



Australian Government

Great Barrier Reef  
Marine Park Authority

# GREAT BARRIER REEF Outlook Report 2019

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## SHIPPING

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Cruise ships are getting larger, carrying more passengers and increasing in number.

Since 2014, shipping management has been coordinated and strengthened by implementation of the *North-East Shipping Management Plan*, which was revised in 2019.

The number of shipping incidents has remained relatively stable but other impacts, such as resuspension of sediment from propeller wash, anchoring, light and noise pollution, and whale strikes remain ongoing threats.

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

Given Australia is an island nation, shipping provides a critical servicing role and supports the economy through both imports and exports. Compared with other areas around Australia, shipping traffic through the Region is relatively limited. The number of ships visiting the Region has remained relatively stable since 2014 with number of voyages made by those ships slowly increasing.

#### Benefits of shipping

Ships that visit ports within the Reef provide important services to communities adjacent to the Region, transporting cargo as well as supporting tourism. The economic activity generated by shipping traffic provides a range of social and economic benefits to communities in the Region's catchment and beyond. There is currently no reliable estimate of the level of economic contribution from shipping within the Region.

Cruise ship and superyacht activities bring further potential economic benefits to the local tourism and recreation industries, resorts and mainland townships. Cruise ships are getting larger, carrying more passengers and increasing in number. The Reef cruise ship industry contributed an estimated \$501 million to the Queensland economy in 2017–18.

#### Impacts of ports

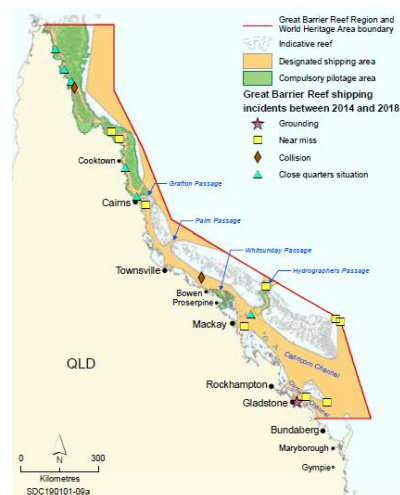
To date, the impacts of shipping have mainly been caused by physical damage and pollution from toxic antifoulant paint as a result of ship

groundings, oil spills, resuspension of sediments from propeller wash, damage to the seafloor from ship anchoring, illegal discharge of garbage (food waste and plastics), light pollution (from ships at anchor) and underwater ship-generated noise, as well as whale strikes. The number of shipping incidents since 2014 has remained relatively stable with no significant groundings since 2010.

#### Management of shipping

Agencies with responsibility for managing shipping and shipping safety in the Region are considered to be generally well equipped to undertake the required tasks. Shipping safety in the Region is well regulated and effectively managed through an extensive suite of control, risk-reduction and risk-response measures.

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



Location of shipping incidents, 2014–2018

FACT SHEET