



Australian Government

Great Barrier Reef  
Marine Park Authority

# GREAT BARRIER REEF Outlook Report 2019

© Matt Curnock

## PORTS

Twelve ports are located in the Great Barrier Reef Region.

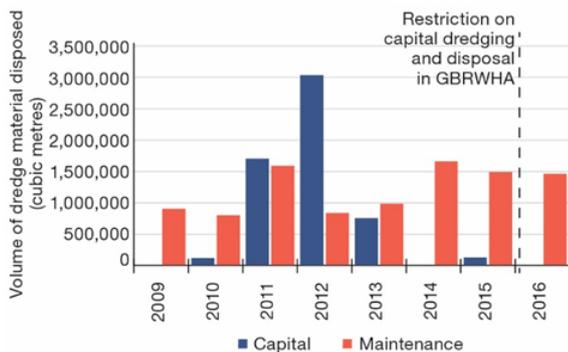
Since 2014, there have been regulatory changes to the management of ports and restriction on sea disposal of capital dredge material in the World Heritage Area.

The risk posed to the Region's ecosystem and heritage values by disposal of dredge material has decreased from high to medium.

### What the Outlook Report 2019 says about ports in the Region

Ports form an integral part of the maritime supply chain supporting industries, trade and local communities. Maritime port infrastructure, including shipping lanes, channels and berths, are critical to the ongoing operation of many trade industries.

The current condition of ports is measured by the trend in port related activities that influence the values of the Region (such as dredging and dredge material disposal) and the level of activity generated (trade throughput). Approved sea disposal areas offshore from ports in the Region cover approximately 66 square kilometres (<0.02 per cent of the Region).



Dredge material disposal (capital and maintenance) in the World Heritage Area. 2009 to 2016

### Benefits of ports

Combined trade throughput at the priority ports in the Region (Townsville, Abbot Point, Hay Point/Mackay and Gladstone) exceeded 262 million tonnes in 2016–17. This trade represents a 3.4 per cent decrease from the previous year.

Ports sustain jobs indirectly through the ongoing industrialisation and commerce in their local

communities. While comprehensive data on direct and indirect employment across ports in the Region are unavailable, in 2016–17 the priority ports generated employment of around 960 full-time equivalent jobs.

Ports contribute to long-term monitoring programs for seagrass, coral, benthic communities and water quality within the Region.

### Impacts of ports

Ports are an established use of the Region, and as with any other use, their presence and ongoing operation continues to pose a range of threats to habitats and species. Some impacts associated with the operation of the 12 ports in the Region have been reduced since 2009, while others persist. These include localised impacts from maintenance dredging and associated disposal of dredge material, artificial light from port infrastructure (which has increased in risk since 2014), noise and other pollution, such as coal dust, cargo and pollutant spills. The overall impact of ports is now high borderline with low due to reductions in some impacts.

### Management of ports

In June 2015, the Marine Park regulations were amended to restrict sea disposal of capital dredge material in the Marine Park. The *Sustainable Ports Development Act 2015* (Qld) provides for the protection of the World Heritage Area through managing port-related development in and adjacent to the area. Priority port master planning is also a substantial management initiative under this Act.

Independent reviewers found management effectiveness for ports in the Region was *very good to good*.

Find out more – [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au)