



Australian Government
Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority



Queensland
Government

16

FIELD MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

ANNUAL

REPORT

S U M M A R Y



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dedicated field officers are essential for protecting the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, which stretches 2300 kilometres along the Queensland coast. With more than 2900 reefs and 1050 islands – home to iconic plants, animals, habitats and rich cultural heritage – there's plenty of vital field work to do in this World Heritage Area.

These field officers are part of the Australian and Queensland governments' joint Field Management Program, which operates in the Commonwealth Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and Queensland Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park, plus on Commonwealth islands and Queensland island national parks.

The joint program provides a constant, in-park presence; delivering practical conservation actions, checking for change, responding to incidents, welcoming people and upholding compliance across the far reaches of the World Heritage Area.

In essence, our field management actions provide the safety net for the Reef to ensure all Australians and international visitors benefit now and into the future.

Patrolling the waters and islands of the World Heritage Area, the joint Field Management Program delivers a range of crucial activities. These include monitoring internationally-important turtle and seabird breeding islands, eliminating island pests, and developing walking tracks, camping areas and lookouts.

In-water activities include installing reef protection markers and moorings, and surveying reefs to help us understand and manage the impact of cyclones, crown-of-thorns starfish and bleaching on our coral ecosystems.

Field management officers interact regularly with Reef and island stakeholders and the broader community, providing information to park users and ensuring they abide by the rules. Across the World Heritage Area, the joint Field Management Program helps Traditional Owners manage their land and sea country and encourages communities and industries to help protect the Reef and islands.

Field management activities are at the heart of Australia's obligation to protect the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. For almost 40 years they have been the essential component of an agreement between the Australian and Queensland governments, which work together for long-term protection of the Reef. There are also longer-term initiatives underway to address external threats, such as climate change and poor water quality from the Reef catchment.

In 2016–17 a Periodic Review Report of the joint Field Management Program was completed and presented to the Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Forum in July 2017. This report reviewed the joint program's performance since 2011 and its capacity to deliver future investment priorities to 2021. The review identified that the program delivers outstanding value for money compared to other national and international jurisdictions similarly engaged in coral reef management. However, it identified the inevitable decline of field management activity without budget intervention. This comes at a time when threats to the World Heritage Area are increasing in volume and severity at a concerning rate.

The Australian and Queensland governments agreed to investigate budget opportunities for additional funding across five years. Budget opportunities will be considered in 2017–18 to achieve key field activities identified in the *Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan* and the *Reef 2050 Plan Investment Framework*.

This document summarises the joint Field Management Program's 2016–17 achievements and complements the *Field Management Annual Report 2016–17*.



2016–17 FINANCE SUMMARY

The Australian and Queensland governments allocated combined funds of \$17,532,000 in 2016–17 to manage the 348,000 square-kilometre World Heritage Area.

This included an additional \$788,000 in joint indexation funding to prevent further declines in service delivery experienced under static funding. The available funds increased to \$20,652,446 with the help of carryover funds, increased revenue, insurance claims and other funding sources.

The Australian Government provided an additional discretionary contribution of \$1,195,000 in 2016–17 towards construction of a large open-ocean vessel to replace *Reef Heron*. A further \$4,690,000 and \$74,000 will be provided in 2017–18 and 2018–19 respectively. The Australian and Queensland governments have agreed to provide additional joint operating funds to maximise the new vessel's time at sea, starting with \$857,644 in 2018–19. The new vessel will enter service early in 2019.

The joint Field Management Program also received funding from other sources that contributed to field delivery, including Queensland Government funding for new moorings and reef protection markers as part of the Significant Regional Infrastructure Projects Program; a contribution from the Great Barrier Reef Foundation for coral bleaching surveys, and offset funding for Queensland and Australian government approvals.

At the start of 2016–17, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority held funds of \$1,224,214, which included previous years' carryovers. Following the release of the *Queensland Sustainable Fishing Strategy 2017–2027*, \$1,200,000 of these funds were provided to the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. This will support the implementation of vessel monitoring systems on all commercial fishing vessels operating in priority fisheries in the World Heritage Area by 2018, consistent with the *Field Management Business Strategy 2017 to 2021*.

Expenditure was within one per cent of available funds, excluding the held over commitment to 2017–18 of \$1,177,762 from the \$1,195,000 Australian Government discretionary contribution. At the end of 2016–17, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service held funds of \$1,274,185 and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority held funds of \$73,349 on behalf of the joint Field Management Program.

The joint Field Management Program has five core priorities that aim to maintain the outstanding universal value of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, and enhance the economic, recreational and traditional uses of the Great Barrier Reef.

RANGERS ON PATROL




PROVIDING A REEF SAFETY NET



Reef Ranger vessel spent 266 days at sea travelling 27,794 kilometres, a distance equivalent to half way around the world



DELIVERING PRACTICAL CONSERVATION ACTIONS

SAVING ADULT TURTLES
 **150m**
 TOTAL FENCING NOW 1150M to stop nesting green turtles falling over rocky ledges 
 182 exhausted nesting turtles rescued and returned to the water 

ERADICATING PESTS
 WORLD-FIRST ERADICATION OF **AFRICAN BIG-HEADED ANTS** on Tryon Island 

MAINTAINING HEALTHY ISLANDS
 **9 PLANNED BURNS**
 OVER 1700HA
 Containment of 2 wildfires on Curtis Island

PROTECTING SEABIRDS
 PEST CONTROL FOR SAFER HABITAT AT SHOALWATER BAY 
 Silver gull control reduces chick predation at Capricornia Cays

CHECKING FOR CHANGE

ENSURING EARLY DETECTION

1070 IN-WATER SURVEYS MONITOR **CROWN-OF-THORNS STARFISH** OVER 212KM

KEEPING TABS ON SEABIRDS
199 BIRD SURVEYS 
 identify first successful breeding of **ENDANGERED HERALD PETRELS** on Raine Island since 1982

BETTER MARINE HABITAT KNOWLEDGE
 **10** subtidal seagrass sampling sites fill gaps in the **MARINE MONITORING PROGRAM**

ISLAND WATCHING
50 SURVEYS OF REMOTE ISLANDS 
 new pest **pharaoh ant** on Bell Cay targeted for eradication

PROTECTING HISTORIC BUILDINGS
MONITORING CONDITION on 3 Commonwealth and 3 national park islands 

WELCOMING PEOPLE

EDUCATING USERS
75,490 ZONING MAPS DISTRIBUTED 
 - 1651 on-water public contacts
 - 700,000 Facebook reach
 - 1.4 million reached via media releases

HELPING BOATIES PROTECT CORAL & SEAGRASS
 **147 PUBLIC MOORINGS** AND 170 REEF PROTECTION MARKERS

ENCOURAGING LOCAL STEWARDSHIP
 Volunteers respond to 58% of marine strandings 

HELPING MANAGE COUNTRY TRADITIONAL OWNERS
 SPENT **420** DAYS ON FIELD MANAGEMENT VESSELS

MAINTAINING SUSTAINABLE USE DECISIONS MADE ON: 
360 joint marine parks
43 state marine park
51 island national park permits

UPHOLDING COMPLIANCE

PROTECTING REEF SPECIES
 674 dedicated compliance patrol days deter illegal activity 

INDUSTRY STEWARDSHIP 
13 commercial fishing vessels voluntarily trial monitoring devices

IMPOSING CONSEQUENCES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HARM
 905 possible offences lead to **32** court prosecutions, **43** infringement notices, **88** caution notices, **411** advisory letters, **14** warning notices

RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS

UNDERSTANDING REEF HEALTH 
 663 SURVEYS ASSESS EXTENT AND SEVERITY OF 2016 CORAL BLEACHING
 259 surveys assess damage from Cyclone Debbie

RESTORING CYCLONE DEBBIE DAMAGED VISITOR SITES
90% OF CAMPGROUNDS AND DAY-USE AREAS
 & **30% OF WALKING TRACKS** 
 reopen for Easter

PROTECTING ENVIRONMENTS
 Mitigating risk associated with **134 vessel events**, including **65 groundings** and **29 sinkings**




2016–2017 HIGHLIGHTS



MARINE AND ISLAND CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

The joint Field Management Program delivered a range of activities to help maintain and improve the condition of the Reef and islands. These conservation actions help protect marine habitats, island habitats and vulnerable species, and restore ecosystems to their natural state.

REEF SURVEYS

Field management officers conducted 1943 reef health and impact surveys across 129 reefs in 2016–17. They also completed 1070 in-water surveys to detect crown-of-thorns starfish across 12 reefs and approximately 212 kilometres. When combined with regular localised tourism operator surveys and reactive agency surveys, these field management surveys produce a reef-wide picture of the Great Barrier Reef's condition.

RAINE ISLAND RECOVERY PROJECT

The joint Field Management Program continued adaptation work, with 73 days spent on Raine Island. Field management officers fenced off an additional 150 metres of rock ledge and eroded areas to stop nesting green turtles falling over rocky edges, and to guide them back towards the beach on a safe path. There is now 1150 metres of fencing.

They also rescued and returned over 180 stranded female green turtles to the water, allowing them to return and lay more turtle eggs. International and national experts attended a Turtle Nesting Environment Summit to evaluate results of sand reprofiling work done in 2014, assess factors causing egg mortality, and determine research priorities to inform future management activity.

SEABIRD MONITORING

The joint Field Management Program completed a total of 199 bird surveys in 120 locations in 2016–17, the second full year of monitoring under the *Coastal Bird Monitoring and Information Strategy 2015–2020*. These surveys confirmed the first breeding of endangered Herald petrels on Raine Island since 1982 and identified a previously unrecorded dark phase of Herald petrel.

They also identified 1930 little terns at Shoalwater Bay, the largest number ever recorded in the World Heritage Area. Shoalwater Bay also supports stable numbers of vulnerable western Alaskan bar-tailed godwits — a species that is showing declines elsewhere — as well as 10 per cent of the east Asian–Australian flyway population of whimbrel.

Trials of alternative seabird monitoring methods, such as acoustic sensors and drones, are underway at a number of islands, from Raine Island in the far north to the Capricornia Cays in the south. These suggest the potential for more efficient and effective collection of data. Further trials have begun to confirm suitability for different species and island environments.

PEST MANAGEMENT

Targeted conservation management actions continued during 2016–17 to protect the natural integrity of priority island locations and reduce disturbance and predation of vulnerable species.

The joint Field Management Program delivered 16 pest, plant and animal projects to control pests like pigs, foxes, dogs, ants, cattle, goats, silver gulls, lantana and Guinea grass. Monitoring is underway to confirm the eradication of pigs on Dunk Island and goats on High Peak Island — goat eradication is also close on St Bees and Orpheus islands. Comprehensive monitoring has confirmed a world-first island eradication of African big-headed ants on Tryon Island.

BIOSECURITY

Introduced pests are a significant threat to World Heritage Area islands and prevention is far more effective and efficient than eradication. New biosecurity initiatives will help prevent pests arriving and establishing on islands.

The joint Field Management Program is working with research stations, resorts and commercial vessel operators to encourage and support them in developing quarantine procedures, checking vessels and freight for pest stowaways, and educating visitors about pests. Brochures, video clips and webpages have been produced to inform World Heritage Area visitors about actions they can take to keep islands pest free.

A new pest incursion of pharaoh ants was also identified on Bell Cay. The source of introduction is unknown, but the joint program is monitoring the impact on seabirds and planning eradication of the pest ant.



INCIDENT RESPONSE

Field management officers respond quickly to environmental incidents such as oil or pollution spills, grounded vessels, stranded marine animals, wildfire, coral bleaching, pest species invasions, and cyclone and flood damage to ecosystems and infrastructure.

In 2016–17, the joint Field Management Program assessed the risks associated with 134 vessel events in the World Heritage Area. These events had the potential to cause environmental damage, and included 12 spills, 65 groundings and 29 sinkings. Assessment resulted in seven official Order to Remove notices and field response to 35 incidents, which included five site assessments of damage. Sixteen of the 134 events involved vessels over 50 metres in length, including two over 100 metres.

A draft Great Barrier Reef Incident Management Framework was developed to guide the joint Field Management Program in preparing for and responding to incidents; the framework will be finalised in 2017–18.

CORAL BLEACHING

The back-to-back mass coral bleaching in 2016 and 2017 is considered to be the most serious event to impact the World Heritage Area.

The joint Field Management Program played a key role in determining the extent of mortality caused by the 2016 event by undertaking 663 reef health and impact surveys. These surveys showed an estimated 29 per cent loss of shallow water coral cover on the Great Barrier Reef, with over 74 per cent lost in the far north.

Opportunistic reef health and impacts surveys were also completed to enhance situational awareness of the 2017

event and support broad scale surveys done by other partners. The Great Barrier Reef Foundation, through the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, supported the delivery of the bleaching surveys by contributing \$85,830.

SEVERE TROPICAL CYCLONE DEBBIE

Cyclone Debbie crossed the Queensland coast near Airlie Beach on Tuesday 28 March 2017 in the upper limits of a Category 4 system. The cyclone significantly impacted the Whitsundays, one of Queensland's most significant tourism areas.

Field management staff responded rapidly, with around 40 rangers deployed locally and from across Queensland to assess damage and start clean up within a day of the cyclone crossing. Collaboration with Maritime Safety Queensland, insurance providers and vessel owners enabled the removal of most of the 97 vessels that sank or grounded, without needing to issue formal notices.

Whitehaven Beach was one of the worst affected visitor sites. Heavy machinery removed fallen trees and debris, producing over 700 cubic metres of mulch, and 10,000 cubic metres of sand was shifted to reinstate the beach profile in areas of highest tourist use. Eighty public moorings and 50 reef protection markers were checked and repairs made to provide safe marine infrastructure.

More than 660 reef health and impacts surveys assessed impacts on fringing reefs and helped tourism operators re-establish popular water-based activities, such as snorkeling and diving. For the first time, marine intervention assisted post cyclone recovery of reefs, with tourist operators righting overturned corals and heavy machinery returning coral bommies to the water to provide structure for fish and coral recruits.



CURTIS ISLAND OFFSETS FUNDING

Field management activity on Curtis Island included enhanced pest management, habitat restoration, fire management, visitor infrastructure, management planning and ranger presence.

Recovery of endangered yellow chat birds continued, with a substantial breeding event of 42 birds, up from 35 in 2015–16. Sustained control of pigs, cattle, foxes and dogs helped improve the condition of the marine plain where yellow chat birds live and breed. Field officers also documented the impact of feral horses on the island's values to inform future management decisions.

Curtis Island residents and visitors will appreciate the new 12-kilometre road in the south of the island, which links Oceanview to Graham Creek. A carpark and boat ramp also provides safe, sustainable visitor access to Graham Creek, which is a popular fishing destination.

Wildfires pose a significant threat to the island's natural and cultural values, and to the Liquid Natural Gas plants. To mitigate this risk, the joint Field Management Program maintained 40 kilometres of firelines and roads to provide safe and effective access in the event of a wildfire. This enabled rapid response to two wildfires in February 2017.

Offset funding from Queensland Government approvals made the above field management activities possible. In 2016–17 the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the Department of Environment and Energy signed a Memorandum of Understanding establishing the arrangements for offset funding from Australian Government approvals. This funding will contribute to field management activities in 2017–18 and beyond.



CULTURAL HERITAGE PROTECTION

The joint Field Management Program manages cultural and Indigenous heritage on island national parks and Commonwealth islands. This includes developing heritage management plans to protect significant sites, and undertaking maintenance and restoration at some locations.

The joint program manages cultural heritage on Dent and Lady Elliot Island in partnership with resort operators who have relevant leases. The lease for Lady Elliot Island has been renewed till 2025, which will enable continued tourism use while protecting the island's heritage. At Low Isles, we recently awarded a two-year contract to a caretaker, who will oversee protection of the island's heritage. This contract has the option of a two-year extension to 2021.




The joint Field Management Program also provides assistance to other government agencies with responsibilities for management of World Heritage Area values, including shipwrecks. Field management staff assisted with underwater cultural heritage site assessments of six shipwrecks in 2016–17, maintained public moorings at the Yongala historic shipwreck and reported the discovery of a shipwreck exposed on a beach north of Yeppoon following severe weather and erosion.

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 Australian Government
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15s



 Millions of visitors each year
 Big, beautiful, diverse
 40 years of management



INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

There are more than 70 Traditional Owner groups with connections to land and sea country between Bundaberg and the eastern Torres Strait Islands. The joint Field Management Program focuses on getting Traditional Owners back on country and engaged in land and sea country management.

Traditional Owners and the Department of National Parks Sport and Racing jointly manage a number of National Parks (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land).

In 2016–17, seven per cent of joint Field Management Program positions were Indigenous-identified and held by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people. Traditional Owners spent 420-person days on field management vessels undertaking activities like examining cultural sites, compliance, pest control, fire management, seabird monitoring, infrastructure maintenance and management planning.

The joint program collaborated with Traditional Owners on all 10 of the Raine Island trips for 2016–17, with Traditional Owners employed as rangers for 146 person days to assist with recovery activity. We also contracted Girringun Land and Sea Rangers under a works and services agreement for a third successful consecutive year to undertake field management activities in the Girringun Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement Area.

Together, Girringun Rangers and field management rangers delivered fire and pest programs, maintained visitor infrastructure, undertook compliance and monitored seabirds and seagrass. The Girringun Rangers also worked with Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol to remove 111 abandoned crab pots in the Hinchinbrook Channel so they no longer posed a threat to marine wildlife.



COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND STEWARDSHIP

For many users, field management officers are the public face of the Australian and Queensland governments' management of the Great Barrier Reef.

Communication with park users is a vital part of encouraging voluntary compliance and maintaining Reef health. The joint Field Management Program recorded 1651 public contact moments while on patrol and distributed more than 75,490 zoning maps. Field management activities have been promoted on social media, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn, reaching thousands of people.

Marine animal stranding training has now been delivered to almost 500 volunteers, including 30 new volunteers trained in 2016–17. Volunteers responded to 58 per cent of marine strandings requiring a response in 2016–17. Volunteer involvement in strandings response has also recently expanded with a change to hotline arrangements so that volunteers may now respond at any time of day, not just outside office hours.

The joint program developed and trialed new communication and education to combat growing recreational fishing complacency and negligence. These products targeted recreational fishers, and incorporated strong compliance messaging, information on offence hotspots, advice about penalty increases, educational information about zoning benefits and encouragement for reporting illegal activity. A dedicated trial of the new strategies in Cairns reached a wide audience, with 1784 stickers and 4137 business cards distributed, a social media reach of 27,242, a television reach of 386,000 and print media reach of around 1.4 million people.



RECREATION AND TOURISM FACILITIES

The joint Field Management Program provides visitor facilities that support a vibrant tourism industry and a broad range of recreational users, while minimising visitor impacts. Regular inspections and appropriate maintenance of these facilities is a priority.

The joint program installed 20 new public moorings and 25 new reef protection markers in 2016–17 to protect coral and seagrass habitats from anchor damage, and to provide safe, sustainable visitor use. We serviced marine facilities to a high standard, with 95 per cent of 147 public moorings and 95 per cent of 170 reef protection markers operational in the World Heritage Area.

There were also new and improved island visitor opportunities, with road upgrades on Curtis Island, Henry Lawson's walking trail and Arthur Bay access track on Magnetic Island, and replacement of the main beach boardwalk at Green Island.

Funding from the joint Field Management Program, Curtis Island offset funding and additional Queensland Government funding made these new and improved facilities possible.



PLANNING AND ASSESSMENTS

The joint Field Management Program contributes to complementary planning and permitting across marine parks and national park jurisdictions. The established and respected joint assessment and permit framework is a critical component of successful complementary permitting.

ASSESSMENTS AND PERMITS

The joint program helped to improve the established permit framework through two projects: the enhancing permissions system project and permits online project,

both led by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. These improvements will deliver a more efficient, effective and timely joint permit system.

In 2016–17 the joint program assessed and made decisions on 360 Commonwealth and Queensland marine parks permits, 43 Queensland marine park permits, 51 national park permits and four commercial activity agreements to enable sustainable use of the World Heritage Area.

Permit compliance is also an important part of the joint permitting framework and ensures permitted use is sustainable. Checking that activities are taking place as permitted minimises environmental harm and impacts on other park users.

Field management officers supervised a range of permitted works and events to minimise potential environmental harm, including mooring and pontoon installations, dredging, beach protection works and competitive events. The joint Field Management Program also completed vessel and aerial compliance patrols, encouraged voluntary compliance, did multi-agency field audits, and took appropriate action to deal with unpermitted activities.

PLANNING

The *Hinchinbrook Island National Park Management Plan 2017* and *Hinchinbrook Island National Park Visitor Strategy 2017* were completed. The management plan is the first plan developed and gazetted under the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing's new values-based management framework. An Assessment and Monitoring Strategy has also been prepared for the national park.

Field management officers did health checks of Hinchinbrook Island's key values to monitor condition and trend. They also undertook value assessments of Raine, Magnetic, Green and Fitzroy islands and Capricornia Cays as part of the new framework.

The joint Field Management Program also contributed to the review of the Commonwealth Whitsundays Plan of Management, including policy development, stakeholder consultation, public information sessions and assessment of potential superyacht anchorages.



COMPLIANCE

Illegal fishing is one of the highest direct risks to the World Heritage Area and illegal recreational fishing is a growing non-compliance problem. During 2016–17 the joint Field Management Program continued to step up its enforcement operations against illegal fishing with support from partner agencies, including Maritime Border Command, Australian Federal Police, Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol and Queensland Police.

There were 674 days dedicated to compliance patrols on vessels, 10 land-based days and 71 days of chartered flights to encourage user compliance and maintain the integrity of the zoning plan and World Heritage Area values.

There were 905 possible offences reported in 2016–17, with illegal recreational fishing comprising 56 per cent of these offences, up from 43 per cent in 2015–16. These reported offences resulted in 43 infringement notices (\$57,097 in fines), 88 caution notices, 411 advisory letters, 14 warning notices and 32 court prosecutions (\$90,400 in fines) to provide an effective deterrent to further illegal activity.

Analysis of intelligence has resulted in targeting hotspots such as shoals and wrecks during high risk periods and altering traditional vessel patrol patterns from broad areas to increase patrol time in targeted high risk green zones.

Under the *Queensland Sustainable Fishing Strategy 2017–2027*, vessel tracking of all priority commercial fisheries in the World Heritage Area by the end of 2018 will significantly enhance compliance capability and support Reef resilience. Thirteen commercial fishing vessels installed monitoring devices as part of a voluntary trial in 2016–17, with some progressive commercial fishers demonstrating that devices can be used effectively on small vessels such as dories.

PROGRAM SUPPORT

Delivery of field management activities relies on a skilled workforce, operational and appropriately located management infrastructure, a fit-for-purpose and well-maintained vessel fleet, and good systems.

Field management vessels spent 1481 days at sea during 2016–17. The 24-metre primary open ocean vessel *Reef Ranger* spent 266 days at sea in its third year of operation, up from 244 in 2015–16 and 241 in 2014–15.

The quick transit times and multi-tasking capacity of *Reef Ranger* enabled officers to work on priorities such as Raine Island recovery, coral bleaching response, crown-of-thorns starfish response, Cyclone Debbie response and compliance. It also supports activities such as visitor facility management, natural resource management (fire and pest), reef and seabird monitoring, and communication and education of park users.

The joint Field Management Program took delivery of two new vessels in Cairns in 2016–17: *Gundari* is a rigid-hulled inflatable boat that can work in coastal and near-shore areas, while *Sula* is an enforcement vessel that will support enhanced compliance patrolling.

Well-trained staff members are also essential to the delivery of an effective, efficient and safe joint Field Management Program. Field management staff received training across 24 different training courses in 2016–17.

Training included the highly successful Field Management Foundation course, which was specifically designed to unify staff awareness and understanding of the joint Field Management Program. The training has now been delivered to 107 participants through seven courses held since 2014, with around 70 per cent of current field management staff completing the training. Another course is planned for September 2017.

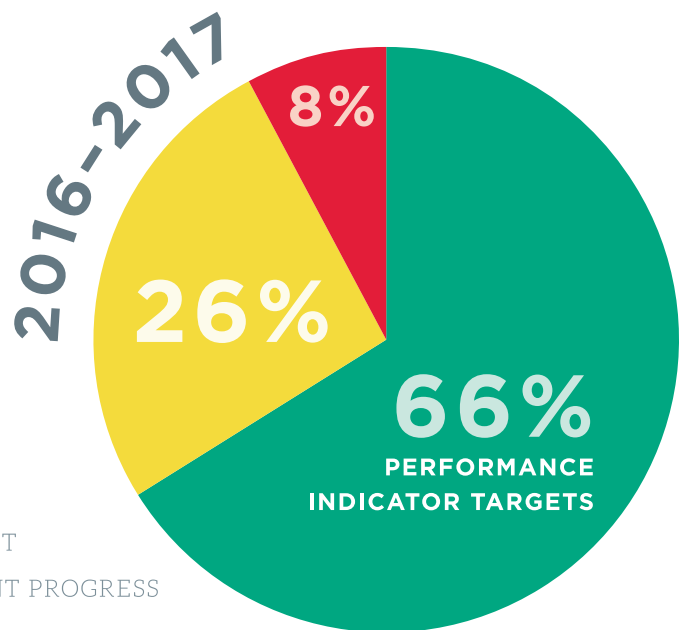
Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Forum supported a shift in certain joint program responsibilities under the Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing in July 2017. This shift included approval of the Field Management Annual Business Plan and Five Year Business Strategy.



RESULTS AGAINST PERFORMANCE INDICATORS







Performance indicators highlight joint Field Management Program achievements against nine high-level strategies derived from the Field Management Annual Business Plan 2016–17, which the Director-General of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Chairman of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority jointly approved.

In 2016–17, 26 performance indicator targets (66 per cent) were achieved, 10 performance indicator targets (26 per cent) were not achieved but demonstrated significant progress, and three performance indicator targets (eight per cent) were not achieved, or had no significant progress. This is a decline from 2015–16 and illustrates how responding to incidents such as Cyclone Debbie and a second consecutive year of coral bleaching has affected delivery of the joint Field Management Program’s planned day-to-day activities.












KEY

- TARGET ACHIEVED
- SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS TOWARDS TARGET
- TARGET NOT ACHIEVED + NO SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS

	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	RESULTS 2016-17	
MARINE AND ISLAND CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT	620 REEF HEALTH AND IMPACT SURVEYS COMPLETED	1943 reef health and impact surveys completed	
	40% OF FIELD MANAGEMENT OFFICERS DELIVERED REEF HEALTH AND IMPACT SURVEYS	52% of officers delivered reef health and impact surveys	
	90% OF CONSERVATION PRIORITY PEST PROJECTS ACHIEVED PROJECT OUTCOMES	87% of conservation priority pest projects achieved project outcomes Eradication of some pest animals is close, including goats from Orpheus, St Bees and High Peak islands, and pigs from Dunk Island Rat control on Frankland and Barnard islands was held over to 2017-18 due to delays obtaining minor use permits	
	40 GREAT BARRIER REEF ISLAND WATCH SURVEYS COMPLETED	50 surveys completed	
	IDENTIFY KEY VALUES AND ASSESS CONDITION AND TREND FOR FIVE ICONIC/PRIORITY PARKS USING THE VALUES-BASED MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK	Key values, condition and trend identified for Raine, Magnetic, Green and Fitzroy islands and Capricornia Cays Health checks also undertaken for Hinchinbrook Island	
	90% OF SCHEDULED SEABIRD MONITORING OCCURRED AT PRIORITY SITES	80% of essential sites surveyed Some surveys were not undertaken due to unsuitable weather and emerging priorities such as incident response to Cyclone Debbie 199 surveys completed at 120 locations On target to deliver 100% of significant sites surveyed by 2020, with 46% surveyed since 2015	
	80% OF PLANNED CONSERVATION BURNS ACHIEVED TO PROTECT LIFE, PROPERTY AND BIODIVERSITY	75% of planned burns successfully completed from the 2016 planned burn program — one of three conservation burns and three of four protection burns Some planned burns were not completed due to unsuitable weather and emerging priorities, such as incident response to Cyclone Debbie Five other planned burns and responses to two wildfires were also undertaken	
	100% OF HIGH-PRIORITY AND MEDIUM-PRIORITY ISLAND PROTECTED AREAS HAVE CONTEMPORARY FIRE STRATEGIES IN THE QUEENSLAND PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE 'FLAME' SYSTEM	44% of fire strategies for high-priority and medium-priority islands are in draft form are in FLAME Additional resources will be directed at achieving this indicator in 2017-18 100% of all fire history, planned burns and wildfires in FLAME	
	NO NEW PEST INFESTATIONS OF ECOSYSTEM CHANGING INVASIVE PESTS ESTABLISHED ON ISLANDS WITH HIGH BIOSECURITY LEVELS OF SERVICE	One new pest — pharaoh ants — was discovered on Bell Cay Impacts are being monitored and eradication planning is underway Siam weed was eradicated from Magnetic Island and African big-headed ants from Tryon Island	

	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	RESULTS 2016-17	
INCIDENT RESPONSE MANAGEMENT	100% OF SPILLS RISK ASSESSED	100% of reported spills risk assessed (12 spills)	■
	100% OF VESSEL GROUNDINGS OR SINKINGS NOTIFIED TO THE JOINT FIELD MANAGEMENT PROGRAM RISK ASSESSED	100% of reported vessel groundings or sinkings risk assessed (65 groundings and 29 sinkings)	■
	100% FIELD MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO VESSEL GROUNDINGS OR SINKINGS WHERE THE INCIDENT CONTROL AGENCY REQUIRES THE JOINT FIELD MANAGEMENT PROGRAM'S SUPPORT	100% response to requests The joint Field Management Program was incident controller for 65 groundings and 29 sinkings, and responded to 35 incidents where five site assessments of damage were done	■
	MINIMUM OF 90% OF REMOVAL ORDERS EFFECTED AT NO COST TO THE AGENCIES	100% of removal orders effected at no cost (seven issued)	■
RECREATION AND TOURISM FACILITIES	DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAM PROPOSAL FOR FUNDING CONSIDERATION BY MINISTERIAL FORUM AS PART OF THE PERIODIC REVIEW	Capital investment program developed to identify future priorities and funding Findings incorporated into the Periodic Review Report considered by Ministerial Forum in July 2017	■
	100% OF CRITICAL AND STATUTORY INSPECTIONS ON VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE OCCURRED WITHIN SCHEDULED TIMEFRAMES	100% of infrastructure inspections completed (181 statutory, 58 critical infrastructure)	■
	90% OF FUNDED CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE TASKS DELIVERED ANNUALLY	100% of infrastructure maintenance tasks delivered (268 tasks)	■
	95% OF PUBLIC MOORINGS AND REEF PROTECTION MARKERS IN OPERATION AT ALL TIMES	95% of 147 public moorings operational 95% of 170 reef protection markers operational	■
INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT	NUMBER OF DAYS TRADITIONAL OWNERS SPENT ON FIELD MANAGEMENT VESSEL TRIPS AND LAND-BASED PATROLS MAINTAINED OR INCREASED	Traditional Owners spent 420-person days on field management vessels in the World Heritage Area This is a decline from 574 days in 2015-16, but it is an increase from 348 days in 2014-15 and 143 days in 2013-14 Decline influenced by the diversion of vessels and staff to other priorities, such as incident response to Cyclone Debbie and coral bleaching, which reduced activities typically undertaken with Traditional Owners in the northern Great Barrier Reef	■
	GREATER THAN 5% OF THE JOINT FIELD MANAGEMENT PROGRAM WORKFORCE IDENTIFY AS INDIGENOUS PEOPLE	6% of positions are Indigenous-identified and held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (seven of 115 positions)	■
	80% OF REQUIRED MEETINGS WITH LAND TRUSTS FOR JOINTLY MANAGED NATIONAL PARKS (CAPE YORK PENINSULA ABORIGINAL LAND) ATTENDED	83% of required meetings attended 100% of Lama Lama Land Trust and Cape Melville, Flinders and Howick Group Aboriginal Corporation and Wuthathi joint management and fire planning meetings attended 75% of Kuuku Ya'u Corporation joint management meetings attended	■
	INDIGENOUS RANGER GROUPS RESPOND TO OR REPORT AN INCREASING PERCENTAGE OF MARINE ANIMAL STRANDINGS	Yuku Baja Muliku and Mandubarra Indigenous ranger groups responded to 7% of strandings requiring response Five strandings were reported This forms the baseline for future years	■

	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	RESULTS 2016-17	
CULTURAL HERITAGE	INCREASED NUMBER OF FORMAL ARRANGEMENTS IN PLACE FOR TRADITIONAL OWNER INVOLVEMENT IN CULTURAL SITE PROTECTION	Cultural site protection measures progressed within existing joint management, Indigenous Protected Areas and Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements New agreements and collaborative work programs developed or well progressed with Indigenous groups, including Wuthathi and Meriam Le, Erubam Le and Ugarem Le people for Raine Island; and the Gunggandji people for islands and marine parks waters offshore from Cairns	■
	100% OF COMMONWEALTH AND NATIONAL PARK ISLANDS WITH LEASES HAVE ANNUAL INSPECTIONS TO ENSURE TENANTS MEET OBLIGATIONS TO PROTECT CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES	100% of annual inspections completed for the three Commonwealth islands with Commonwealth heritage listed buildings and leases (Lady Elliot Island, Dent Island, Low Isles) and the three national parks with significant cultural heritage (Magnetic Island, Raine Island and Cape Capricorn on Curtis Island — none have leases)	■
PLANNING AND PERMITS	OVER 300 APPLICATIONS FOR JOINT MARINE PARKS PERMITS ASSESSED AND DECIDED JOINTLY	360 joint marine parks permits assessed and decided	■
	OVER 100 APPLICATIONS FOR STATE-ONLY MARINE PARKS, ISLAND PROTECTED AREAS AND GREEN ISLAND RECREATION AREAS (FOR RELEVANT AUTHORITIES) DECIDED WITHIN STATUTORY OR AGREED TIMEFRAMES	98 applications were received and decided (43 Queensland-only Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park permits, 51 island national park permits and four commercial activity agreements)	■
	MANAGEMENT STATEMENTS, PLANS AND THEMATIC STRATEGIES DEVELOPED FOR ICONIC AND PRIORITY PARKS USING THE VALUES-BASED MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK	Hinchinbrook Island National Park Management Plan 2017 and Visitor Strategy 2017 completed	■
COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND STEWARDSHIP	TREND IN PUBLIC CONTACTS TO BE RECORDED USING THE FIELD REPORTING SYSTEM	1651 public contact moments recorded This is a decline from 3412 in 2015-16, which was influenced by the redirection of resources away from public contact activities to incident response such as Cyclone Debbie and coral bleaching In addition, Field Reporting System standardised reporting is still being embedded within the joint program Field Reporting System enhancements should provide more representative future reports	■
	MAINTAINED OR INCREASING TREND IN COMMUNITY OR VOLUNTEER GROUPS RESPONDING TO MARINE TURTLE STRANDINGS	Community or volunteer groups responded to 58% of strandings requiring response, consistent with a maintained or increasing trend — 57% in 2015-16, 59% in 2014-15, 46% in 2013-14, 18% in 2012-13	■
	80% ATTENDANCE BY QUEENSLAND PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE AT LOCAL MARINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS	69% attendance at Local Marine Advisory Committee meetings (38 of 55 meetings)	■

	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	RESULTS 2016-17	
COMPLIANCE	740 DEDICATED COMPLIANCE VESSEL PATROL DAYS FUNDED OR PARTIALLY FUNDED BY THE JOINT FIELD MANAGEMENT PROGRAM UNDERTAKEN IN THE WORLD HERITAGE AREA	674 dedicated compliance patrol vessel days were completed (91%) Adverse weather events including Cyclone Debbie and the associated incident response contributed to the reduced patrol vessel days	
	MULTI-AGENCY PARTICIPATION IN 70% OF TARGETED SPECIAL OPERATIONS IN THE WORLD HERITAGE AREA	Multi-agency participation in 60% of 27 special operations	
	60 DEDICATED COMPLIANCE AIRCRAFT PATROL DAYS FUNDED BY THE JOINT FIELD MANAGEMENT PROGRAM UNDERTAKEN IN THE WORLD HERITAGE AREA	71 dedicated compliance aircraft patrol days were completed (118%)	
	INCREASING TREND IN PERCENTAGE OF INDIGENOUS RANGER GROUPS RESPONDING TO OR MAKING COMPLIANCE INCIDENT REPORTS	Indigenous ranger groups made two incident reports, a decline from six in 2015-16 Ongoing training and mentoring of Indigenous ranger groups will lead to an increasing trend in future years	
	100% OF BRIEFS OF EVIDENCE SUBMITTED TO THE COMMONWEALTH DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS ARE ACCEPTED	100% of 34 Briefs of Evidence submitted and accepted	
PROGRAM SUPPORT	DOWNTIME OF THE JOINT FIELD MANAGEMENT PROGRAM'S TWO OFFSHORE VESSELS (EXCLUDING SCHEDULED MAINTENANCE) LESS THAN 10% OF DAYS AT SEA	Total combined downtime for the two offshore vessels was less than 1% (two days out of 384 days) <i>Reef Ranger</i> recorded two unscheduled outage days out of 271 scheduled days at sea <i>Reef Heron</i> had no unscheduled outage days out of 130 scheduled days at sea	
	THE JOINT FIELD MANAGEMENT PROGRAM DELIVERED MORE THAN 1400 DAYS AT SEA	A total of 1481 vessel days at sea were delivered (105%), an increase from 1406 days in 2015-16 (100%)	
	EXPENDITURE WITHIN 1% OF BUDGET AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH LABOUR, OPERATING AND CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS	Expenditure was within 1%, excluding the held over commitment to 2017-18 from the \$1,195,000 Australian Government discretionary contribution for the new large vessel	
	100% OF PATROL EFFORT RECORDED USING THE FIELD REPORTING SYSTEM	Anecdotally, recording of patrol effort on the Field Reporting System is high Recording of all patrol effort will be an ongoing priority	
	DECREASED TREND IN LOST-TIME INJURIES YEAR-ON-YEAR	Increasing trend in lost time injuries The total number of lost-time injuries was five with a total of 69 days lost time This is an increase from four in 2015-16 and three in 2014-15, equal to 2013-14 and down from 11 in 2012-13 Promoting a safe work culture will continue to be a priority	

Further information about the joint Field Management Program

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