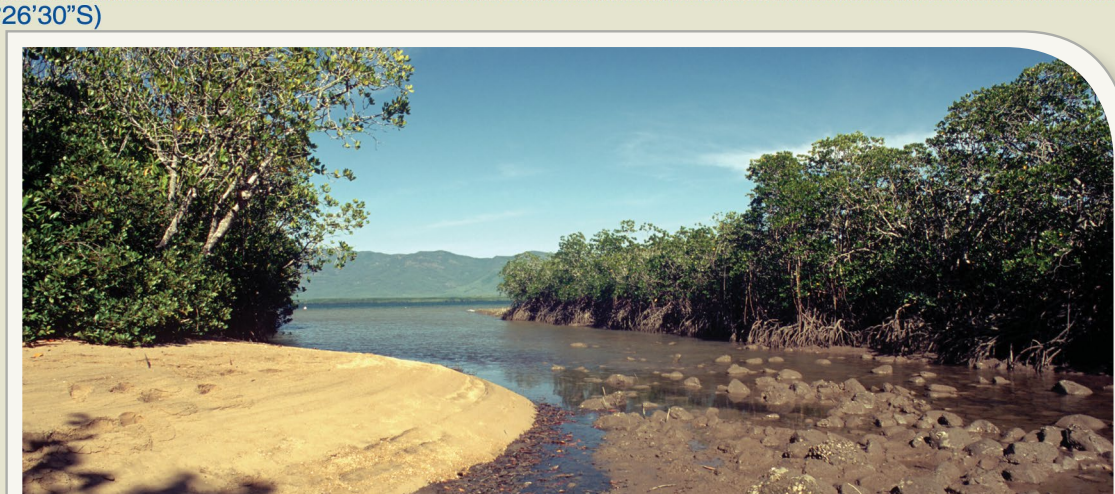
## Ongoing processes

The Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area shows outstanding examples representing the major stages of the Earth's evolutionary history over millions of years. Globally, the Great Barrier Reef shows significant diversity of reef and island morphologies that reflect ongoing geomorphic, oceanographic and environmental processes. There are over 900 islands and cays in the Great Barrier Reef of which 300 are coral cays in various stages of geomorphic development. There are many deep water features adjoining the continental shelf including canyons, channels, plateaux and abyssal plains. PICTURED: Aerial view of the Great Barrier Reef showing its diverse coral structures and islands.



## The Reef's social and economic values and attributes

The Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area supports a wide range of human activities, including tourism and diving, commercial, recreational and traditional fishing, ports and shipping activities. The tourism and fishing industries are worth more than five billion dollars annually to the Australian economy. The total value revenue from all commercial fishing (including aquaculture, line, net, trawl and pot fisheries, and marine and aquaculture fish and coral collection) in the World Heritage Area in 2010-11 is estimated to be around \$193 million. Use of the Great Barrier Reef goes well beyond commercial activities. Recreation, such as boating, sailing and snorkelling, is also a big part of life on the Reef and the pastime generates around \$240 million a year to the state's economy. More than 800,000 Queenslanders identify themselves as recreational fishers. PICTURED: A boat with people on the water, likely engaged in recreational fishing or boating.



## It's all connected

Coastal ecosystems provide a range of ecological services that support the Reef, including water distribution, food and habitat, and nutrient and chemical cycling. For example, many reef species use the catchment for some part of their lifecycle. Adult mangrove jacks live on the Reef, but as larvae they migrate through freshwater rivers and streams and have even been found more than 100 kilometres inland. Barramundi also use floodplain habitats for parts of their life history. It is important to protect the quality of these habitats as they can impact on the health, survival, growth and breeding of many species that live on the Great Barrier Reef. Other animals, such as whales, travel from all over the world to spend a part of their life within the Great Barrier Reef. PICTURED: Mangrove estuary on Hinchbrook Island looking back towards the mainland.

