

# Tourism

## What does the Outlook Report say about the Great Barrier Reef marine tourism industry?

The Great Barrier Reef is one of the healthiest coral reef ecosystems in the world. Around two million tourists visit the Great Barrier Reef each year. Almost three million additional people are transported by the tourism fleet to visit islands throughout the Region.

There are high levels of visitor satisfaction about the Great Barrier Reef tourism experience and the industry provides significant economic benefits to local communities. Tourism makes a significant contribution to the presentation and management of the Great Barrier Reef.

Climate change has major consequences for most aspects of marine-based tourism but marine tourism operators are working with marine managers to adopt best environmental practices in their operations and look at opportunities to adapt their industry in the face of climate change impacts.

*In 2006/07 Great Barrier Reef tourism contributed \$5.1 billion to the Australian economy.*

*During the same year, 54 000 full time positions across all industries were derived from the Great Barrier Reef. 92.7 per cent of these were employed in tourism.*

*Tourism use of the Great Barrier Reef is consistently focused in a small portion of the Region (i.e. Cairns/Port Douglas and the Whitsundays). About 80 per cent of all tourism activity occurs in about seven per cent of the Region.*

## How effectively is commercial marine tourism managed in the Marine Park?

The commercial marine tourism industry is managed under the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003*, the statutory Plans of Management for the Cairns Area, Hinchinbrook and Whitsundays, and through mandatory permitting.

Plans of Management set out detailed tourism management arrangements, including capping some permit types and defining maximum group and vessel sizes in individual locations. Site management arrangements and specific policies also apply to tourism operations.

More than four in every 10 tourists are now experiencing the Great Barrier Reef with a certified high standard operator recognised by the independent Eco Certification Program. This voluntary program is additional to the mandatory management arrangements for tourism operations.

The Outlook Report identifies that sound governance, industry partnerships and management processes are in place to manage marine based tourism in the Great Barrier Reef and that this arrangement is widely recognised as world leading.

The Report identifies that threats to the Great Barrier Reef ecosystem associated with tourism activities have been significantly reduced and are now considered to be generally low risk. It also identifies that coordinated and professional management of tourism ensures a sustainable industry that contributes to Marine Park management.