

# Southern Plan of Management

## JOINT STATEMENT



The Great Barrier Reef is vital to Traditional Owners, it is our lifeblood. Furthermore, the southern Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is important to all users, stakeholders and communities. Its values are many: cultural, environmental, economic, and social. These values, however, are under threat from increasing human use, western practices, broader climate change, lack of appropriate regulation, impacts from adjacent catchments and conflicts between users, uses and values<sup>2</sup>.

As users of this immense resource, we must reinforce the basic moral values of country, which are to Share, Care and Respect<sup>2</sup>.

First, we must understand how we define Country. Country is land, sea, air, stars, rocks, plants and animals – all things living and non-living. She is our spirituality. Country is Us<sup>1</sup>.

There has been so much damage to our Country, and she is struggling to recover from threats on a scale never faced before<sup>2</sup>.

Country is stressed and unhealthy, Country is crying<sup>1</sup>.

The Great Barrier Reef is Country. The Reef is our Heart and the water is the life-blood that connects us all<sup>1</sup>.

The Great Barrier Reef has been handed down from our Creator, through our ancestors, to manage and protect our Land and Sea Common Law Native Title Holder Rights on Country<sup>2</sup>.

She is our mother. The Reef is an extension of Us and we are an extension of Her<sup>1</sup>.

The Reef looks after us, feeds and protects us, and keeps us healthy. She's the keeper of our stories and our Lore<sup>1</sup>.

Without her we will suffer irreversible effects to our identity<sup>1</sup>.

The Reef Authority and Traditional Owners of the southern Great Barrier Reef (the Darumbal, Port Curtis Coral Coast, Woppaburra and Yuwi people) are working to protect the values of Country and its Lore. Together we stand united in solidarity for the care of the Great Barrier Reef<sup>2</sup>.

Together, the southern Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owners and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (the Reef Authority) will be developing a southern Great Barrier Reef Plan of Management. To better address threats, conflicts and identify opportunities for the future.

This Plan of Management will complement the existing Zoning Plan and offers a finer scale of management, well suited to identifying and implementing localised solutions.

The Plan of Management will be co-designed considering all aspects of Country. It includes tangible and intangible expressions of Traditional Owners' relationships with country, people, beliefs, knowledge, law, lore, language, symbols, ways of living, sea, land and objects, all arising from Indigenous spirituality.

The Plan of Management will be developed with an understanding of the link between a Healthy Reef and Healthy People. We will build upon our past traditions including Lore, Trading Routes, Song Lines, Language Lines and Creation Stories. The Plan will look towards the future where Strong People and Strong Country depend upon each other and include multiple components including Country's Health, People's Health, Heritage and Knowledge, Empowerment and Economics, Education, Culture and Community.

The Reef Authority, southern Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owners and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service will work collaboratively but also include coastal communities, stakeholders, government and non-government organisations who all care about the future of our Reef.

The multi-year journey for this new Plan of Management begins now.

It is time to come together to write the next chapter of Australia's history.

Together as One Mob, One Spirit, One Country.

**Join us.**

<sup>1</sup> From Healing Country statement - Great Barrier Reef Foundation

<sup>2</sup> Southern GBR Traditional Owner Reference Group