



# LOCAL MARINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHAIRS' MEETING

COMMUNIQUE  
JULY 2025



## Introduction

Senior Reef Authority staff and Local Marine Advisory Committee (LMAC) Chairs and Secretaries (or their proxies) of the nine LMACs met in Townsville on 19 July 2025 as part of their official meeting schedule for the 2024-2027 LMAC term.

The meeting is held twice in every LMAC term (three years) and provides an opportunity for networking across the LMACs as well as with Reef Authority staff.

## Welcome

The Reef Authority's General Manager for Strategic Policy and Partnerships, Caroline Turnour, welcomed attendees to the meeting and paid respects to the Wulgurukaba and Bindal Traditional Owners and acknowledged their traditional lands and sea country.

## Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Update

Caroline Turnour provided an overview which included:

- Summary of Annual Operating Plan which continues to be progressive and innovative.
- Our Education and Engagement consists of Reef Guardian Schools and Councils, LMACs, High Standard Tourism Operators, Master Reef Guides, and Eye on the Reef.
- Communications and messaging around Marine Parks Zoning and compliance.
- The importance and value of the LMACs particularly as a source of local intelligence and are instrumental in assisting with Reef management priorities.
- In October 2025, the Reef Authority will bring together Traditional Owners and Reef stakeholders to explore interventions that support the resilience of the Reef in the face of increasing climate pressures.
- Reef Authority input into the Reef 2050 Plan review. The review will be looking for innovation and opportunities to work with other partners to ensure a holistic approach to Reef protection.

Richard Quincey, General Manager for Marine Park Operations, reported that:

- The branch handles compliance, permissions systems, interventions and Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRAs).
- Crown-of-thorns Starfish Control Program is a key Reef intervention that is working.
- Island Rehabilitation and Reef conservation actions are demonstrating ongoing success.

Fred Nucifora, General Manager for Major Projects, reported that:

- Re-development of the Great Barrier Reef Aquarium is on a positive trajectory. The opening of the aquarium is proposed for 2029. The staff have been re-homing aquarium species and growing corals during its closure.
- Currently developing the Southern Plan of Management and working with Traditional Owners on mapping cultural values. This mapping will then be layered with environmental values.
- The Reef Knowledge System is undergoing a process of simplification to ensure information is accessible.
- Comprehensive habitat mapping is underway.
- Douglas Shoal environmental remediation project is in the final stages. The reef Authority is currently working with Gladstone Ports Corporation.

## Key achievements and interests

The attendees introduced themselves and shared with the group the key achievements and topics of interests from their LMAC. These included:

- Cape York LMAC: There has been a huge increase in tourism in the region due to upgrades to the roads facilitating greater access to remote areas, resulting in increased recreational fishing pressures.
- Douglas LMAC: Declining water quality; recovering after flooding and bleaching events. Abandoned vessels and removal of wrecks is an ongoing issue. Tourism is the biggest industry in Port Douglas.
- Cairns LMAC: There are strong ties to tourism industry. Looking into long-term sustainability of tourism and getting messages out to the community.
- Hinchinbrook – Cassowary Coast LMAC: Has intense farming in the region and sustainable agriculture practises. Concerned about water quality and coastal management.
- Townsville: Issues include impacts of climate change, flooding, marine debris, biosecurity and algae. The underwater museum has created awareness of local inshore reefs.
- Whitsunday LMAC: Tourism is important to the economy of the area the community trying to strike a balance between industry, fishers and tourism. The region is now a Whale Heritage Area.
- Gladstone LMAC: The challenges when working with industry to minimise the impacts from land-based activities affecting the Reef. Concerned about marine debris from visiting boats, and water quality. Promoting the protection of turtles.
- Capricorn Coast LMAC: Working on reducing plastic use and increase signage at boat ramps.
- Burnett LMAC: Looking into Dark Skies Accreditation for the region.

## Reef Health and climate change

Mark Read, Director for Field Management Strategy, presented on the current health of the Great Barrier Reef. In his presentation, Mark included:

- The Reef Authority focuses on Reef health all year round but intensify the efforts over high-risk summer periods.
- Importance in communicating with our partner agencies to raise awareness and maximise collaborative efforts.
- The Reef Authority relies on climate forecasts, real-time monitoring of Reef conditions, and in-field monitoring to predict, forward plan and respond to significant Reef health events.
- Comparison of patterns of heat exposure in 2023-24 with 2024-25.
- A reflection of Reef health from the 2023-24 summer.
- What the Reef experienced in 2024-25.
- Current conditions.

## Panel – Which interventions are working to address increasing threats to the Great Barrier Reef and what is possible in the future?

The Reef Authority's Fiona Merida, Director Reef Education and Engagement; Mark Read, Director Field Management Strategy; David Williamson, Assistant Director Crown-of-thorns Starfish Science Management and Ed Roberts, Permits Manager for Science Government and Ports were

joined by Mia Hoogenboom, Acting Director Reef Restoration Adaptation Program at the Australian Institute of Marine Science on the panel.

Using the Tourism Reef Protection Initiative (Fiona), Reef Joint Field Management Program (Mark), Crown-of-thorns Starfish Program (David), Interventions Policy (Ed) and the Reef Restoration Adaptation Program (Mia) as examples, the panellists were asked which interventions are working to address increasing threats to the Great Barrier Reef and what is possible in the future.

They were also asked what Reef resilience means to them and if they had a magic wand, what would they try to improve.

### **Workshop – Three Horizons exercise ‘Interventions to protect the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef’.**

With the information provided during the panel discussion supported by table stimulus materials, the attendees workshopped:

#### **Horizon One:**

Listed what’s working well now and what is challenging and potentially not sustainable in the future.

Items that were identified as working well:

- Intergovernmental agreement – Reef Joint Field Management Program
- COTS Control Program
- Eye on the Reef
- Reef Guardians Programs
- Commercial fisheries management
- Stakeholder engagement
- Sustainable Ports Strategy
- LMACs
- Long Term Monitoring Program
- Traditional Use of Resources Agreements,
- Site stewardship via tourism operators (Mater Reef Guides)
- Shipping, shipping lanes, pilotage, and Reef Vessel tracking
- Marine Park zoning
- Care and hope in the community
- Coastal management and restoration
- Queensland’s Sustainable Fishing Strategy
- Outlook Report
- Outreach and partnership programs
- Permission systems (for some uses)
- Reef 2050 Plan
- Reef based tourism
- Marine Park Act.

#### **Horizon Three:**

They were then encouraged to visualise 2050 with a Reef that is thriving and used sustainably and then list what values would underpin this?



## Horizon Two:

Using the information from Horizon One and Horizon Three, attendees were asked to provide pathways on how to get from where we are now (Horizon One) to where we want to be (Horizon Three).

Themes identified to enable the desired future state included:

- Genuine recognition of the value of the ecosystem goods provided by the Reef
- Everyone needs to be involved for it to work
- Support Traditional Owner led initiatives and TUMRAs
- Data collection and use
- Effective water quality and catchment management processes
- Better management of recreational fishing
- Greater use of enabling technologies
- Costing mechanism as deterrent- all money raised goes to sustainable fishing
- Sustainable recreational fishing practices (education, lobbying, investment)

## Attendees:

### LMAC members

Jessie Price-Decle, Chair  
Cal Clarke, Proxy  
Heather Platt, Chair  
Rana Dadpour, Secretary  
Terry Cummins, Chair  
Michael Nash, Secretary  
Sharon Marks, Chair  
Adrian Bram, Proxy  
Deanna Vierling, Secretary  
Jo Stoye, Secretary  
Stuart Kininmonth, Chair  
Gail Riches, Secretary  
Mike Middleton, Chair  
Judith Stutchbury, Proxy

Cape York LMAC  
Cape York LMAC  
Douglas LMAC  
Douglas LMAC  
Cairns LMAC  
Hinchinbrook-Cassowary Coast LMAC  
Townsville LMAC  
Whitsunday LMAC  
Whitsunday LMAC  
Capricorn Coast LMAC  
Gladstone LMAC  
Gladstone LMAC  
Burnett LMAC  
Burnett LMAC

### Reef Authority

Caroline Turnour  
Richard Quincey  
Fred Nucifora  
Karen Markwort  
Chris Cochrane  
Fiona Merida  
Kevin Edison  
Carolyn Roche  
Kate Finch

General Manager  
General Manager  
General Manager  
Director  
Director  
Director  
Director  
Assistant Director, Strategic Engagement  
Strategic Engagement Officer

### Panel Members

David Williamson  
Mark Read  
Ed Roberts  
Mia Hoogenboom

Reef Authority  
Reef Authority  
Reef Authority  
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