



Australian Government  
Great Barrier Reef  
Marine Park Authority

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park







# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised this publication may contain names and images of deceased persons.

Strategy artwork © Zane Saunders photographed by Rob Richardson. From public mural artwork installed at the Kuranda Village titled '*Bulmba Maminga*' Love the country. Care for it.



## Australian Government

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*The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority acknowledges the continuing sea country management and custodianship of the Great Barrier Reef by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners whose rich cultures, heritage values, enduring connections and shared efforts protect the Reef for future generations.*



*Step of Change by Nicky Bidju Pryor – Bidju Designs*

*Commissioned for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's  
Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan 2018.*

# FOREWORD

We are proud to present the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park*.

The strategy sets out a clear collaborative approach for assisting Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef to keep their Indigenous heritage strong, safe and healthy. It aims to move towards a future where the enduring culture and connection of Reef Traditional Owners with their sea country is widely recognised, Indigenous heritage is protected, and we manage the Reef together.

It's our deep hope that this strategy provides an important step in our journey together towards increased co-management of our iconic Reef and its rich cultural values.

The strategy was developed by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority with guidance and advice provided by the Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee and many Reef Traditional Owners.

The Authority expresses its heartfelt thanks to the Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee for the huge amount of time and expertise members contributed to developing this strategy. The Authority is also grateful to all Traditional Owners who contributed through workshops, submissions and surveys.

The strong support for the strategy shown by Traditional Owners and partners during the public consultation phase is a reflection of the advice and guidance offered by the Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee and Traditional Owners.

The Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee expresses its appreciation for the cooperative approach that Authority staff took developing the strategy — the process and outcome are excellent examples of what can be achieved when management agencies and Traditional Owners work together on important initiatives.

This *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park* is a significant first step in a journey together to keep the culture, heritage and environment of the Reef alive and strong into the future. We look forward to implementing the strategy together.



Ian Piner  
Chairperson  
Marine Park Authority Board



Phil Rist  
Independent Chair  
Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee

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# 1.0 Introduction

*“The sea, its natural resources and our identity as Traditional Owners, are inseparable... Our ancestors have hunted and fished in this sea country since time immemorial.”*  
*(Girringun Aboriginal Corporation spokesperson, 2005)*

*“It is vitally important that our heritage sites, culturally significant places and traditions are kept for our present and future generations.”*  
*(Gooreng Gooreng Traditional Owner, 2017)*



## 1.1 ABOUT THE STRATEGY

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park* (the strategy) sets out a vision, guiding principles, outcomes, objectives and actions for how the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (the Authority) will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to keep Indigenous heritage in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park strong, safe and healthy.

The *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* (the Marine Park Act) aims to provide for the long-term protection and conservation of the environment, biodiversity and heritage values of the Great Barrier

Reef region. The inscription of the Great Barrier Reef on the World Heritage List in 1981 recognised its outstanding universal value, including ‘man’s interaction with his natural environment’<sup>1</sup>.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have cared for their sea country and heritage for tens of thousands of years. Since colonisation, their sea country and cultural practices have come under increasing pressure from other uses.

Many cultural practices remain strong, whilst other Indigenous heritage values have deteriorated with changes in the environment and impacts on heritage.<sup>2</sup>

Partnerships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other land and sea managers are increasingly important to assist with managing these external pressures. This strategy has been developed to focus on approaches and actions that support Traditional Owners to protect and care for Indigenous heritage within the scope of the Authority’s management responsibilities for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

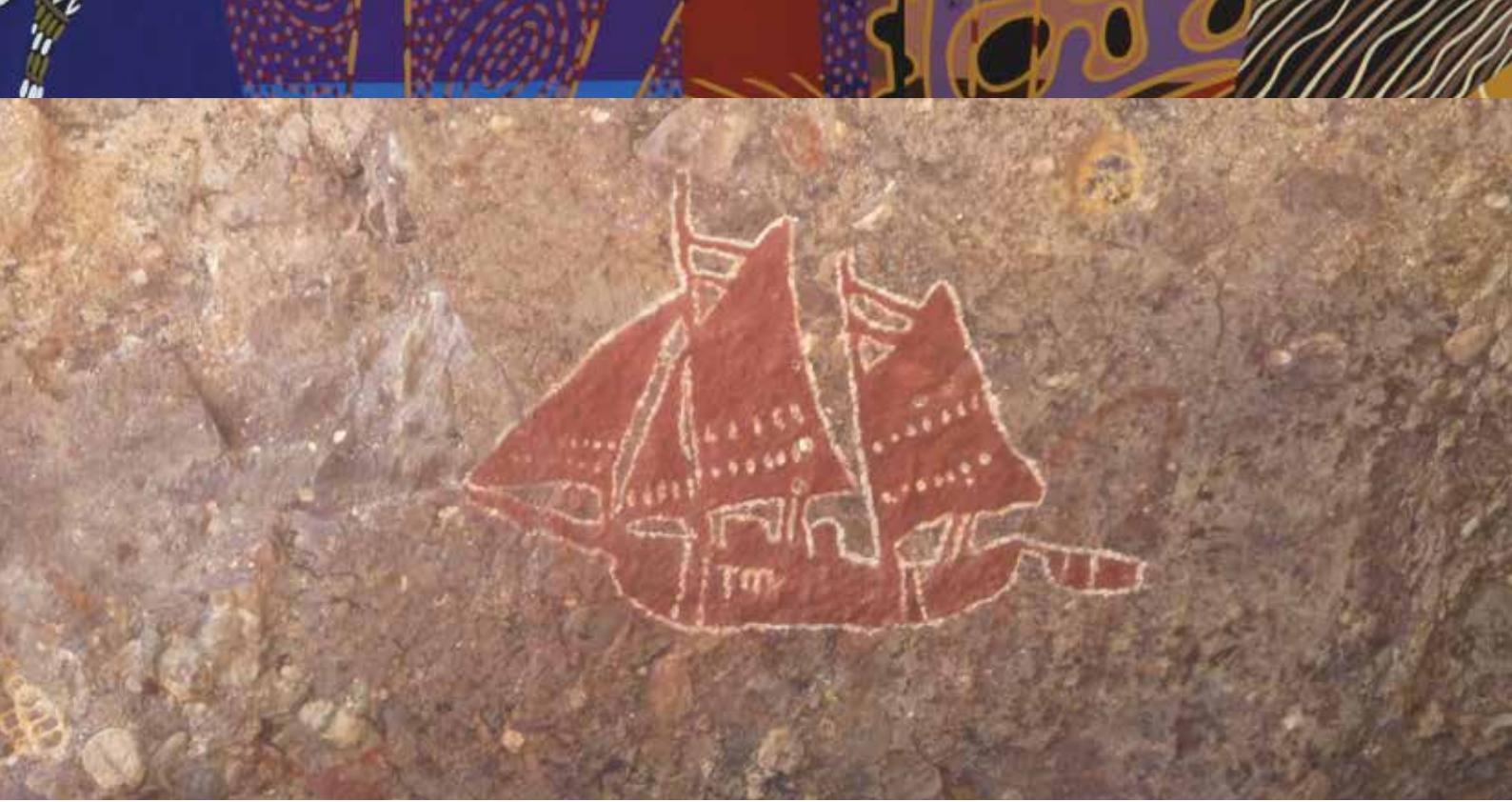
Reef Traditional Owner groups and the Authority’s Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee provided essential input into the strategy’s development, building upon earlier Traditional Owner input into the *Great Barrier Reef Strategic Assessment 2014*, the *Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan 2015* and previous sea country forums.



A sea turtle in the Marine Park, © Commonwealth of Australia (GBRMPA)

<sup>1</sup> Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 1981, *Nomination of the Great Barrier Reef by the Commonwealth of Australia for inclusion in the World Heritage List*, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

<sup>2</sup> Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2014, *Great Barrier Reef Region Strategic Assessment 2014*, Commonwealth of Australia



Artwork recording first contact, Stanley Island, © Commonwealth of Australia (GBRMPA)

The resulting document outlines a strategic approach for the Authority to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples keep their heritage strong, safe and healthy, and contribute towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aspirations for sea country and heritage management into the future.

## 1.2 SCOPE

This strategy applies specifically to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (the Marine Park) — see map. However, the Authority recognises that jurisdictional boundaries do not match natural or Traditional Owner estate boundaries and acknowledges actions under this strategy may extend outside the boundaries of the Marine Park.

Indigenous heritage includes tangible and intangible components of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' land and sea country in accordance with their practices, observances, customs, traditions, beliefs or history.<sup>3</sup> These components may have natural heritage value, historic heritage value and/or socio-economic value.

Nothing in this strategy affects the operation of the *Native Title Act 1993*, including section 211, which provides that holders of native title covering certain activities do not need authorisation to engage in those activities.

<sup>3</sup> Australian Heritage Commission 2002, *Ask First: A Guide to respecting Indigenous heritage places and values*, Australian Heritage Commission, Canberra.



## 1.3 PURPOSE

The purpose of this strategy is to outline a plan and actions for the Authority to implement that will lead to better understanding, protection and promotion of Indigenous heritage values of the Great Barrier Reef.

*The strategy outlines how the Authority can contribute to keeping Indigenous heritage values strong, safe and healthy.*



This is of vital importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ancestors, current generations and children; as well as to national and international heritage and the health of the Great Barrier Reef itself.

This strategy also fulfils actions under the bilateral *Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan*, and addresses recommendations of the *Outlook Report 2014*<sup>4</sup> to better recognise and protect heritage of the Reef.

## 1.4 DEVELOPMENT

The Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee<sup>5</sup>, the *Outlook Report 2014* and the *Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan*<sup>6</sup> recommended that the Authority developed an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage strategy, to better recognise and protect Indigenous heritage of the Reef.

The Authority led the development of the strategy over 2016 to 2018. The Authority's Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee, whose role is to provide advice and guidance to the Marine Park Authority Board, had input into the process and content over five meetings throughout this time.

Six workshops were held with Traditional Owner organisations – both with and without formal agreements with the Authority – from all geographic regions, covering over 20 Traditional Owner groups and more than 80 participants. The Queensland Land and Sea Rangers Forum 2017 provided input. Contribution was also made from previous



*Woppaburra seasonal calendar, © Woppaburra Traditional Owners*

<sup>4</sup> Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2014, *Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2014*, Commonwealth of Australia.

<sup>5</sup> Letter by Chair of IRAC Melissa George to chairman Russell Reichelt, 10/9/2012 and Dale A, George M, Hill R and Fraser D 2016, *Traditional Owners and Sea Country in the Southern Great Barrier Reef – Which Way Forward?* National Environment Science Panel Programme, CSIRO

<sup>6</sup> Commonwealth of Australia 2016, *Long-Term Sustainability Reef 2050 Plan*, Commonwealth of Australia, at Action HA4



Lama Lama junior rangers learn about drones, © Commonwealth of Australia (GBRMPA), Photographer: Gus Burrows

engagement processes.<sup>7</sup> The Authority engaged other Reef management partners, including the Queensland Government Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, the Queensland Land and Sea Ranger Program, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy.

In early 2018, a draft strategy was released for public comment by the Marine Park Authority Board on advice from the Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee. The draft was open for public consultation for eleven weeks, from 26 February to 10 May 2018.

A user-friendly consultation package included a survey and summary brochure. All of the Authority's advisory boards were invited to comment. The Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee held a full-day

workshop to review the strategy and its actions. Targeted consultation with Traditional Owners was achieved through a mail-out of consultation packages to 45 Indigenous organisations covering all 70 Reef Traditional Owner groups. A presentation and distribution of the consultation package occurred at the Reef Traditional Owner Workshop in May 2018, attended by more than 60 Traditional Owners from 35 Traditional Owner groups. Other presentations were made on request, including to state and Australian government agencies.

Thirty-seven submissions were received, from a range of organisations and individuals. The majority were from Traditional Owners. The submissions and survey results demonstrated strong support for the strategy. Comments and improvements focused on strengthening, rather than disagreeing with, actions. These were considered in finalising the strategy.

<sup>7</sup> Dale A, George M, Hill R and Fraser D 2016, *Traditional Owners and Sea Country in the Southern Great Barrier Reef – Which Way Forward?* National Environment Science Panel Programme, CSIRO; Gidarjil Development Corporation 2016, *Reef 2050 Long Term Sustainability Plan Indigenous Implementation Plan*, report to Department of the Environment, unpublished

## 2.0 Context

*“(Indigenous heritage includes) everything. This contributes to the person I have become and the person I will be in the end of my days, this will exist even after I am gone... it is the remaining and everlasting evidence seen and unseen of our existence in this place.”*

*(Port Curtis Coast Corporation Workshop, 2017)*



### 2.1 INDIGENOUS HERITAGE

Traditional Owners view Indigenous heritage as '**everything in sea country**'<sup>8</sup>.

The Authority applies a broad definition of **Indigenous heritage** meaning physical (tangible) and non-physical (intangible) expressions of Traditional Owners' relationships with country, people, beliefs, knowledge, law, language, symbols, ways of living, sea, land and objects; all of which arise from Indigenous spirituality, including heritage places (sites) and/or values. When applied to a place, this definition is consistent with the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) definition of the Indigenous heritage value of a place; meaning a heritage value of the place that is of significance to Indigenous persons in accordance with their practices, observances, customs, traditions, beliefs or history.

The Authority recognises that the environment is inseparable from cultural identity, with cultural practices inextricably linked to plants, animals and the environment.<sup>9</sup>

Indigenous heritage includes everything in sea country, including natural values, Indigenous values and historic values. It includes tangible and intangible expressions of Traditional Owners' relationships with country, people, beliefs, knowledge, law, language, symbols, ways of living, sea, land and objects, all arising from Indigenous spirituality.



The Authority's *Traditional Owner Heritage Assessment Guidelines*<sup>10</sup> outline the importance of Indigenous heritage to individuals, communities, Australia and internationally, and provide many examples of Indigenous heritage components (the things that hold value) within the Reef.

The Authority recognises that components can hold many values, including natural heritage value, Indigenous heritage value, historic heritage value and social, economic or aesthetic value.

<sup>8</sup> Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee 2017

<sup>9</sup> Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2014, *Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2014*, Commonwealth of Australia, at p79

<sup>10</sup> Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2017, *Traditional Owner Heritage Assessment Guidelines*

## Examples of components that hold value for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Great Barrier Reef include:

- The ocean, plants and animals, views, and sky and stars
- Respect, knowledge, language and stories, lore and responsibility
- People, ancestors, the present and the next generation
- Places significant for sites, plants, animals, corals, burials, birthing, food and totems
- Cultural keystone species, for example, turtles, dugongs, humpback whales
- Technologies, such as fish hooks, stone tools, artefacts, and scar trees
- Cultural behaviours, including traditional hunting, passing down knowledge, working together, remembering ancestors and keeping people, place and heritage safe
- Historical places associated with colonisation, like missions and massacre sites
- Historical connections, for instance between Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, and with South Sea Islanders.<sup>11</sup>

Further detail on the Authority's definition and approach to Indigenous heritage values can be found in the *Traditional Owner Heritage Assessment Guidelines*.<sup>12</sup>



Great Barrier Reef underwater,  
© Matt Curnock



Traditional hat weaving at Port Curtis  
Coral Coast, © Commonwealth of  
Australia (GBRMPA)



Traditional astronomy is used for  
navigation, calendars, and to predict  
weather, sourced from Pexels



Traditional gathering of berries, © Commonwealth of  
Australia (GBRMPA)



Turtles nesting at Raine Island, © Commonwealth of Australia  
(GBRMPA)

11 Markwell 2017, *Results of Traditional Owner Initial Engagement Analysis Report*, internal report, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

12 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2017, *Traditional Owner Heritage Assessment Guidelines*

## 2.2 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES' CONNECTION TO HERITAGE

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been linked with the Reef since time immemorial. Prior to sea level rise and the Reef forming over 7000 years ago, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples lived on what is now the seafloor, and cultural knowledge of this time's practices and sites still remains. After the Reef formed, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples cared for their sea country through interweaving their culture and spirituality with sustainable use of its resources.

Despite historical events of dispossession and displacement, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples maintain connection to their land and sea country. Those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent who have spiritual or cultural affiliations with a site or area in the Marine Park — or are holders of native title with that site or area, and are entitled to undertake activities under custom or tradition — are termed Traditional Owners<sup>13</sup>.

However, there are also many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who lost their direct connection to their land and sea country during and following European colonisation. These individuals and families may continue to have interests in Indigenous heritage in the region, such as through historic, spiritual or cultural values. They may also have a personal connection through family history with a place, including a mission or a massacre site.

There are some 70 Aboriginal Traditional Owner groups with authority for sea country management in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owner groups are also connected to the Reef and hold cultural knowledge of their traditional use of the Great Barrier Reef region more broadly.

The Authority recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have connection to areas of the Reef that extend beyond the official Marine Park boundary, including into Torres Strait waters. The eastern reefs of the Torres Strait form the intact northern extension of the Great Barrier Reef, and are increasingly recognised for their potential refugia



Depiction of dugong and turtle in rock art site on an offshore island in Cape York, © Commonwealth of Australia (GBRMPA)

value, as well as their significant cultural values to Traditional Owners of these islands and surrounding sea estates.

European settlement led to a multitude of users and pressures on the Reef, and a major disruption to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' custodianship capacity. The *Outlook Report 2014* confirmed that the declining health of the Reef has affected culture.<sup>14</sup> At the same time as the Reef experienced new pressures, loss of land and sea country rights, dislocation, disease, dispersion and disadvantage disrupted the capacity of people to perform and pass on their cultural responsibilities and care for their sea country.

Despite this recent history, many Traditional Owners remain connected to their sea country and strong in their culture.<sup>15</sup> A vast, rich array of components with heritage value still exist and are actively maintained by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Many people work tirelessly through their communities and various Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to maintain

13 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975

14 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2014, *Strategic Assessment Overview*, Commonwealth of Australia, at p12

15 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2014, *Great Barrier Reef Region Strategic Assessment 2014*, Commonwealth of Australia, and Markwell 2017, *Results of Traditional Owner Initial Engagement Analysis Report*, internal report, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority



Woppaburra sea country, © Commonwealth of Australia (GBRMPA)

the remaining heritage values of the Reef, managing sea country, recording oral tradition and expressing living culture. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are increasingly re-asserting their role in managing their country through active engagement in on-country management and policy and planning programs.<sup>16</sup>

*“...we’ve had a long, long, long association with the Reef. It is one of the seven wonders of the world but we also have a common culture and obligation to it.”<sup>17</sup>*

(Traditional Owner from Mamu Country, 2012)



in 1975 started the development of a marine protected area system which is now the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The Marine Park is managed to protect and conserve the Reef's environmental, biodiversity and heritage values. In 1981, the outstanding universal value of the Reef was recognised with the listing of the Great Barrier Reef as a World Heritage Area for its natural heritage value. The nomination included recognition of Indigenous heritage values, recorded as recognition of ‘man’s interaction with the environment’.<sup>18</sup>

The Authority’s experience managing the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park included the development of a suite of management tools that have primarily been used for ecosystem and biodiversity management.

With this strategy, the Authority aims to apply its management capabilities to further understanding, respecting, protecting and managing in partnership Indigenous heritage values.



For more than four decades, the Australian Government has joined Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the task of managing the heritage and other values of the Reef. The establishment of the Great Barrier Reef Region

16 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2014, *Great Barrier Reef Region Strategic Assessment 2014*, Commonwealth of Australia, at section 7.24

17 Barry, G. 2012a, *Transcript of an interview with a Traditional Owner from Mamu Country*, in Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2014, *Great Barrier Reef Region Strategic Assessment 2014*, Commonwealth of Australia, at section 7.24

18 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 1981, *Nomination of the Great Barrier Reef by the Commonwealth of Australia for inclusion in the World Heritage List*, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Townsville.

## 2.4 CURRENT STATE AND TREND

Traditional Owners with connections to the Reef maintain their cultural practices and customs. However, because Indigenous heritage values are closely tied to land and sea country, values have deteriorated with deterioration of the environment.<sup>19</sup>

Table 1: Condition and trend of Indigenous heritage values<sup>20</sup>

Component	Condition	Trend	Objective
<b>Sacred sites, sites of particular significance and places important for cultural tradition:</b> Places of Indigenous heritage value have not been systematically identified and many have deteriorated, especially around developed areas and on islands.	Poor	Deteriorating	Improve
There are many places, especially in coastal systems and on islands, where there is pressure on sacred sites and other sites of cultural significance. This is particularly around areas of high development and those exposed to severe weather events. Other sites are intact and in good condition and are being well managed by Traditional Owners.			
<b>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander structures, technology, tools and archaeology:</b> Indigenous structures (for example, fish traps), tools, technologies and archaeology have not been systematically identified. They are under pressure from coastal development and vehicle use. Some specific sites, such as the Hinchinbrook fish traps, are managed by Traditional Owners. The significance of some sites, such as the rock quarry on South Molle Island, is recognised on the National Heritage List.	Poor	Deteriorating	Improve
<b>Stories, songlines, totems and languages:</b> Story, language, songlines and totems are being affected by activities such as shipping, anchoring and dredging. These have a particularly significant impact as they may transgress these traditional systems.	Poor	Deteriorating	Improve
Some species of cultural significance, such as whales, dugongs, turtles, rays, sharks and dolphins, and other coastal resources, are under pressure, especially in areas south of Cooktown.			
<b>Cultural practices, observances, customs and lore:</b> Traditional Owners with connections to the Great Barrier Reef Region maintain their cultural practices and customs. There is evidence of inter-generational transfer throughout the Reef.	Good	Stable	Maintain



Turtle hatchlings on Raine Island, © Commonwealth of Australia



Bush food, © Commonwealth of Australia

19 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2014, *Great Barrier Reef Region Strategic Assessment 2014*, Commonwealth of Australia  
20 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2014, *Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2014*, Commonwealth of Australia

The health of Indigenous heritage components is heavily dependent on the state of the environment. The Reef is experiencing dramatic system-wide declines in its condition under a combination of pressures; the most significant of which is climate change.<sup>21</sup>

The *Outlook Report 2014* found that the overall outlook for the Reef had worsened since 2009 and was likely to deteriorate in the absence of action to address threats. The report found the most significant factors influencing the values of the Reef were climate change, water quality, coastal development and some fishing impacts.

The assessment noted a decade of extreme weather, including severe cyclones and floods, had contributed to the decline in Reef health, and reduced the capacity of the ecosystem to recover from these and other disturbances.

This trend is continuing, with further extreme weather events causing widespread coral bleaching and cyclonic damage in 2016 and 2017. In addition to these recent climate-related impacts the Reef is also facing a major crown-of-thorns starfish outbreak, which has been ongoing since 2010<sup>22</sup>.

#### **The Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee in the Reef Blueprint for Resilience submitted:**

*“Recent events occurring on the Reef, both natural and manmade, have had a disastrous impact on its state of health. Our tears of joy when connecting with the Reef as young people have turned to tears of deep sadness as Elders. We watch this wonder of the natural world show us that it needs our immediate care.”<sup>23</sup>*



## **2.5 CURRENT MANAGEMENT APPROACHES**

### **2.5.1 MANAGEMENT THROUGH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ORGANISATIONS**

Indigenous heritage is primarily managed through cultural responsibilities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, with some assistance from other managing agencies and Australian regulation. Under Australian law, native title recognises that Traditional Owners have inherent rights and interests over their traditional area of sea country, including a right to continue their own practices such as traditional use of marine resources.<sup>24</sup>

To continue to deliver cultural responsibilities for sea country and lore, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have formed organisations to manage land and sea programs through administration, project officers and rangers. Many are Traditional Owner organisations, following cultural protocols and exercising cultural authority on behalf of specific Traditional Owner groups. These organisations can have partnerships with other organisations that also contribute to heritage management. Some have developed on-ground management capacity through ranger programs, such as through the Australian Government’s Working on Country Program and the Queensland Government’s Land and Sea Rangers Program.



*Indigenous compliance officers, © Commonwealth of Australia (GBRMPA)*

<sup>21</sup> Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2017, *Reef Blueprint for Resilience*, Commonwealth of Australia.

<sup>22</sup> Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2017, *Reef Blueprint for Resilience*, Commonwealth of Australia.

<sup>23</sup> Statement to the Great Barrier Reef Summit 2017 submitted by the Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee, in Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2017, *Reef Blueprint for Resilience*, Commonwealth of Australia.

<sup>24</sup> Native Title Act 1993



Lama Lama rangers undertaking boat safety training, © Commonwealth of Australia (GBRMPA)

## 2.5.2 MANAGEMENT THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN TRADITIONAL OWNERS AND THE AUTHORITY

The Authority manages heritage through regulations to avoid impacts on values, and programs to encourage partnerships and support on-ground management and compliance.

The *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* (the Marine Park Act) provides for the long term protection and conservation of the environment, biodiversity and heritage values of the Great Barrier Reef Region.<sup>25</sup> The Act, its regulations and the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003* (the Zoning Plan) establish a regulatory framework for sustainable use. The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*<sup>26</sup> manages significant impacts on matters of national environmental significance, which includes the Great Barrier Reef, threatened species and matters relating to World Heritage.

The Marine Park Act and regulations specifically allow for partnerships with Traditional Owners in management of marine resources. The Zoning Plan expressly acknowledges the rights and interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders by providing for the management of the traditional use of marine resources, including traditional hunting,

in accordance with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander custom and tradition.

In 2003 the Authority developed a specific regulatory tool, Traditional Use of Marine Resource Agreements (TUMRAs), to accredit community-based plans for management of traditional use of marine resources. Through the establishment of these agreements the Authority legislatively recognises the rights of Traditional Owners to manage their traditional resources and has provided funding and assistance to increase their capacity to do so.

The Authority has *Traditional Owner Heritage Assessment Guidelines*<sup>27</sup> which outline how Traditional Owner values are considered in the Authority's environmental assessment and permitting process. The Authority and the Woppaburra Traditional Owners have developed *Woppaburra Traditional Owner Heritage Assessment Guidelines*<sup>28</sup> to trial place-specific assessment guidelines, accompanied by a consultation protocol, to use when proposing to undertake activities in defined Traditional Owner estates.

The Authority supports heritage management through programs and partnerships with Traditional Owner organisations. For the past decade the

25 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975 at section A1

26 Expectations for engagement are set out in *Engage Early – Guidance for Proponents on Best Practice for Indigenous Engagement for Environmental Assessment under the EPBC Act 1999*, along with *Ask First: A Guide to respecting Indigenous heritage places and values*

27 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2017, *Traditional Owner Heritage Assessment Guidelines*

28 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2017, *Woppaburra Traditional Owner Heritage Assessment Guidelines*,

Authority has delivered an Indigenous Land and Sea Country Partnerships Program, providing dedicated staff, technical assistance and funding to develop and implement TUMRAs, increase Indigenous compliance capabilities, and support development of individuals and groups. The Authority has committed to the long term future of the program by providing core funding from 2018.

Traditional Owner organisations have partnered with the Authority under the program to expand TUMRAs. In 2018, there are nine agreements covering 25 per cent of the Reef coastline. They have also used the program to facilitate and run a wide variety of cultural and caring for country activities, including Junior Ranger programs, cultural heritage camps, sea country conferences, international conference attendance, training, monitoring and research.

The Authority supports Traditional Owners to control and protect their sea country from illegal activities. A dedicated Indigenous compliance team builds compliance capacity of rangers and organisations across the Reef. The Authority also partners with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rangers on joint compliance patrols, and incorporates Traditional Owners into over 500 days annually of Field Management Program activities.

### 2.5.3 REGULATION

Traditional Owner heritage values of the Marine Park are recognised and protected by international and national legislation. International legislation includes the *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* 1972, and the *Convention on Biological Diversity* 1992. National legislation includes the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*, *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, and *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984*.

In addition, heritage within Queensland's coastal waters is also covered by a legislative duty of care, which means a person who carries out an activity must take all reasonable and practicable measures to ensure the activity does not harm Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage.<sup>29</sup>

## 2.6 THREATS TO INDIGENOUS HERITAGE

There are multiple threats already impacting on heritage in the Reef, including to ecosystem health, biodiversity and tangible and intangible Indigenous heritage. The *Strategic Assessment 2014* found Indigenous heritage values were likely to continue to deteriorate, based on the inextricable connections between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and the Reef environment, and the increasing pressures of coastal development.<sup>30</sup>

The condition and trend of the Reef is foundational to maintaining heritage values. The major threats already impacting on the health of the Reef are climate change, poor water quality from catchment run-off, coastal development, remaining impacts of fishing and crown-of-thorn starfish outbreaks. Most impacts were assessed as increasing into the future, driven mainly by climate change, economic growth and population growth. The future impacts of climate change are predicted to be very serious as greenhouse gas concentrations continue to rise.<sup>31</sup> The resulting coral bleaching, changes in animal and plant distributions and increasing severe weather events all disrupt Indigenous heritage and cultural practices.

In addition, other direct uses including impacts of fishing (illegal and legal), tourism, recreation, research, environmental works and anchoring, may impact on heritage. For example, activities may damage fish traps, middens or burial sites, or disrupt traditional hunting, songlines, language, customs and lore.

Impacts assessed as having a very high risk of having a major impact on Indigenous heritage values were:

- increased sea temperature
- ocean acidification
- death of discarded species from extraction
- illegal fishing and poaching
- modifying supporting terrestrial habitats.<sup>32</sup>

29 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003, Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003

30 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2014, *Great Barrier Reef Region Strategic Assessment 2014*, Commonwealth of Australia

31 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2014, *Great Barrier Reef Region Strategic Assessment 2014*, Commonwealth of Australia, at pg13

32 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2014, *Great Barrier Reef Region Strategic Assessment 2014*, Commonwealth of Australia

The *Traditional Owner Heritage Assessment Guidelines*<sup>33</sup> include a list of potential hazards associated with permitted activities and their possible impact on heritage values and their social values, such as aesthetics, personal connection, and health and wellbeing.

There is an irretrievable loss of Indigenous knowledge with the passing of Elders. Difficulty in exercising cultural rights and responsibilities, such as loss of access and lack of resources since the disruption of the traditional lifestyle, creates challenges in transferring knowledge to the younger generation. Heritage is intrinsically linked with the people to whom it belongs. Without the systemic passing on of cultural knowledge that occurred prior to European disruption, heritage is at risk of not being passed on to the next generation, and thus lost forever.

A further risk to heritage is a lack of on-ground management capacity and opportunities for Traditional Owners.<sup>34</sup> Limited access to marine areas due to not having suitable boats, and limited resources to conduct protection and rehabilitation activities, prevent active management. On-ground management requires competent organisations with strong governance in place that have cultural

authority to make decisions, and resources such as boats and rangers to implement management activities. Programs and funding often lack continuity. Without on-ground management, cultural and legislative rules and responsibilities cannot be implemented or enforced.

The limited consideration of Indigenous heritage in management of the Reef puts heritage at risk of being impacted unintentionally. Without information on heritage, the Authority cannot consider it during assessment or planning processes. Without use of Traditional Owner knowledge in decision making, choices may inadvertently impact on heritage irreversibly.

Poor community awareness and appreciation of heritage values has also been identified as a risk to heritage<sup>35</sup>, with inadvertent damage from a range of activities allowed in the Marine Park risking impact.

There is currently no peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Reef to collectively discuss issues, implement actions and represent Traditional Owners' interests in high level forums. This makes it difficult for Traditional Owner groups to collaboratively address heritage management issues at a Reef scale.



Humphead Maori Wrasse at Tongue Reef,  
© Commonwealth of Australia (GBRMPA),  
Photographer: Chris Jones

33 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2017, *Traditional Owner Heritage Assessment Guidelines*

34 Commonwealth of Australia 2016, *Long-Term Sustainability Reef 2050 Plan*, Commonwealth of Australia

31 Commonwealth of Australia 2016, *Long-Term Sustainability Reef 2050 Plan*, Commonwealth of Australia

## 3.0 The way forward

### 3.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In developing and implementing this strategy, the Authority:

#### **1. Recognises a broad definition of Indigenous heritage**

The Authority applies the broadest definition of Indigenous heritage, which includes everything on sea country. This recognises that Indigenous heritage is biocultural, and includes the environment and intangible components.

#### **2. Engages respectfully with Traditional Owners on Indigenous heritage matters**

The Authority presumes appropriate Traditional Owners include those identified through the development of a TUMRA, and those identified through a native title process. Where neither a TUMRA nor a native title claim exists, the Authority will seek consensus amongst Traditional Owner groups on which Traditional Owner group can speak for an area.

#### **3. Recognises that all sea country activities contribute to Indigenous heritage management**

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs within the Authority contribute to the management of Indigenous heritage.

#### **4. Respects that Traditional Owners own and control Indigenous heritage information**

For any sharing of information necessary for implementation of the strategy, the Authority applies best practice protocols for sharing and holding Indigenous knowledge. This includes gaining free prior informed consent from Traditional Owners with the appropriate cultural authority.

#### **5. Holds the minimum Indigenous knowledge necessary for management purposes**

For any sharing of information necessary for implementation of this strategy, the Authority applies the principle of holding the least amount of information necessary for management purposes.

#### **6. Supports increasing co-management**

The Authority recognises Traditional Owners' aspirations to increase co-management of the Reef, and actions under this strategy are intended to further this goal. The Authority seeks to establish formal partnerships wherever possible to implement the strategy. The Authority seeks to empower and support Traditional Owners to contribute to decision making wherever possible.

## 3.2 STRATEGY OVERVIEW

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage

## VALUES

Indigenous heritage includes everything in sea country.

It includes tangible and intangible expressions of Traditional Owners' relationships with country, people, beliefs, knowledge, law, language, symbols, ways of living, sea, land and objects. These all arise from Indigenous spirituality, including heritage places (sites) and/or values including natural values, Indigenous values and historic values.

Indigenous heritage also connects with the social and economic values of the Reef.

## COMPONENTS

### Environment

Natural heritage (ecosystem and biodiversity) components

### Places

Sacred sites, sites of particular significance and places important for cultural traditions

### Technologies

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander structures, technology, tools and archaeology

### Culture

Stories, songlines, totems and languages

Cultural practices, observances, customs and lore

Traditional management and use

### History

Historic heritage components.

## VISION

Indigenous heritage values of the Reef are safe and healthy for past, present and future generations.

## OUTCOMES AND

### 1. Keep heritage strong

**Respect, recognise and promote the connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with the Reef**

- Empower Traditional Owners through our governance and advisory structures
- Respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in all our business
- Promote understanding of Indigenous heritage values.

### 2. Keep heritage safe and healthy

**Protect Indigenous heritage values of the Reef**

- Incorporate Indigenous heritage values in our processes
- Identify and protect Indigenous heritage values in our planning
- Protect Indigenous heritage through environmental assessment and management
- Integrate Traditional Owner knowledge in environmental assessment and management

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy Overview

## THREATS

### Conditions and trends

Climate change  
Coral bleaching  
Poor water quality  
Coastal development  
Fishing impacts  
Crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks.

### Direct use impacts

Fishing (legal and illegal)  
Tourism  
Recreation  
Research  
Environmental works  
Anchoring.

### Loss of Indigenous knowledge

Passing of Elders  
Difficulty exercising cultural rights and responsibilities  
Difficulty transferring knowledge to younger generations.

### Lack of on-ground management capacity

Limited access to marine areas  
Limited resources for protection and rehabilitation activities  
Funding, programs and continuity difficult to maintain.

### Limited consideration of Indigenous heritage in management of the Reef

Management agencies lack information on heritage  
Lack of use of Indigenous knowledge in decisions  
Poor community awareness and appreciation.

### No peak body

Difficult to collaboratively negotiate or conduct business.

## MISSION

Great Barrier Reef are kept strong, present and future generations

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### Heritage safe

### Participates through Authority processes

Information into

heritage in policy

through compliance

knowledge and input into our permitting process.

### 3. Keep heritage healthy

#### Partner with Traditional Owners and others in Reef management

- Support Traditional Owners to identify, assess, map and store knowledge of their heritage values
- Partner with Traditional Owners to manage the Reef through shared decision-making, agreements and capacity building
- Facilitate partnerships between Traditional Owners and other Reef managers
- Support social and economic outcomes through programs and partnerships
- Monitor, evaluate and report on the health of Indigenous heritage in the Reef.

### 3.3 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

#### Outcome 1: Keep heritage strong

Respect, recognise and promote the connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with the Reef

**This outcome envisages a future where the connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with the Reef is respected and recognised by all Reef users. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples freely practice their culture and look after their heritage, passing to the next generation the spiritual practices and Indigenous knowledge that have sustained their health and identity over thousands of years.**

Respecting Traditional Owners' rights and responsibilities as past, present and future custodians of the Reef is the foundation for increasing co-management. The Authority recognises the connection Traditional Owners have to sea country and their roles and responsibilities as its custodians. The Authority acknowledges the importance of Traditional Owners, their ancestors and their future generations, and their invaluable traditional knowledge gained through caring for the Reef throughout its 7000 year life.

The Authority recognises the essential place of Traditional Owners in Reef management and is committed to empowering Traditional Owners through governance and advisory forums. Under the Marine Park Act, the Marine Park Authority Board — responsible for decision-making on the care and development of the Marine Park — must have at least one Indigenous member experienced in Indigenous issues relating to the Marine Park. An Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee with a majority of Traditional Owner members advises the Marine Park Board. Other Reef advisory committees also include Indigenous members. Having Indigenous members well informed and active in advisory and decision-making processes is of vital importance to Reef management, and the Authority will work with members to continue to strengthen the effectiveness of their representation.

The Authority is committed to respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in all of its business, and continuously improving the cultural competence, respect and understanding of its staff. In 2018 the Authority launched its *Reflect*



Showcasing sea country connection in the Reef HQ Aquarium,  
© Commonwealth of Australia (GBRMPA)

*Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)*, which strongly supports these goals, including through cultural competency training and awareness raising.

Widespread promotion of the importance of Indigenous heritage values and Traditional Owner connection to sea country is necessary to build cultural awareness and sensitivity of the wider public and other Reef users. Actions under this strategy that encourage safe information sharing can support Traditional Owners to share information and cultural knowledge for widespread promotion by the Authority to stakeholders and the public. The Authority will work with Traditional Owners to increase its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content in its communication, promotional and educational tools to improve the understanding of thousands of Reef users. Key tools include Reef HQ Aquarium public displays and activities, the Reef Guardian program for schools, and a Reef Discovery Course targeted at educating tour operators.

## **Outcome 1: Keep heritage strong**

Respect, recognise and promote the connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with the Reef

### **Objectives and actions**

#### **O1.1 Empower Traditional Owners through our governance and advisory structures**

- A1.1.1 Maintain and strengthen effective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on governance and advisory forums, including the Marine Park Authority.

#### **O1.2 Respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in all our business**

- A1.2.1 Implement the Authority's Reconciliation Action Plan to increase cultural competency and actively contribute to reconciliation within the Authority and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

- A1.2.2 Acknowledge Traditional Owners and consider their interests in plans, policies and forums.

- A1.2.3 Identify culturally appropriate contacts and develop engagement protocols for each Traditional Owner estate within the Marine Park.

#### **O1.3 Promote understanding of Indigenous heritage values**

- A1.3.1 Develop a communications package and plan to increase promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional use, connection to sea country and heritage values to the broader public and other users of the Reef.

- A1.3.2 Integrate Indigenous heritage knowledge into Reef HQ Aquarium displays, activities and tours.

- A1.3.3 Develop and implement educational modules for schools to promote understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sea country connection and culture.

- A1.3.4 Finalise and implement modules for the Reef Discovery Course and incorporate into the Master Reef Guide certification to increase the cultural awareness of tourism operators.

- A1.3.5 Encourage and support Traditional Owner-led sea country naming, signage and language initiatives through Authority programs.

## Outcome 2: Keep heritage safe

Protect Indigenous heritage values through Authority processes

**This outcome envisages a future where Indigenous heritage is identified, considered and protected across the range of Authority tools and processes, such as planning, permitting and compliance.**

Protection of heritage values is one of the main objects of the Marine Park Act. The Authority is committed to working with Traditional Owners, who hold the expertise and knowledge on Indigenous heritage, to allow the Authority to better integrate consideration of Indigenous heritage into Authority processes. However, the Authority is currently limited in its consideration of Indigenous heritage by a paucity of information<sup>36</sup>. Indigenous heritage values have not been systematically identified by management agencies. Traditional Owners have been reluctant to share specific information on values because of cultural lore protecting cultural information and reservations around loss of control of information. In addition, physical mapping and recording of attributes requires resources to access country and resource data systems.

The Authority is committed to supporting Traditional Owners collate, store and manage their own Indigenous knowledge. Actions under this strategy aim to support Traditional Owners to have a strong, consolidated base of information to both inform their own sea country management, and to use to influence broader management of the Marine Park.

To enable protection of heritage through the Authority's processes, such as in planning, permitting and compliance, Traditional Owners may choose to share heritage information with the Authority. To ensure sharing is safe, secure and with free, prior, informed consent, the Authority is developing best practice protocols, systems and agreements on sharing of Indigenous knowledge.

Identifying Indigenous heritage in policy and planning processes is the most proactive method of recognising, considering and protecting heritage. The Authority is investigating how increased co-management and protection of heritage values might be achieved through its policy and planning tools. Coupled with Indigenous heritage information, especially in a spatial format, the Authority could then use appropriate planning tools for outcomes

such as protection of significant areas and increased co-management.

The Authority is committed to integrating Traditional Owner knowledge into the environmental assessment and permitting process. The Authority is working in partnership with Woppaburra Traditional Owners on a pilot project to trial how Traditional Owner expertise could be used to improve consideration of Indigenous heritage in the permit assessment process. The *Woppaburra Heritage Assessment Guidelines*<sup>37</sup> set out places and species of cultural significance, which trigger further consultation where heritage may be impacted. A consultation protocol sets out who to consult on specific activities proposed in the Woppaburra Traditional Use of Marine Resources Area. Following the trial, the Authority aims to work with other interested Traditional Owner groups to develop more place-specific guidelines to guide permitting decisions.

The Authority is committed to Traditional Owners having increasing input into Authority decision making. For this to occur it is essential that the Authority has the culturally-correct contacts and decision makers for each area and issue. The Authority is committed to developing a consultation process and protocol to ensure Traditional Owners have input into decisions and policies.



Protected area signage at Wunjunga Beach for cultural heritage site, © Commonwealth of Australia (GBRMPA)

36 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2014, *Great Barrier Reef Region Strategic Assessment 2014*, Commonwealth of Australia, at section 7.73  
37 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2017, *Woppaburra Traditional Owner Heritage Assessment Guidelines*

## **Outcome 2: Keep heritage safe**

Protect Indigenous heritage values through Authority processes

<b>Objectives and actions</b>	
<b>O2.1</b>	<b>Incorporate Indigenous heritage information into our processes</b>
A2.1.1	Develop and implement information sharing agreements and cultural protocols with Traditional Owner organisations to allow culturally appropriate access to traditional knowledge for planning and management.
A2.1.2	Develop geospatial data layer of Indigenous heritage value components for internal, external and Traditional Owner use.
A2.1.3	Develop and implement a cultural knowledge management system for managing information shared with the Authority.
<b>O2.2</b>	<b>Identify and protect Indigenous heritage in policy and planning</b>
A2.2.1	Investigate and trial use of planning tools to increase protection and management of culturally significant places (for example, TUMRAs, s39ZA arrangements and sea country plans).
<b>O2.3</b>	<b>Protect Indigenous heritage through compliance</b>
A2.3.1	Continue to strengthen the compliance capability of the Authority and Traditional Owner partners.
A2.3.2	Incorporate surveillance of sites having Indigenous heritage value into compliance plans and patrols.
<b>O2.4</b>	<b>Integrate Traditional Owner knowledge and input into our environmental assessment and permitting process</b>
A2.4.1	Develop and implement place-specific assessment guidelines which outline and map Indigenous heritage and engagement protocols for specific Traditional Owner estates.
A2.4.2	Work with native title bodies to better explain the Authority's processes and increase the effectiveness of the native title notification system.
A2.4.3	Develop guidance and templates for applicants on expectations for Traditional Owner consultation, provision of information and the identification of avoidance and mitigation measures.



### Outcome 3: Keep heritage healthy

Partner with Traditional Owners and others in Reef management

**This outcome envisages a future where Traditional Owners and other Reef managers manage the Reef together to keep sea country and Indigenous heritage strong, safe and healthy.**

The Authority is committed to supporting Traditional Owners manage and safeguard their Indigenous knowledge and heritage. A strong, consolidated Traditional Owner knowledge base contributes towards maintaining Indigenous knowledge and giving Traditional Owners a solid foundation for sea country planning and management. In addition, the Authority recognises it increases the ability of Traditional Owners to choose to share information on their values with other managers to increase co-management and heritage protection.

The Authority is committed to increasing co-management of the Reef with Traditional Owners. The Authority views co-management as encompassing a broad range of partnership activities and formal agreements with Traditional Owners to manage the Marine Park. Managing in partnership brings together thousands of years of Traditional Owner expertise and knowledge in sea country management with the legislative tools and expertise of the Authority to achieve

cultural, environmental and social outcomes. Building capacity through a small grants program and professional development will help position Traditional Owner organisations to be better able to engage in co-management activities.

The Authority aims to increase co-management through expanding, deepening and strengthening partnership activities, including engagement, Traditional Use of Marine Resource Agreements, Indigenous compliance programs and service level agreements for the delivery of environmental and heritage services. The Authority is also investigating other opportunities for partnerships which further support and progress co-management.

The Authority has relationships with many other Reef users and management authorities. The Authority can build understanding of Indigenous heritage and will help facilitate partnerships between Traditional Owners and other Reef users and managers.

The Authority is committed to supporting social and economic outcomes through programs and partnerships, recognising the larger goal of independent sustainable communities are essential to achieving better heritage outcomes in the long term.

The *Outlook Report* and the Reef 2050 Reef Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program will monitor, evaluate and report on the health of sea country, culture and heritage.

## **Outcome 3: Keep heritage healthy**

Partner with Traditional Owners and others in Reef management

<b>Objectives and actions</b>	
O3.1	<b>Support Traditional Owners to identify, assess, map and store knowledge on their heritage values</b>
A3.1.1	Conduct an assessment of Indigenous heritage values through supporting Traditional Owner led identification, mapping, recording and storage of information.
O3.2	<b>Partner with Traditional Owners to manage the Reef through shared decision-making, agreements and capacity building</b>
A3.2.1	Expand and strengthen partnerships with Traditional Owners to increase co-management and heritage planning, including through the use of TUMRAs.
A3.2.2	Explore opportunities to support Traditional Owners in sea country planning to assist integrated planning and management of estates.
A3.2.3	Implement a small grants program to develop capacity of Traditional Owner groups and individuals in sea country management.
A3.2.4	Investigate two-way capacity building initiatives between the Authority and Indigenous organisations, such as through secondments and exchanges.
O3.3	<b>Facilitate partnerships between Traditional Owners and other Reef managers</b>
A3.3.1	Facilitate partnerships between Traditional Owners and other government agencies and the private sector to benefit marine park management.
A3.3.2	Increase awareness and support Traditional Owners to adopt technology to assist in sea country management and knowledge exchange.
A3.3.3	Encourage partnerships between local councils and Traditional Owners.
A3.3.4	Investigate options to increase researcher and commercial operator understanding, acknowledgement and respect for heritage, and engagement with Traditional Owners.
O3.4	<b>Support social and economic outcomes through programs and partnerships</b>
A3.4.1	Expand the use of Traditional Owner and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land and sea management organisations (for example, through service level agreements) to deliver environmental or heritage protection on the Reef.
A3.4.2	Review current programs and processes to improve benefits to Traditional Owners engaged in sea country management.
O3.5	<b>Monitor, evaluate and report on the health of Indigenous heritage in the Reef</b>
A3.5.1	Support the development of Indigenous heritage indicators and monitoring to assess condition over time through the Reef Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program.

# Glossary and terms

**Co-management** is viewed by the Authority as encompassing a broad range of partnership activities and formal agreements with Traditional Owners to manage the Marine Park.

**Estate** means areas of country belonging to a particular group. Many sea country estates, and all adjacent coastal estates, have been mapped to particular Traditional Owner groups who can be contacted for information about their heritage in particular areas.

**Traditional Owner** has the meaning given by the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*. The Act provides that Traditional Owner means an Indigenous person:

- a. who is recognised in the Indigenous community or by a relevant representative Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander body:
  - i. as having spiritual or cultural affiliations with a site or area in the Marine Park; or
  - ii. as holding native title in relation to that site or area; and
  - iii. who is entitled to undertake activities under Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander custom or tradition in that site or area.

**Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement** means an agreement, developed in accordance with the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 1983*, by a Traditional Owner group, for the traditional use of marine resources in a site or areas of the Marine Park.



## About the artwork: “Bulmba Maminga” — Love and Care for the Country

For many thousands of years, we — the Bama, the people of this place — have followed one track, djumburru nyiwul. This track is the Law of the Dreaming of the Storytime. We call it Buluru. This Law links us with the creatures of this world, on the land, in the air and in the waters, and to the land itself — our bulmba — our home.

We have lived at one with the land and the waters and lived sustainably on their resources.

Our laws tell us that if we dig for yams we should never take them all, but leave some so there will be more in the future. We cared for the environment because our lives depended on it.

Since colonisation, much of our forest has been cleared and the lives of its creatures endangered; and now even the Reef is being affected. Our sea is being polluted. Rubbish on the land makes it to the sea and threatens ngawuyu (turtle), djulmburran (dugong) and other animals. Our Elders used to say: “Bulmba budan! Clean up the camp! Clean up the place!”

Today is no different — we must “Bulmba budan! Clean up the place!” Our future depends on it.

## About the artist: Zane Saunders

Zane Saunders identifies as Aboriginal, both Goongari (South Western Queensland — Mitchell, Carnarvon Gorge, Maranoa River region), which is his grandfather's lineage; and Badjula (South East Queensland — Fraser Island) — his grandmother's country.

Coming from a very strong visual arts background, Zane explores and investigates new visual expressions. While continuing his broad traditional visual arts output in painting and printmaking, Zane has courageously explored diverse and challenging mediums of installation, sculpture, media and contemporary performance.

Zane's visual art work is in many collections, including the National Gallery of Australia and the National Gallery of Victoria.



## Step of Change

The Authority commissioned this artwork for our *Reconciliation Action Plan*. The artwork represents the Authority's story in an Aboriginal way:

- The foot is shown as a group of islands which depicts the step we need to take to make change for the good of the Great Barrier Reef.
- The different blue colours in the background represent a ripple in the water. This indicates the change that will happen if we take a step now.
- The animals represent the life in and around the Reef.
- The aqua coloured lines represent the Great Barrier Reef coming to life.

## About the artist: Nicky Bidju Pryor

Nicky is a Juru Traditional Owner and his land and sea country extends from Home Hill to Bowen. He descends from the Birri Gubba nation on his grandfather's side and Gunggandji nation from Yarrabah on his grandmother's side. He spent a lot of time as a child with family line fishing, spearfishing and learning about the Great Barrier Reef. As an adult, he has been on conservation trips with family to learn more about turtles and what's being done to conserve the traditional land.





Australian Government

Great Barrier Reef  
Marine Park Authority

