



Australian Government
Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority



Queensland
Government

REEF JOINT FIELD MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

ANNUAL REPORT



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The Reef Joint Field Management Program Annual Report 2024–25, by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (part of the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation), was approved by the Field Management Strategy Group on 21 November 2025.

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Cover: *Reef Sentinel* on patrol in the Palm Islands. © Commonwealth of Australia (Reef Authority)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised this publication may contain names and images of deceased persons.

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Artwork by Yirrganydji artist Tarquin Singleton.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and custodians of Land and Sea Country in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. As the Great Barrier Reef’s first managers, their enduring connections, wisdom and expertise have guided the care and protection of the Reef for millennia. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

THE STORY BEHIND THE ARTWORK

Yirrganydji artist Tarquin Singleton was commissioned to capture the essence of the Reef Joint Field Management Program, which is dedicated to protecting the Great Barrier Reef’s unique wildlife and the places they call home.

The artwork reflects the deep connection between people, culture and Sea Country. The Great Barrier Reef is home to many iconic and culturally significant species, including turtles, sharks, rays, dugongs, dolphins, seabirds and whales.

The coral reef represents Sea Country itself, while a school of fish weaving through the islands and cays symbolises the interconnectedness of land and sea and the shared responsibility to protect these areas.

In the background, the dots represent stars and coral spawning, and the lines depict the winds and currents that sustain the Reef’s life and movement.



Rangers and a Reef Authority officer at Capricornia Cays National Park—united in Reef conservation.
© Queensland Government

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (World Heritage Area), the planet’s largest coral reef ecosystem, is renowned for its extraordinary biodiversity and interconnectedness. Covering 348,000 km², it includes over 2,900 reefs and 1,050 islands, holding immense environmental, cultural, social and economic value both locally and globally.

The Reef Joint Field Management Program (the Program) plays a crucial role in protecting this iconic natural wonder from growing pressures and safeguarding the World Heritage Area for future generations. Working to lead or support more than 80% of the strategic actions under the *Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan*, it manages the Commonwealth Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, the state Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park and various island protected areas, including Commonwealth and national park sites.

The Program is jointly delivered by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (Reef Authority) and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), a division of the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI). Reinforced by the *Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement 2024*, it represents a model of collaborative excellence between the Australian and Queensland governments and relies on vital partnerships with Traditional Owners, other government agencies, research institutions, industry stakeholders and the wider community to deliver a broad range of field activities.

This report details the Program’s achievements in addressing threats and enhancing the resilience of species, habitats and ecosystems across the World Heritage Area. It reports on progress in implementing the Program’s *Annual Business Plan 2024–25* through a range of activities, including conservation actions, monitoring changes, responding to incidents, welcoming visitors and upholding compliance. This year’s highlights include entering paid service arrangements with 16 Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger groups, conducting planned burns to mitigate

bushfire risks on islands, successfully translocating green turtle eggs to improve hatching success, progressing ReefScan surface and deep-water trials, and continuing to reduce the risks of illegal fishing to maintain a long-term declining trend.

The Program’s dedication to workforce safety has earned it numerous awards in the 2025 DETSI Director-General’s Safety Behaviour Awards, including for the development of the targeted Human Factors in vessel operations training course; for individual leadership in fostering a culture of safety; and for the *Tamoya II* crew, who rescued two people from a capsized vessel. Ensuring the health and safety of all staff remains the Program’s highest priority.

Despite the Program’s successes, the Great Barrier Reef (the Reef), like many reefs globally, continues to face significant challenges, particularly from climate change. Following a widespread coral bleaching event in early 2024, UNESCO’s draft decision on the Reef’s State of Conservation recognised the Program’s efforts and called for sustained adaptation programs and increased funding for innovation. Another bleaching event in 2025, that impacted the northern half of the World Heritage Area, underscores the ongoing need for hands-on management and innovation through the Program to strengthen Reef resilience.

This report describes the highlights of the Program over the last year and summarises some of the priority projects that are critical to protecting the Reef’s values. Some statistics may differ from those in the Reef Authority’s *Corporate Report 2024–25* and DETSI’s *Annual Report 2024–25* due to differences in data extraction and validation timing.



Denham Island, Flinders Group National Park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land).
Hamon Williams © Queensland Government

FINANCE SUMMARY

The Australian and Queensland governments allocated funding of \$40,001,720 through the Program’s Annual Business Plan 2024–25 to deliver field activities across the World Heritage Area.

The Program’s available funds of \$40,001,720, included Australian and Queensland government appropriations of \$18,394,301 and \$19,218,069 respectively, \$1,980,766 in carryover funds from 2023–24, and other discretionary funding and additional revenue.

At the end of 2024–25, the Program’s expenditure of \$40,128,416 was within 0.3% of the available funds. This is an improvement from 5.2% in 2023–24. The Reef Authority held funds of \$323,808 and QPWS was in debit by \$450,504.

The Program also received funding from other sources that contributed to field delivery in 2024–25, including:

- offset funding for Queensland and Australian government approvals associated with Curtis Island liquefied natural gas projects
- Curtis Island Environmental Management Precinct
- Australian Government Ocean Leadership Package funding for the Raine Island Recovery Project
- Australian Government funding for the Great Barrier Reef Green Turtle Research Program
- Queensland Government funding for Green Island Recreation Area management, the Reef Management Technology Initiative, and joint management of National Parks (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land)
- Australian Government Reef Trust funding for summer Reef health assessments, the Restoration of Reef Islands Project and the Reef Islands Rehabilitation Project
- Queensland Government Reef Package funding for Whitsunday Island walking tracks, the Great Barrier Reef Island Arks Acquisition project and the Reef Trails project.



Other funding sources included Australian Government funding, such as for the Green Turtle Research Program. © Commonwealth of Australia (Reef Authority)

ACHIEVEMENTS IN BRIEF



WORKING WITH TRADITIONAL OWNERS

MANAGING COUNTRY TOGETHER



38 new **Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers** trained to address non-compliance in their Sea Country.

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS



Paid service arrangements in place with **16 Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger groups**.

BUILDING SKILLS



7 work placements for **Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers** in the Program since 2021.



RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS

REOPENING ISLANDS TO VISITORS



repaired and reopened **32 km of walking tracks** and **20 camping areas** after the north Queensland floods.

ASSESSING REEF HEALTH



Conducted aerial surveys over **281 reefs** from Townsville to the Torres Strait.

PROTECTING HABITAT



Mitigated risks associated with managing **50 maritime events**, including **23 groundings** and **15 sinkings**, down from 123 events in 2023–24.



DELIVERING CONSERVATION ACTIONS

PROTECTING ISLAND VALUES



Pest control activities removing **453 deer** from newly acquired **Long Island**, protecting **critically endangered littoral rainforest and coastal vine thickets**.

INCREASING ISLAND PROTECTED AREA ESTATE



Gazettal of **434 ha** of new acquisitions, now totalling **2,026 ha** over **25 national park aggregations** over the multi-year **Island Arks** project.

IMPROVING MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS



39 planned burns treating **4,206 ha**, mitigating bushfire impacts on island habitats.



WELCOMING PEOPLE

ENHANCING VISITOR EXPERIENCE



With **campground upgrades** at **Little Ramsay Bay and Zoe Bay** along the **Thorsborne Trail** on **Munamudanamy (Hinchinbrook Island)** and new interpretive signs installed on **Heron and North West** islands.

ENGAGING WITH WORLD HERITAGE AREA USERS



5,803 contacts with users while on patrol; **97%** of visitors during these contacts had access to zoning information, an increase from 96% in 2023–24.

INFORMING THE COMMUNITY



7.86 million people reached by social media content and an estimated **225 million** people potentially reached through proactive media activities.



CHECKING FOR CHANGE

SURVEILLING OUTBREAKS



64 days of dedicated crown-of-thorns starfish (COTS) monitoring, delivering **1,013 in-water surveys** and **3,298 manta tows** across **94 reefs** covering **641 km of reef margin**.

WATCHING ISLANDS



Health checks conducted on **7 island national parks** checking condition of key values and **166 Island Watch** surveys.

MONITORING IMPACTS



2,000 Reef Health Impact Surveys (RHIS) delivered across **206 reefs**, including **310 surveys** during the **summer widespread coral bleaching event**.



UPHOLDING COMPLIANCE

PROTECTING THE REEF



Delivered **1,109 dedicated compliance days** to deter illegal activity—**970 vessel**, **52 land based** and **87 aerial surveillance days**.

EFFECTIVE COMPLIANCE MESSAGING



97% of recreational fishers contacted in the marine parks had zoning information onboard, directly contributing to voluntary compliance and reducing the impacts of illegal fishing.

REDUCING THE RISK OF ILLEGAL COMMERCIAL FISHING



Over the past five years, electronic vessel tracking and the compliance program's strategies have led to an **82% reduction in commercial fishing offences**.



Mandubarra Aboriginal Land and Sea Inc.
rangers on a bridled terns survey trip. © Styleedia

HIGHLIGHTS AND PROJECT OUTCOMES



WORKING WITH TRADITIONAL OWNERS

The Program acknowledges the ongoing custodianship of the World Heritage Area by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is committed to supporting Traditional Owners to actively engage in Land and Sea Country management. QPWS also works in joint management arrangements for National Parks (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land) with Traditional Owners. The Program’s *Traditional Owner Partnership Strategy 2022–2027* provides the framework for strengthening and guiding these partnerships.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Finalised the *Bajjal Habitat Restoration Plan* with the Mandubarra Traditional Owners and environmental delivery partner Aestra. Developed as part of the Restoration of Reef Islands Project (see page 10), the plan establishes a vision for traditional ecological knowledge and Western science working together to support a healthy and resilient environment on Bajjal (Stephens Island). Informed by on-ground threat assessments, the plan will improve important bridled tern habitat and critically endangered rainforest communities and support improved decision-making and ongoing management of Mandubarra Sea Country.
- Delivered Eyes and Ears Compliance Training to 38 Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers from Juunjuwarra, Gunggandji Mandingalbay Yidinji, Darumbal, Woppaburra and Port Curtis Coral Coast. The training provides an understanding of allowable activities in the marine park and gives Indigenous rangers skills to observe, record and report on any suspected non-compliance issues in their Sea Country. To support Woppaburra’s newly recruited Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger team, the training was provided on Country on Woppa (Great Keppel Island) for the first time. The Program also provided compliance summaries for respective areas.
- Provided a work placement for an Indigenous ranger who has now secured a position with their corporation. These successful placements promote two-way learning and help build partnerships between the Program and Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger (QILSR) groups. Seven work placements have been coordinated since 2021, with participants often securing further employment either with QPWS or with Indigenous corporations.
- Supported five new Indigenous staff to commence the two-year Indigenous Rangers Leadership Program in March 2025. The Program has now supported 20 Indigenous staff over the past five years to participate in this leadership program.



Indigenous Rangers Leadership training in Mareeba. © Styleedia



Erubam Le Traditional Custodian and Green Turtle Research Program cultural adviser on Country.
© Commonwealth of Australia (Reef Authority)

Paid service arrangements

Paid service arrangements were coordinated with 16 different Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger groups, including (see map 13 for partnership activities):

- Dawul Wuru (Yirrganydji) to deliver Michaelmas Cay monthly bird surveys
- Eastern Kuku Yalanji and Yirrganydji for the Low Isles gravesite project
- Giringun to deliver compliance, bird surveys, natural resource management and asset maintenance
- Yuwi to undertake compliance
- Dingaal to deliver natural resource management, asset maintenance and values-based management planning
- Gunggandji for work on the Fitzroy Island working group and natural resource management
- Wulgurukaba for work on the Yunbenun Advisory Group and for the Yunbenun Rangers
- Bandjin and Girramay for work on the Munamudanamy Working Group
- Woppaburra for an Indigenous ranger work placement
- Mandubarra for restoration works on a fish trap
- Darumbal for vessel patrols, natural resource management and asset maintenance
- Meriam Le and Wuthathi for cultural and natural resource management on Raine Island
- Erubam Le, Kuuku Ya'u and Meriam Le for work on the Great Barrier Reef Green Turtle Research Program.

To reduce administrative burden on Traditional Owner groups that partner with multiple agencies and manage numerous grants and contracts, the Program is now trialling a streamlined approach to paid service arrangements. Where groups have an established QILSR arrangement funded by DETSI, Program work will now be embedded into the groups' annual QILSR work plans. The first trial with Dawul Wuru to conduct bird surveys has proven successful. Arrangements with other groups will proceed in 2025–26.



Seventeen Indigenous rangers from 10 Traditional Owner groups completed Program-funded dive training, bringing the total to 58 rangers from 20 groups with scuba certifications. © Queensland Government

Disposal of small vessels to Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger groups

The Program established a targeted tender process to dispose of its small vessels to QILSR groups, providing them an economical option to purchase fit-for-purpose commercial vessels to manage their Sea Country. Program vessels have a demonstrated history of excellent return on sale and reliable post-sale use by external parties. Replacing a public auction, the new process requires expressions of interest to be submitted by QILSR groups and then assessed by an evaluation panel to identify the most suitable bid. Groups are also required to have an independent marine surveyor assess the vessel prior to making a final decision. Two vessels will be sold to QILSR groups using this method in 2025–26, with further vessels to follow in future years.

Planned burn on Konomie (North Keppel Island), Keppel Bay Islands National Park. © Queensland Government

DELIVERING CONSERVATION ACTIONS

The Program delivers conservation actions to protect and recover important natural and heritage values, including coral reefs, seagrass meadows, mangrove forests, coral cays, continental islands, wetlands, threatened species and cultural heritage.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Improved conservation outcomes and bushfire mitigation on protected area islands through the annual burn program. Extra resources provided by the QPWS Fire Management Uplift Program (FMUP) assisted in exceeding the burn target, with 4,206 ha burnt in 39 planned burns (see map 2 for planned burning locations). The FMUP also facilitated an increase in cross-region aerial ignition and the use of drones and fixed-wing aircraft for aerial ignition. An increase in staged burning on Curtis Island is achieving a broadscale mosaic, significantly reducing potential bushfire impacts and improving habitat for the endangered yellow chat.



Wuthathi Traditional Owners relocating turtle eggs to Sir Charles Hardy National Park (CYPAL) as part of trial. © Queensland Government



Magnetic Island National Park planned burn. © Queensland Government

- Translocated 38 northern green turtle egg clutches from Raine Island to Wuthathi (Sir Charles Hardy Group) National Park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land) as part of the Raine Island Recovery Project Phase 2. Aiming to improve hatching success and male turtle recruitment, the project demonstrated that eggs can be relocated successfully. The hatching success of the relocated eggs was 70%—approximately the same as the hatching success of nests on Raine Island during the same period. Monitoring showed that nest temperatures throughout the incubation period were above the pivotal sex-determination temperature, meaning it is unlikely that many male hatchlings were produced. In 2025–26, the project will relocate around 100 clutches of eggs and install a shade structure on the island to reduce the incubation temperatures.

- Relocated the historic gravesite of Jane Ann Owen, the first lightkeeper's wife, on Low Island to protect it from shoreline erosion. Following the excavation and exhumation of the grave by archaeologists from the DETSI Heritage Branch and the University of Southern Queensland, skeletal remains were reinterred with ceremony in a new position on the island. Field support was provided by Jabalbina Indigenous Rangers, Low Isles caretakers and Low Isles Preservation Society volunteers. The grave is a feature of the Commonwealth Heritage listed lightstation and the project ensures the conservation of its significant heritage values.



The successfully relocated gravesite on Low Isles. © Commonwealth of Australia (Reef Authority)



Whitsunday Islands National Park, where biosecurity measures continue to prevent a yellow crazy ant incursion. © Queensland Government

HIGHLIGHTS

- Added 434 ha of new acquisitions to Curtis Island National Park, bringing the total Island Arks acquisitions over the course of the multi-year project to 161 islands (or parts thereof) with 2,026 ha across 25 national park aggregations.



Curtis Island National Park, where the protected area continues to grow through Island Arks acquisitions. © Queensland Government

- Continued biosecurity measures to prevent a yellow crazy ant incursion on national park islands in the Whitsundays. Yellow crazy ants pose a significant threat to the tourism value of the islands and are established on the Whitsunday mainland and Hamilton Island. Guided by a pest management plan, the Program undertakes baited surveillance across multiple islands and supports QPWS Central Region in surveys and control methods on the mainland.

- Implemented strategic pest animal control activities on islands to protect key values, including (see map 2 for all pest control locations):
 - Persistent control of pigs on Munamudanamy (Hinchinbrook Island) over two years, significantly reducing their impacts along the Thorsborne Trail. The Program is now considering eradication of pigs as the new target.
 - Control of black rats on North West Island, with eradication expected to be achieved by the end of 2025, protecting seabird nesting habitat. Mice were eradicated from North West Island in 2022.
 - Control of introduced wallabies on St Bees Island to reduce impacts on woodlands and grasslands. Nearly 2,000 wallabies were humanely euthanised. Thermal drones were used to undertake wallaby census counts and monitor progress of the control program.



Nesting noddies, one of the seabird species at North West Island protected through pest management. © Queensland Government



Revegetation at St Bees Island, following Island Arks acquisitions. © Queensland Government

PRIORITY PROJECTS

Restoration of Reef Islands

The Restoration of Reef Islands Project commenced in 2020–21 with the aim of improving island habitat resilience. In 2024–25 the project continued to assess intervention options with environmental delivery partner Aestra, Mandubarra Aboriginal Land and Sea Incorporated and Girringun Aboriginal Corporation. Development of the project’s rapid assessment tool was finalised and implemented during surveys. Reports were completed for bridled terns at Bajjigal Island; active threat assessments at Bimi, North and Eva islands; and Rapid+ surveys at additional northern and far northern Reef islands.

The *Bajjigal Habitat Restoration Plan* was completed (see highlight on page 7 for more detail) and work will now continue with Mandubarra Aboriginal Land and Sea Incorporated and Aestra to deliver the on-ground restoration activities highlighted in the plan.

[Australian Government Reef Trust funding, \$5.4 million]



Restoration of Reef Islands Project field trip to Brook Islands National Park with Girringun Aboriginal Corporation. © Commonwealth of Australia (Reef Authority)

Island Arks Acquisition

While the initial \$6 million Great Barrier Reef Island Arks Acquisition project was finalised in June 2024, rehabilitation works are continuing on new acquisitions to improve natural and cultural heritage values. Revegetation of three former demolition areas on St Bees Island is now established, with a 95% plant survival rate. Pest animal control activities on Long Island (Broad Sound Island National Park) have removed 453 deer, allowing natural vegetation to begin recovery and reducing impacts on sensitive turtle nesting areas. Demolition works on Collins Island are planned for 2026–27, when the required \$2 million funding will be available. Further acquisitions are proceeding and due to be dedicated in 2025–26.

[Queensland Government Reef Package funding, \$1 million ongoing]

Reef Islands Rehabilitation

The Reef Islands Rehabilitation project began in 2023–24 to implement the *Lady Elliot Island Ecosystem Resilience Plan* and remove asbestos-containing material from Pine Islet. In 2024–25, an additional 14,150 m² of land was revegetated by Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort and dedicated volunteers. All *Pisonia grandis* planting has now been completed, marking a transition to the propagation and planting of native shrubs, grasses and groundcover species. Most *Pisonia grandis* forest areas, along with some coastal zones, have reached the minimum maintenance phase. With only one exception, all permanent monitoring sites are on track to achieving the establishment of the desired regional ecosystem. The introduction of herbicide treatments and other management tools has led to increased efficiency in weed control. Trials are currently underway to assess the effectiveness of various techniques aimed at depleting the soil weed seed bank prior to planting. These results are expected to further enhance the efficacy of future weed management efforts.

Planning continued for removal of cyclone-damaged asbestos-containing buildings on Pine Islet. Project scope, method and cost estimates are near finalisation with a contracted quantity surveyor.

[Australian Government Reef Trust funding, \$7.4 million; Great Barrier Reef Foundation Reef Islands Initiative funding will cease in 2026]



North West Island, Capricornia Cays National Park.
© Queensland Government

CHECKING FOR CHANGE

The Program checks for change on islands and in the water to monitor reef and island condition and the extent of existing or emerging threats. Checking for change identifies impacts of the main threats to the World Heritage Area and enables appropriate management actions to be implemented.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Delivered 2,000 RHIS to maintain awareness of Reef health and threats to inform management actions—1,013 surveys focused on COTS outbreak severity and extent; 461 surveys completed during the high-risk period from September to March; 310 surveys undertaken as incident responses to assess coral bleaching severity; 100 surveys completed to assess impacts of Tropical Cyclone Alfred; and 116 surveys undertaken outside the high-risk period (see map 3 for RHIS locations).
- Deployed ReefScan Surface successfully during COTS survey trips. Fifty-seven reefs were surveyed in synchrony with traditional manta tows to compare the efficiency of data capture and the results of data analysis between the new equipment technology with automated analysis and the traditional manta tow methods. Initial comparisons show similar data analysis outputs between both methods. Trials began for ReefScan Deep, with 23 reefs surveyed up to 35 m depth for benthic ecosystem and COTS data. Development will continue to refine equipment performance and trial the equipment with field staff.
- Trialled thermal imaging drones at North West Island to enable population census and reproductive success monitoring of wedge-tailed shearwater and black noddy populations. This also reduces the need for access and disturbance to nesting area burrows. Trailcam systems were installed and new bespoke systems are being developed to capture high-resolution imagery alongside development of machine learning models to conduct reliable species counts.
- Maintained vigilant surveillance of pests by delivering 166 Island Watch surveys, which act as an early warning system for potential pest incursions and are an essential biosecurity tool.
- Collaborated with Parks Australia to develop an island monitoring strategy for the Coral Sea Marine Park. Specialist Program staff assisted with island health assessment training and seabird monitoring techniques on voyages, sharing experience and skills between two marine park management agencies.
- Supported monitoring of turtle nesting and foraging index sites at Raine, Heron, Wreck, Wild Duck, Peak, Curtis and Green islands and the Piper Island group. The Program provides vessels, accommodation, remote camping equipment, biosecurity and logistical support for research partners undertaking turtle tagging, monitoring of nest incubation success and other activities (see map 4 for turtle monitoring locations).
- Supported DETSI's Heritage Unit in November 2024 to survey the historic shipwrecks of *Moltke* and *Octopus* near Yunbenun (Magnetic Island). Staff from the Program, DETSI and the Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) completed 28 scuba dives over four days from Program vessel *Reef Sentinel* to assess the wrecks' condition and inform a wider understanding of underwater cultural heritage deterioration and preservation.



Manta tow, as part of Reef Health Impact Surveys (RHIS). Anna Darby © Queensland Government



Green turtle research in the Torres Strait.
© Commonwealth of Australia (Reef Authority)

PRIORITY PROJECTS

Great Barrier Reef Green Turtle Research Program

In 2024–25, field activities included a second broadscale aerial survey and topographical survey of turtle nesting beaches north of Princess Charlotte Bay and across the Torres Strait, one satellite tagging trip to reefs off Mer Island, and two foraging ground population monitoring surveys at the Piper Island group and reefs off Erub Island in the eastern Torres Strait. Fieldwork is now completed, and this multi-year project has been extended by 12 months with Reef Trust and DCCEEW to allow for final data analysis, reporting, and delivery of the Socialisation and Outreach Project.

[Australian Government Reef 2050 Plan implementation funding]



Green turtle research in the Piper Islands. © Commonwealth of Australia (Reef Authority)

Island health checks consolidation

The aim of the island health checks consolidation project was to improve the implementation of health checks—the foundational monitoring tool to track the condition and trend of key values on protected area islands in the World Heritage Area. In 2024–25, the project rolled out staff training on the use of the new QPWS Monitr app and delivered all required health checks on Raine, Green, Munamudanamy (Hinchinbrook), Yunbenun (Magnetic), Whitsunday, Lizard and Curtis islands and Capricornia Cays.

Marine megafauna management

Marine megafauna management progressed in 2024–25 through developing working relationships with partner agencies and convening the inaugural Marine Turtle Workshop with DETSI's Wildlife and Threatened Species Operations (WTSO) team. The joint workshop will now be held annually to collaborate on and guide priorities and management actions for marine turtles.

A gap analysis was undertaken of Program and WTSO activities in the *Queensland Marine Turtle Conservation Strategy* and it was decided not to proceed with developing an implementation plan for the Program's activities at this time. Instead, the status of actions in the strategy will now be maintained and updated annually by the Program and WTSO, who will continue to collaborate on Queensland marine turtle management.



Turtle tracks at Wreck Island. © Queensland Government



Sunken vessel in the Whitsundays.
© Maritime Safety Queensland



RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS

Field management staff respond to incidents to minimise harm to the World Heritage Area’s outstanding universal value, including ship and smaller vessel groundings and sinkings, pollution spills, bushfires, pest incursions, stranded marine animals and severe weather events, such as flooding.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Responded to severe flooding in north Queensland in February–March 2025, when over 3 m of rain fell over the two months. The Program closed 18 island national parks between Mission Beach and Townsville for safety, then within two weeks had inspected, undertaken works on and reopened all 32 km of walking tracks and 20 campgrounds within the affected area. The response was supported by the Program’s high-speed 21 m overnight barge *Island Guardian*, enabling rangers to deliver an extended multi-day recovery program with all required equipment transported on the barge. The Program has built over \$10 million worth of recreational visitor infrastructure over the last 10 years, providing high-quality products resilient to extreme weather events.
- Assisted other QPWS regions by sending Program fire crew—equalling 53 person days—to assist in bushfire response in central and south-west Queensland. Three bushfire incidents were recorded in the World Heritage Area but no response was required in these cases (see map 7 for bushfire locations).
- Removed 21 grounded, sunk or abandoned vessels to protect World Heritage Area values. Four of these removals were undertaken cooperatively with the Sea Country Traditional Owners (see map 6 for all maritime incidents).
- Improved preparedness through revising the Incident Management Framework for the World Heritage Area and drafting a risk assessment framework to prioritise the Program’s response to maritime and environmental incidents, ensuring effort is focused where it is needed.
- Conducted two site assessments of damage after commercial fishing vessels ran aground, at Cairns Reef near Cooktown and Sweetlip Reef at the Swains. These assessments showed significant damage at both sites, with damage to 46% of corals over a 95 m² area at Cairns Reef and an extensive detritus field and benthic damage over the 71 m grounding scar at Sweetlip Reef. The assessments used a variety of methods to document whether damage to the benthos had occurred, and attempted to ascertain the extent and severity of damage. They also established a causal link between the suspect vessel and the damage. The documented results of the assessments at Cairns Reef led to a successful prosecution, with a fine and a conviction recorded.
- Recorded a rise in marine animal strandings from 279 in 2023–24 to 373 in 2024–25, with marine turtles contributing to most of the increase (see map 7 for stranding locations). This may reflect improved reporting via the updated QWildlife platform and through greater community involvement and reporting, or impacts from adverse weather events affecting foraging populations in the World Heritage Area.



Banfield Reef bleaching during aerial Reef health surveys.
Rance Yule © Pacific Marine Group

Tropical Cyclone Alfred response

Severe Tropical Cyclone Alfred tracked south through the Coral Sea in late February 2025. Fluctuating in intensity from a Category 1 to a Category 4 system, the cyclone caused significant damage to south-east Queensland, including to national parks and other protected areas, through coastal erosion, damaging winds, heavy rainfall and flooding. As the cyclone approached, the Program applied emergency response procedures, closed island national parks in the possible future path of the cyclone and assisted in evacuating turtle researchers from Heron Island.

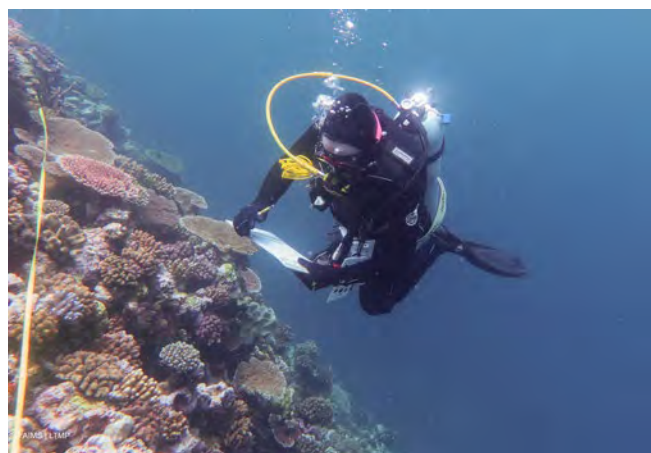
In the aftermath, Program staff undertook 100 RHIS on the coral reefs in the Capricornia Cays and cleared and reopened closed camping areas at Keppel Bay Islands and Curtis Island national parks. Contributing to the wider community response, the Program also dedicated 12 staff to assist in state protected area clean-up efforts throughout south-east Queensland, working to reopen 85 national parks, state forests and conservation areas.



Aerial surveys conducted by AIMS and Reef Authority, March 2025.
Nicholas James © Commonwealth of Australia (Reef Authority)

Coral bleaching and summer Reef health assessment

The Program monitors Reef health year round, with increased focus during the high-risk summer period. In early December 2024, the annual Pre-Summer Reef Health Workshop produced coordinated communication and management response strategies with key partners in anticipation of possible bleaching. By March 2025, satellite and in-water monitoring data indicated prolonged heat exposure and increasing bleaching prevalence in the northern and far northern regions. In response, the Program's Reef Health team coordinated aerial and in-water surveys to assess bleaching across the World Heritage Area. Aerial surveys of 281 reefs in the northern and far northern regions revealed that bleaching was most prevalent between Cooktown and Cape York, where 41% of 162 mid-shelf and inshore reefs exhibited medium to high bleaching (11–60%). In-water surveys across 178 reefs (3,102 surveys) in the northern, central and southern regions supported aerial observations, with similar patterns in the north and mostly low bleaching in the central and southern regions. However, extensive flood plumes from record rainfall in the central region caused freshwater-related coral bleaching and some mortality north of the Burdekin River mouth, highlighting the compounding effects of heat stress and extreme weather events on coral health.



Diver conducting a survey. © AIMS



Welcoming a fishing family during a patrol in the Palm Islands.
© Commonwealth of Australia (Reef Authority)



WELCOMING PEOPLE

The Program welcomes people to appreciate, respect and enjoy the World Heritage Area by improving community understanding of values and threats, and providing visitor facilities to enable ecologically sustainable use. The Program welcomes the involvement of industry and the broader community in field delivery and the protection and recovery of reefs, islands and species.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Completed the *Magnetic Island National Park Visitor Strategy*. Yunbenun (Magnetic Island) is an iconic tourism destination for the region, known for its striking natural beauty. Located just off the coast of Townsville, Yunbenun attracts around 300,000 visitors annually. The visitor strategy is focused on respecting and recognising the Wulgurukaba People's cultural values and the natural and cultural values of the park. It will guide sustainable visitor experiences and promote Yunbenun as one of Queensland's premier nature-based visitor destinations.
- Managed 1,565 active joint permits covering 7,257 permissions across the marine parks—including 954 tourism permits.
- Enabled sustainable use, granting 185 joint permits, 30 state marine park permits, 57 commercial activity permits and 12 commercial activity agreements in 2024–25. Risk-based environmental assessment and regulation is essential to effective management of the World Heritage Area and supporting tourism on the Reef.
- Encouraged voluntary compliance by Reef users through the Know Your Zone recreational fishing campaign, resulting in 42,000 zoning map downloads, 5,000 QR scans, 18,000 Eye on the Reef app downloads and 112,000 website views.
- Fostered community stewardship and increased the response to low-priority marine animal strandings by trained volunteers or Indigenous rangers by 11% since 2023–24. There are now 22 active and trained volunteer groups along the Queensland coastline that assist the Program by responding to low-priority strandings. These groups respond in the field to marine turtle incidents that are submitted via the QWildlife app or the strandings hotline. They also work with rehabilitation centres and veterinarians and enter strandings data into QWildlife.
- Maintained visitor infrastructure on islands to support safe and enjoyable visitor experiences, showcasing the World Heritage Area's natural assets (see map 8 for locations of infrastructure).
- Elevated the profile of the Program with media stories, interviews, radio engagements and media briefings resulting in 1,790 media mentions and total potential reach of 2 million (a daily average of 616,000 people)—measured using the Reef Authority's media monitoring platform Meltwater. The Reef Authority and DETSI reached a total of 7,860,000 people through social media posts, with wildlife-related posts delivering the widest reach.



New visitor facilities at Hinchinbrook Island National Park.
© Queensland Government

PRIORITY PROJECTS

Multi-day trails development

Works continued at Munamudanamy (Hinchinbrook Island) to enhance the world-renowned Thorsborne Trail. Campground upgrades were completed at Little Ramsay and Zoe bays, providing new facilities including toilets, platform benches and pack poles, and allowing for separated areas for commercial guided hiking groups. Works at Mulligans campground are due to be completed in October 2025. Planning is underway to upgrade the entry and exit areas of the Thorsborne Trail and other smaller campgrounds.

Progress continued on Phase 2 of the project to upgrade and build new nature-based visitor experiences along the Ngaro Track on Whitsunday Island. Track upgrades and installation of water collection points and trailhead and directional signs have been completed. The tender process to appoint an ecotourism commercial operator to manage the hiking opportunity was finalised with a successful applicant selected. One of two uniquely designed hiker campsites has been completed and the other is under construction with a revised completion date of August 2025. The Ngaro Track is due to be open in December 2025.



Island Ranger facilitating the works at Munamudanamy (Hinchinbrook Island). © Queensland Government



UPHOLDING COMPLIANCE

Aerial patrol of the Reef.
© Commonwealth of Australia (Reef Authority)

The joint compliance program is critical for upholding the integrity of marine park zoning plans and other regulatory tools that manage the pressures and impacts of human use. Through this work the compliance program significantly contributes to protecting the World Heritage Area at network, regional and local scales. The full benefits of protected area management can only be achieved through a strong and effective compliance program that upholds the integrity of marine and island protected areas. There is a growing body of research demonstrating the benefits of no-take zoning, including wider fisheries and ecosystem benefits extending beyond the no-take zones.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Strategic planning and investment to strengthen compliance has enabled six years of consistently higher levels of in-park compliance operations (1,109 days for 2024–25) and significant improvements in the reach and sophistication of education strategies.
- In 97% of all instances on-water contact with park users, the visitors were found to have marine park zoning information available. This work has led to high levels of voluntary compliance being observed across the marine parks.
- Zoning compliance targeting illegal recreational fishers and the illegal take of protected species (including dugong and turtle) was a priority for surveillance operations. This financial year the compliance program increased its focus in this area, with the Program delivering 74% of its patrolling activity during times of the highest risk (winds under 15 knots). This is a 9% improvement from last year's result and directly contributes to an effective compliance presence and the ability to detect illegal activity of this nature.
- The total number of offences detected in the World Heritage Area continues to see a declining trend over a five-year horizon. Compliance data indicates steady year-to-year variability which cannot be attributed to any single factor. Compared to last financial year's record low levels of reported offences, there has been a 13% increase in the total number of detected offences (from 1,124 to 1,273).
- The single largest contributor to the increased number of offences from the previous financial year was illegal recreational fishing, accounting for 528 offences—an increase of 52% (181 offences) from the record low of the previous year. Despite the increase from last year to this year, it is important to note that the long-term trend of declining numbers of recreational fishing offences is being maintained.
- The increase in detected recreational fishing offending may be attributed to improved targeting of aerial surveillance, increased focus on recreational fishers who actively use counter-surveillance techniques, and very high levels of marine park use in the southern region during school holidays. See maps 11 and 12 for locations of compliance incidents.
- Over the last five years, vessel tracking and targeted compliance strategies have driven an 82% reduction in commercial fishing offences. This has significantly reduced the threat of illegal commercial fishing in the marine parks. In 2024–25, 34 offences were recorded, compared to 54 in 2023–24. It is notable that half of the offences reported this year relate to negligible-impact offending, where commercial fishing vessels have breached no-transit rules.



Compliance patrol off Townsville. © Commonwealth of Australia (Reef Authority)

PRIORITY PROJECTS

Regulatory amendments to the Penalty Infringement Notice Scheme

Feasible options to allow for a tiered penalty framework through regulatory change have been investigated in consultation with the Reef Authority’s legal team and the Commonwealth Department of Public Prosecutions. A tiered penalty structure through fault elements was determined to be an unsuitable option, and a simpler two-tiered penalty arrangement will now be further developed in 2025–26 along with a suite of procedural reforms aimed at improving efficiency and empowering field officers to issue penalty infringements and cautions—decentralising decision-making.



Ranger capturing compliance photos on patrol. © Commonwealth of Australia (Reef Authority)



Island Guardian barge off Yunbenun (Magnetic Island).
© Queensland Government

PROGRAM INPUTS

Delivery of field management activities relies on a skilled workforce, operational and appropriately located management infrastructure, a fit-for-purpose and well-maintained vessel fleet, technological advances, good systems and strong governance.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Undertook operations over the entire World Heritage Area, delivering a total of 2,285 vessel days and 8,072 Program staff days at sea (see map 1 for vessel operations activity). *Island Guardian*, the Program's 21 m mid-shelf support barge, recorded 198 vessel days, demonstrating its utility in supporting all Program work areas. The Program's three other large vessels followed closely, with 190 days by *Reef Resilience*, 189 days by *Reef Ranger* and 165 days by *Tamoya II*. See map 1 for vessel track locations.
- Began a half-life extension refit of *Reef Ranger* in May 2025 that includes the transition to a hybrid power system using a combination of solar, stored battery and traditional diesel power generation. New replacement engines that meet Euro V emissions standards will also be fitted—the first of their kind to be installed in a domestic commercial vessel in Australia. Greening technologies are being incorporated into the extensive work program where possible to reduce CO₂ and other diesel emissions.
- Achieved significant operational efficiencies through a comprehensive review of the large vessel governance and planning processes for the Program's four large overnight vessels. By focusing on multi-tasking, improved geographical efficiencies, refined tasking, prioritisation and reporting processes and improved timing and logistical considerations, the program is planning to achieve cost efficiencies in the 2025–26 large vessel forward program and improved work-life balance outcomes for staff.
- Delivered the new *Business Strategy 2025–2030*, guiding the Program for the next five years to focus on reef and species resilience, visitor experiences, workforce investment, strategic partnerships and innovation, and technology in management.
- Completed development of the marine strandings extension of the QWildlife app, which was released in November 2024. This extension now allows members of the public to submit sightings of any sick, injured or deceased turtles, dolphins, dugongs, seals or whales

found stranded on land or in adjacent coastal waters. All marine animal strandings reporting, incident management, data collection and data reporting is now streamlined on this single modernised platform.

- Won multiple categories in the 2025 DETSI Director-General's Safety Behaviour Awards, including:
 - Safety First Award for the Program's development of a targeted safety training course to address human factors in vessel operations, increasing staff safety and reducing risks in high-exposure roles like vessel masters and dive supervisors.
 - Highly commended for the Safety Impact Award for individual leadership in creating a culture of safety and operational excellence through meticulous planning, risk assessment and communication in coordinating complex multi-day vessel trips.
 - Director-General's Choice Award for the crew of *Tamoya II* for responding to an emergency call to assist two people in a capsized vessel 32 nautical miles away. The *Tamoya II* crew pulled the two from the water, provided first aid, supported authorities and debriefed before resuming their normal duties. The crew's professionalism, preparedness and teamwork saved lives and exemplified safety leadership at sea.



Ranger using the ReefScan technology for surveys. © Queensland Government



Reef Authority officers with new drone technology.
© Commonwealth of Australia (Reef Authority)

PRIORITY PROJECTS

Health and safety

The health and safety of all staff is the Program's highest priority. The Program is committed to promoting a strong safety culture by improving systems, processes and education. Development of a Human Factors training package specific to our vessel and in-water operations was completed and two training courses were held for 40 staff. Training modules focused on the unique challenges of operating at high tempo in the marine environment, including communication, decision-making, fatigue management, situational awareness and stress management. Human factors were also integrated into the safety reporting system to identify human factor related hazards and concerns.

Integrated compliance management system

The Program advanced the implementation of a new compliance management system to replace the legacy system approaching end of life. The new system has been designed to capture and manage incidents, streamline investigation workflows, and enable robust reporting on compliance outcomes. It has been tailored to the compliance program's unique operational environment, supporting the management of incidents such as illegal fishing, vessel groundings, Indigenous activity reports, and information reports.

In 2024–25, Phase 1 of the project addressed security and cloud hosting requirements. Phase 2 requirements to design system functionality were completed, ensuring alignment with business objectives. A key achievement was the first phase of Field Reporting System (FRS) integration, enabling automated data and image uploads and establishing daily system-to-system communication. This laid the foundation for greater automation of manual processes and improved operational efficiency. Final Phase 2 milestones are now in progress, with a go-live date targeted for December 2025.

Technology transformation

Adoption of drone technology continues to increase across the Program. Preparations are underway for compliance officers to receive extended visual line of sight (EVLOS) and night visual line of sight (NVLOS) training to enhance surveillance through vessel-based day and night drone operations.

In addition, the Program is in the process of planning a joint trial of 'Drone in a Box' technology to begin in the 2025–26 financial year. The technology upgrade will aim to enhance remote environmental monitoring and compliance operations with drone flights being controlled from a remote operations centre. The compliance aspect of the trial aims to increase the efficiency of surveillance operations, spending more time in high-risk protected areas for less cost with persistent surveillance. The trial will focus on detecting fishing offences and collecting high-quality evidence, particularly at night. A mounted pan-tilt-zoom camera and radar system for vessel tracking will aim to detect non-compliance.

A review of the capabilities of machine learning in analysing high-resolution satellite imagery was conducted. It found that satellite imagery could not provide a snapshot of the entire region and the data was more suited to localised areas. The Program plans to reinvestigate this when the technology is more advanced.

As technology advances, stronger data management practices are required. A case study showcasing the Databricks platform and connection to business intelligence tools such as Power BI was created and implemented using FRS data for reporting purposes. Discussions with FRS project team have commenced to plan a path forward for the system's governance and redevelopment.



Karamea at Heron Island during sunset.
© Queensland Government

RESULTS AGAINST PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance indicators highlight the Program’s achievements against the Program’s *Annual Business Plan 2024–25*, which the Director-General of DETSI and Chief Executive Officer of the Reef Authority jointly approved.

In 2024–25, the Program had 34 challenging performance indicator targets, of which it achieved 23 (68%), did not achieve but demonstrated significant progress against eight (23%), and did not achieve or make significant progress against three (9%). This is an increase from 65% of targets achieved in 2023–24.

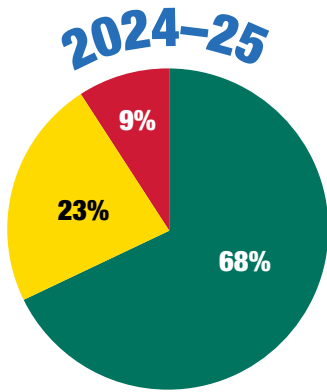


Figure 1: Percentage of the Program’s performance targets achieved in 2024–25

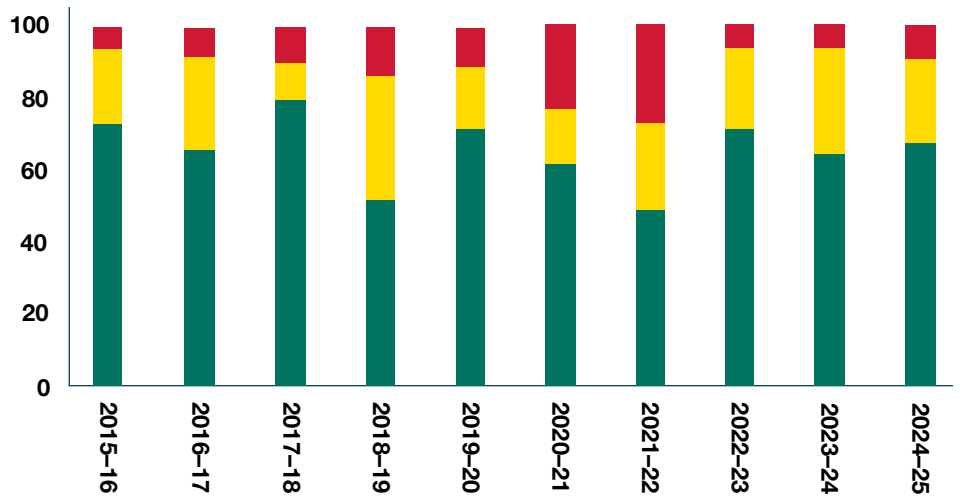


























Figure 2: The Program’s performance over the last 10 years










KEY

- TARGET NOT ACHIEVED + NO SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS
- SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS TOWARDS TARGET
- TARGET ACHIEVED

	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	RESULTS 2024–25	TARGET
WORKING WITH TRADITIONAL OWNERS	1. FOUR WORK PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARE DELIVERED: TWO WITH QPWS AND TWO WITH THE REEF AUTHORITY	Not achieved. One work placement was delivered with QPWS and Woppaburra. The participant successfully secured permanent employment with the Woppaburra TUMRA Aboriginal Corporation at the end of the placement.	 Not achieved No trend. First year of performance indicator
	2. INCREASING TREND OF PROGRAM VESSEL DAYS INCLUDE EXTERNAL* INDIGENOUS RANGERS	Not achieved. In 2024–25, 20% (467 of 2,285 days) of Program vessel days included external Indigenous rangers. This is a decrease from 28% (491 of 1,754 days) in 2023–24.	 Not achieved
	3. A MINIMUM OF SIX DIFFERENT LAND AND SEA RANGER GROUPS ARE PROVIDING PAID SERVICES TO DELIVER FIELD ACTIVITIES	Achieved. Paid service arrangements were coordinated with 16 different Land and Sea Ranger groups: Yirrganydji, Eastern Kuku Yalanji, Giringun, Yuwi, Dingaal, Gunggandji, Wulgurukaba, Bandjin, Girramay, Woppaburra, Mandubarra, Darumbal, Meriam Le, Erubam Le, Kuuku Ya'u and Wuthathi.	 Achieved
DELIVERING CONSERVATION ACTIONS	4. 90% OF REGIONAL PRIORITY BURN PROGRAM ACTIVITIES DELIVERED AND REPORTED IN FLAME	Significant progress. The Program delivered 75% of regional priority burn program activities.	 Significant progress towards target
	5. 80% OF ALL PROTECTION ZONES ARE MAINTAINED WITHIN PRESCRIPTION	Achieved. In 2024–25, 89% of gazetted protection zone had been treated and was maintained within prescription. Protection zones were reviewed and amended to reflect current fire strategies.	 Achieved
	6. 90% OF REGIONAL PRIORITY PEST PROGRAM ACTIONS DELIVERED AND DOCUMENTED IN FLAME	Significant progress. The Program delivered 75% of regional priority pest program actions documented 83% in FLAME.	 Significant progress towards target
	7. 90% OF MOORINGS AND REEF PROTECTION MARKERS ARE INSPECTED AND REGULARLY MAINTAINED—MOORINGS AT FOUR MONTHLY INTERVALS AND REEF PROTECTION MARKERS ANNUALLY	Achieved. In 2024–25, 100% of moorings (369) and reef protection markers (293) were inspected and maintained.	 Achieved
	8. VALUES-BASED MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK (VBMF) ROADMAP ELEMENTS COMPLETE OR ON TRACK	Significant progress. Development of the Whitsunday Management Plan and Capricornia Cays Management Plan is on track. Magnetic Island Visitor Strategy is complete. Lizard Island and Michaelmas Cay pest strategies are complete. Orpheus Island fire strategy is complete. Other strategies and key value and level of service assessments are progressing.	 Significant progress towards target No trend. First year of performance indicator

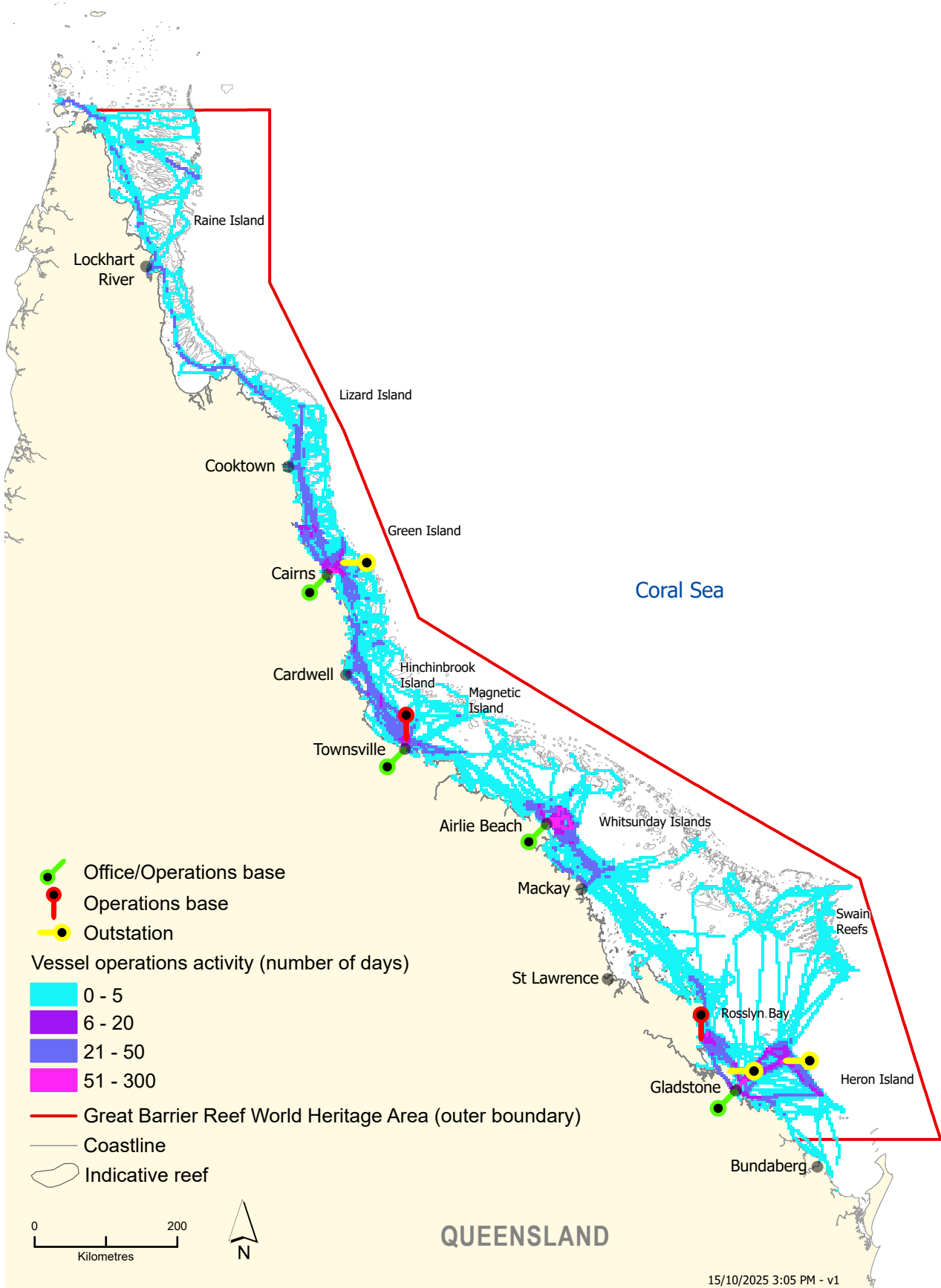
	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	RESULTS 2024–25	TARGET
CHECKING FOR CHANGE	9. 400 REEF HEALTH IMPACT SURVEYS (RHIS) DELIVERED DURING HIGH-RISK PERIOD BETWEEN SEPTEMBER AND MARCH (INCLUDES 80 RHIS UNDERTAKEN AT >6 M DEPTH)	Significant progress. The Program delivered 461 RHIS during the high-risk period between September and March, including 39 RHIS at >6 m depth.	 Significant progress towards target
	10. 60 DAYS CROWN-OF-THORNS STARFISH SURVEILLANCE DELIVERED	Achieved. The Program delivered 64 days of COTS surveillance.	 Achieved
	11. THE ANNUAL HEALTH CHECK PROGRAM FOR HINCHINBROOK, WHITSUNDAYS, GREEN, MAGNETIC, CAPRICORNIA CAYS, RAINE, LIZARD AND CURTIS ISLAND NATIONAL PARKS IS DELIVERED TO THE REQUISITE STANDARD	Achieved. Health checks were completed to the requisite standard at Hinchinbrook, Whitsunday, Green, Magnetic, Capricornia Cays, Lizard and Curtis island national parks, and Island Watch was completed at Raine Island.	 Achieved
	12. 90% OF ANNUAL MONITORING SITES FOR SEABIRDS ARE SURVEYED	Achieved. In 2024–25, 90% (111 of 124 sites) of annual monitoring sites for seabirds were surveyed.	 Achieved
	13. 40% OF ANNUAL MONITORING SITES FOR SHOREBIRDS ARE SURVEYED	Achieved. In 2024–25, 59% (17 of 29 sites) of annual monitoring sites for shorebirds were surveyed.	 Achieved. No trend. First year of performance indicator.
	14. 90% OF PERIODIC MONITORING SITES FOR SEABIRDS ARE SURVEYED WITHIN THE PREVIOUS FIVE YEARS	Achieved. Within the previous five years, 91% (52 of 57 sites) of periodic monitoring sites for seabirds have been surveyed.	 Achieved
	15. 40% OF PERIODIC MONITORING SITES FOR SHOREBIRDS ARE SURVEYED WITHIN THE LAST TWO YEARS	Achieved. Within the previous five years, 43% (62 of 145 sites) of periodic monitoring sites for shorebirds have been surveyed.	 Achieved. No trend. First year of performance indicator.
	16. AT LEAST 70% OF ALL NATIONAL PARK AND COMMONWEALTH ISLANDS SURVEYED USING ISLAND WATCH WITHIN A FIVE-YEAR PERIOD, WITH AT LEAST 120 SURVEYS COMPLETED IN 2024–25	Achieved. In the last five years, 68% of national park and Commonwealth islands have been surveyed; and 166 Island Watch surveys were completed in 2024–25.	 Achieved
	17. 90% OF PRIORITY NESTING AND FORAGING INDEX SITE MONITORING WITHIN THE WORLD HERITAGE AREA IS DELIVERED OR SUPPORTED BY THE PROGRAM	Achieved. The Program supported or delivered 90% of priority nesting and foraging index site monitoring within the World Heritage Area—six nesting index sites (Curtis, Wreck, Wild Duck, Peak, Milman and Heron islands)	 Achieved

	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	RESULTS 2024–25	TARGET
RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS	18. 100% OF MARITIME AND ENVIRONMENTAL INCIDENTS REPORTED TO THE PROGRAM ARE RISK ASSESSED AND RESPONDED TO ACCORDINGLY	Achieved. Of the 50 maritime incidents that occurred in 2024–25, 100% were reported to the Program and—with the 2025 widespread coral bleaching event—were risk assessed and responded to accordingly. This is a significant decrease in maritime incidents from 123 reported in 2023–24.	 Achieved
	19. 80% OF MARITIME INCIDENTS REQUIRING A SITE ASSESSMENT OF DAMAGE ARE UNDERTAKEN WHERE IT IS SAFE TO DO SO	Achieved. In 100% of cases where a maritime incident required a site assessment of damage, an assessment was undertaken.	 Achieved
WELCOMING PEOPLE	20. 95% OF ROUTINE AND 80% OF TAILORED ASSESSMENT DECISION NOTICES ARE GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PERMISSION SERVICE CHARTER	Significant progress. In 2024–25, 96% of routine assessment decision notices and 71% of tailored assessment decision notices were given in accordance with the Permission Service Charter (25 days for routine and 50 days for tailored).	 Significant progress towards target
	21. 90% OF LOW-PRIORITY MARINE STRANDINGS REQUIRING RESPONSES ARE ATTENDED TO BY TRAINED COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS OR INDIGENOUS LAND AND SEA RANGERS	Significant progress. In 2024–25, 83% (309 of 336) of low-priority marine strandings were attended to by trained community volunteers or Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers. This is an increase from 72% in 2023–24.	 Significant progress towards target
	22. 3,000 PUBLIC CONTACTS WHERE PROGRAM STAFF ARE TALKING DIRECTLY WITH WORLD HERITAGE AREA USERS WHILE CONDUCTING COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES	Achieved. In 2024–25, 5,803 public contacts were recorded on the Field Reporting System.* <i>*This performance indicator has changed from previous years to now record the number of individual people interacted with, instead of the number of event instances. The target has been raised from 2,700 in 2023–24 and is also now focused only on contact made during compliance activities, not during all field work.</i>	 Achieved
	23. 100% OF PROGRAMMED CRITICAL AND STATUTORY INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE TASKS COMPLETED	Significant progress. In 2024–25, 95% (114 of 120) of programmed critical and statutory infrastructure maintenance tasks were completed.	 Significant progress towards target
	24. 95% OF PLANNED CAPITAL VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM MILESTONES DELIVERED	Significant progress. In 2024–25, 70% of planned capital visitor infrastructure program milestones were delivered.	 Significant progress towards target

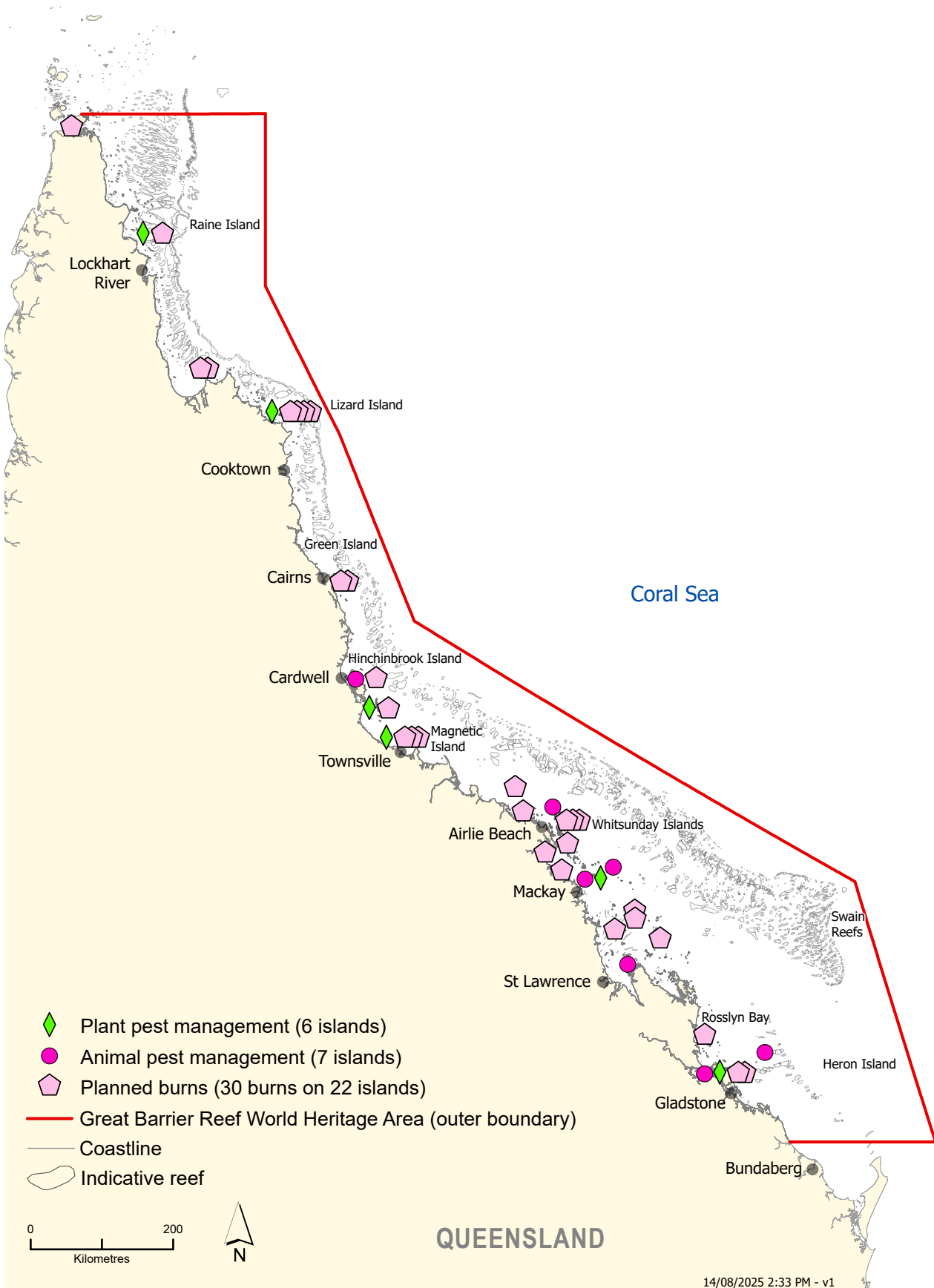
	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	RESULTS 2024–25	TARGET
UPHOLDING COMPLIANCE	25. 1,000 DEDICATED COMPLIANCE DAYS (INCLUDING 880 VESSEL, 120 AIRCRAFT AND LAND BASED)	Achieved. Across all partner agencies, 1,109 dedicated compliance days were delivered (970 vessel, 52 land-based and 87 aerial) to deter and identify illegal activity. Of these, 856 days were delivered by Program staff and 253 days were delivered by the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol.	 Achieved
	26. 65% OF DEDICATED COMPLIANCE PATROL DAYS UNDERTAKEN WHEN WIND IS <15 KNOTS	Achieved. In 2024–25, 74% of dedicated compliance patrol days (634 of 856) were undertaken when the wind speed was under 15 knots.	 Achieved
	27. AT LEAST 20% OF ALL CURRENT JOINT MARINE PARKS PERMITS HAVE BEEN CHECKED FOR PERMISSION COMPLIANCE OVER THE FINANCIAL YEAR	Achieved. In 2024–25, 24% (368 of 1,565) of current joint marine parks permits were reviewed for compliance.	 Achieved
	28. 90% OF ON-WATER VISITORS REACHED DURING PATROLS HAVE ZONING MAPS AVAILABLE, PRINT OR ELECTRONIC (INCLUDING MOBILE APPS)	Achieved. For 97% of 5,809 public contacts recorded in the Field Reporting System, visitors had access to one or more sources of zoning information—81% chart plotters, 17% printed maps, 39% Eye on the Reef app.* <i>*Some visitors had access to more than one method, so the total of individual methods is greater than 100%.</i>	 Achieved
	29. 10% OF DEDICATED COMPLIANCE PATROLS ARE CONDUCTED JOINTLY WITH OR LED BY EXTERNAL INDIGENOUS RANGERS	Not achieved. In 2024–25, 5.2% (58 of 1,109 days) of dedicated compliance patrols were conducted jointly with or led by external Indigenous rangers.	 Not achieved
PROGRAM INPUTS	30. ANNUAL TRAINING PROGRAM DEVELOPED AND DELIVERED	Achieved. The annual training program delivered 300 training packages over 27 different courses.	 Achieved
	31. PROGRAM MAINTAINS 100% COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY SAFETY OBLIGATIONS	Achieved. Both the Reef Authority and QPWS maintained 100% compliance with statutory safety obligations.	 Achieved
	32. 100% OF ALL INCIDENT REPORTS AND HAZARD REPORTS ARE INVESTIGATED AND ACTIONED WITHIN STATUTORY OR PROGRAM IDENTIFIED TIMEFRAMES	Achieved. In 2024–25, 100% of incident reports and hazard reports were investigated and actioned within statutory or Program identified timeframes.	 Achieved
	33. 1,700 TOTAL DAYS AT SEA DELIVERED ABOARD PROGRAM VESSELS, OR ABOARD VESSELS CHARTERED BY THE PROGRAM	Achieved. The Program delivered 2,285 total days at sea. This is an increase from 1,754 total days at sea delivered in 2023–24 and 1,819 days in 2022–23.	 Achieved
	34. EXPENDITURE IS WITHIN 1% OF PROGRAM BUDGET ALLOCATION	Achieved. Expenditure was within 0.3% of Program budget allocation.	 Achieved

APPENDIX 1: FIELD DELIVERY MAPS

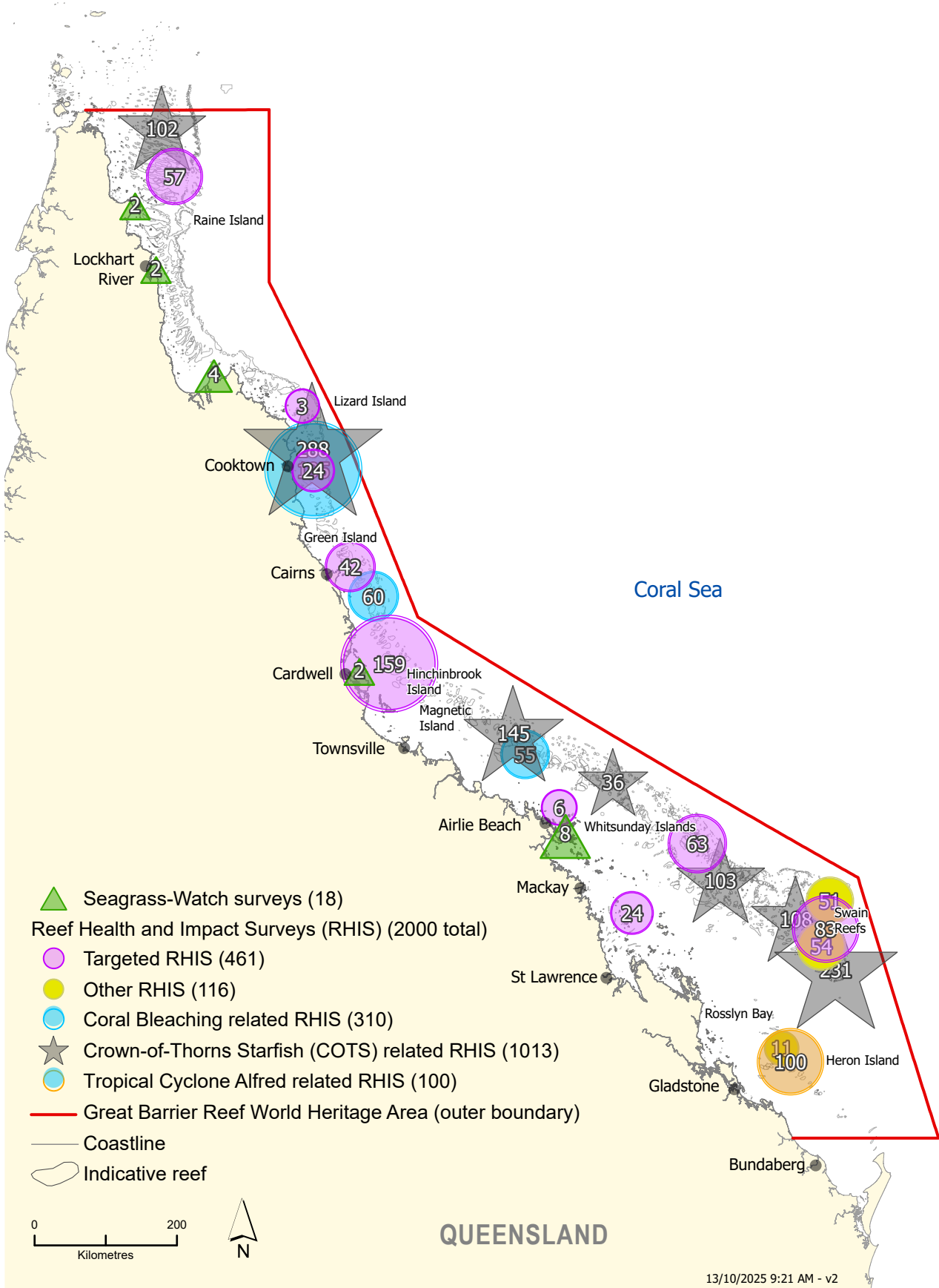
MAP 1: PROGRAM INPUTS - PROGRAM OFFICES AND VESSEL ACTIVITY



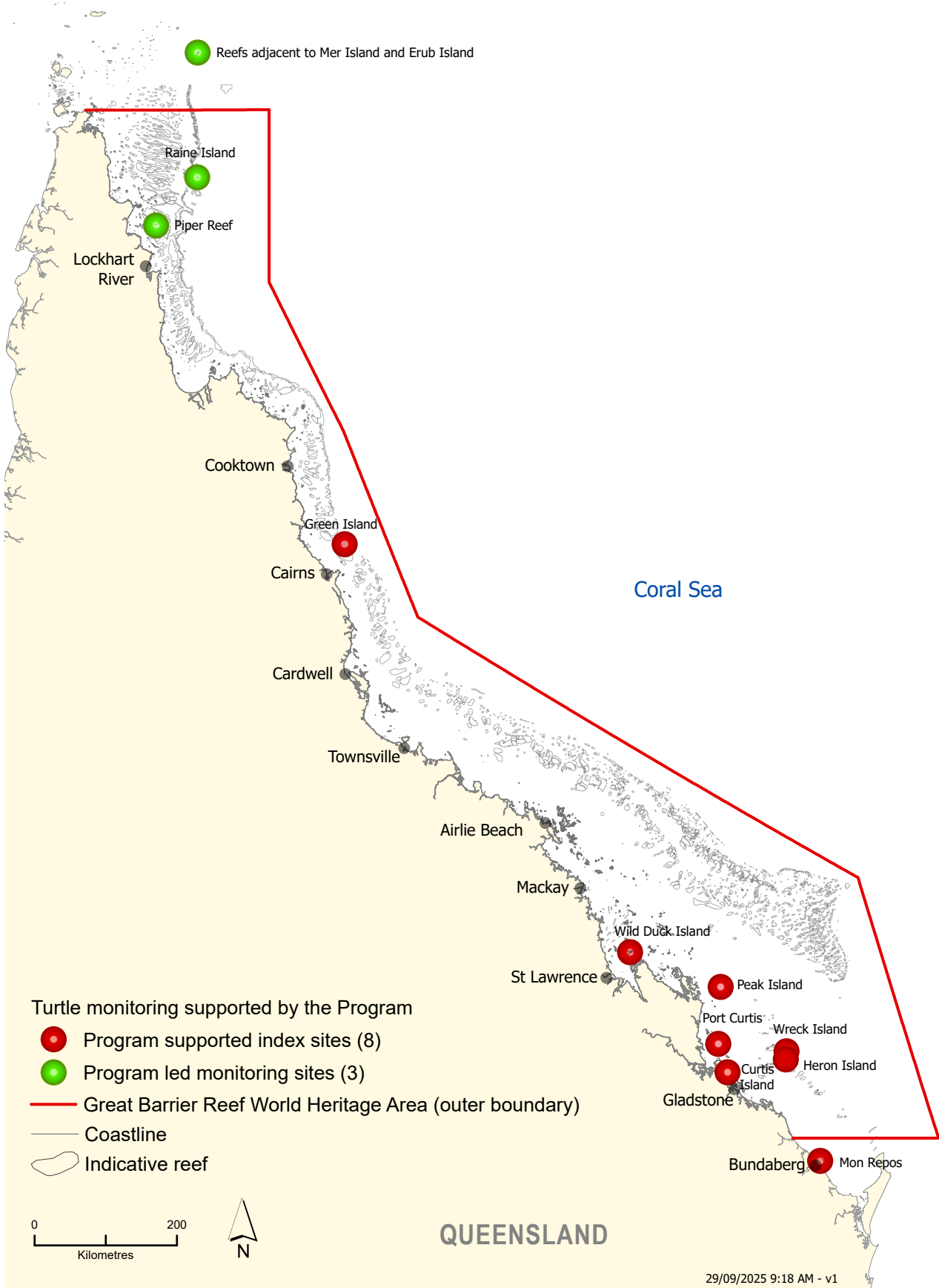
MAP 2: DELIVERING CONSERVATION ACTIONS - PEST AND FIRE MANAGEMENT



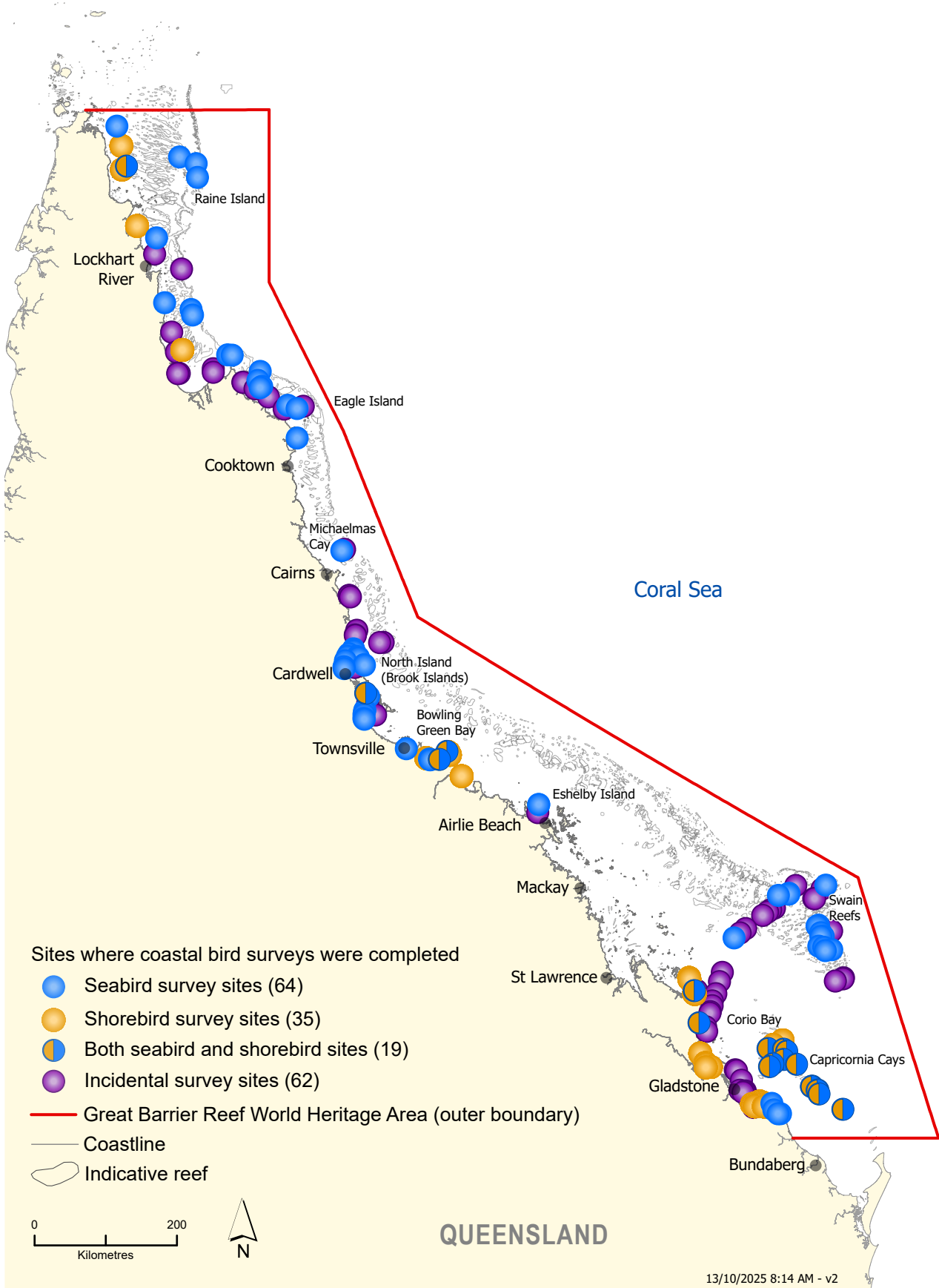
MAP 3: CHECKING FOR CHANGE - MARINE MONITORING



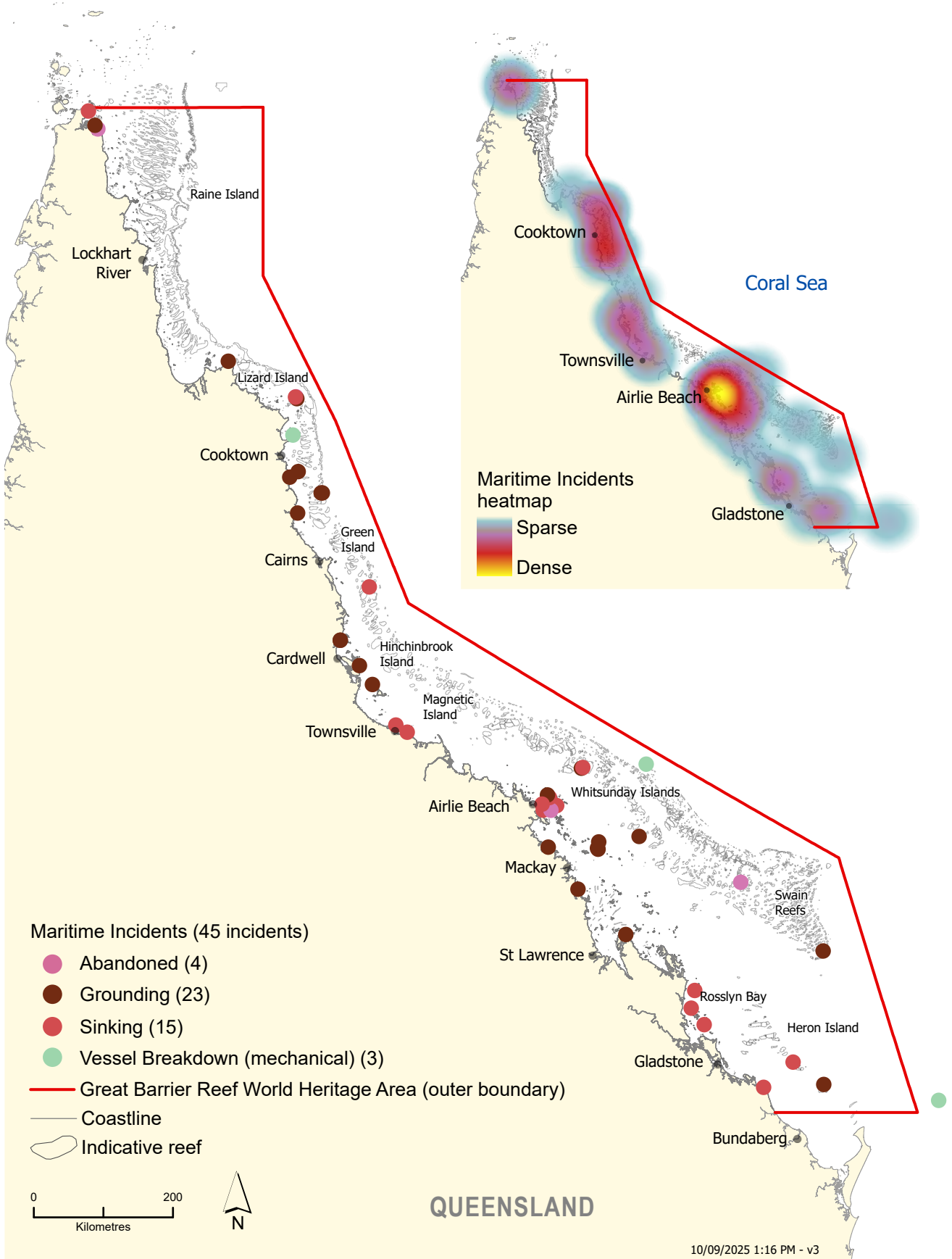
MAP 4: CHECKING FOR CHANGE - TURTLE MONITORING



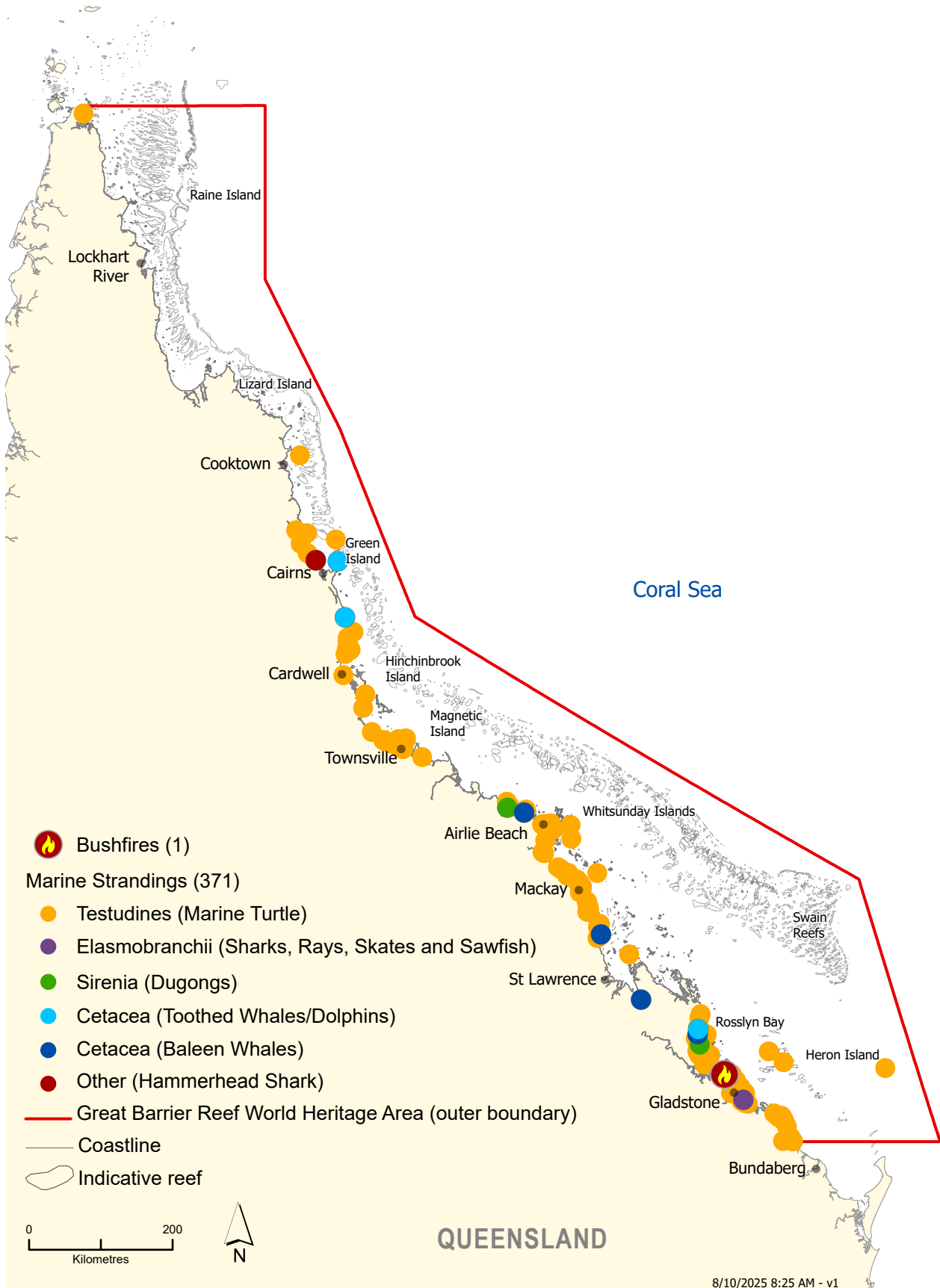
MAP 5: CHECKING FOR CHANGE - COASTAL BIRD SURVEYS



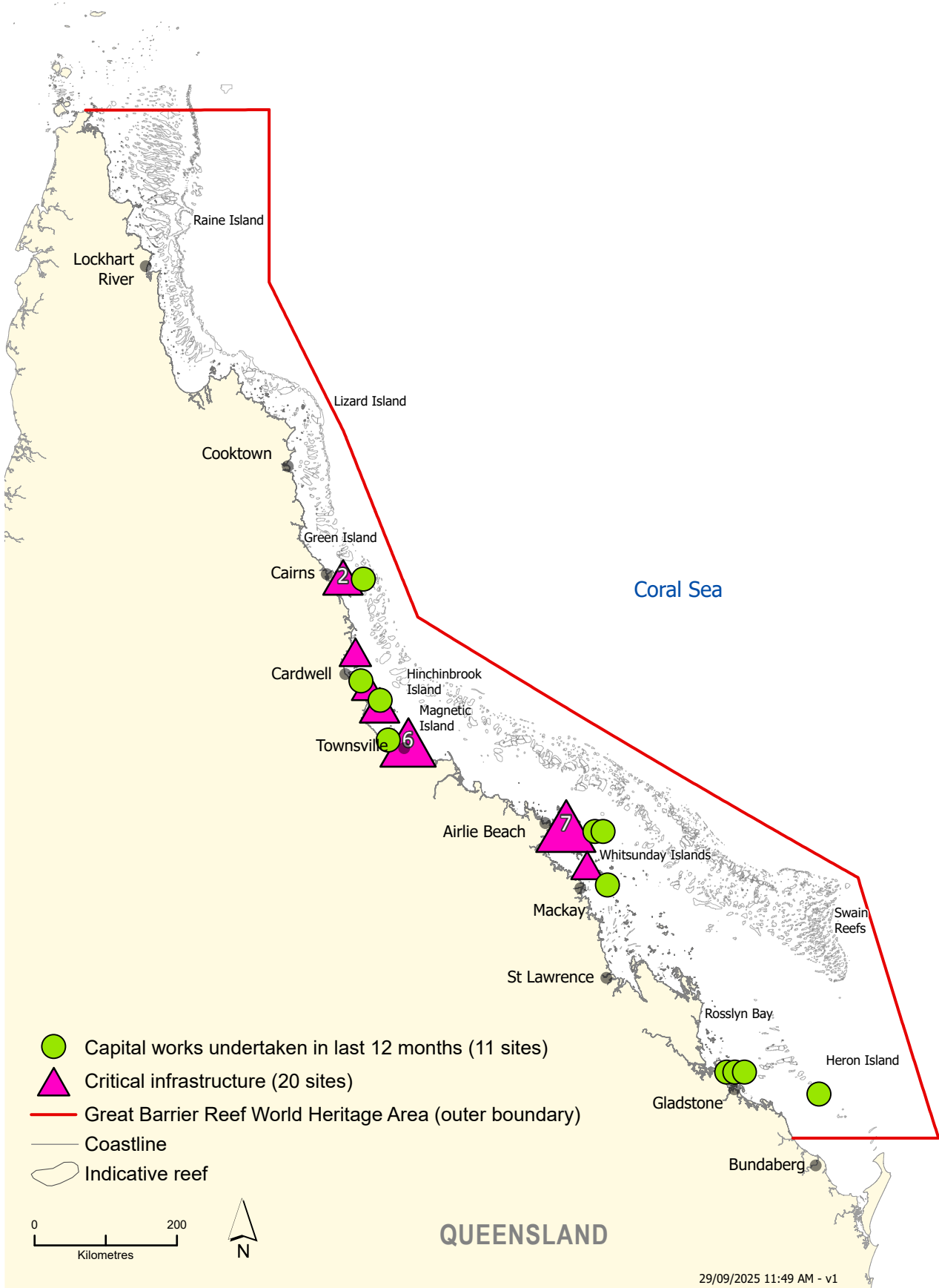
MAP 6: RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS - MARITIME INCIDENTS



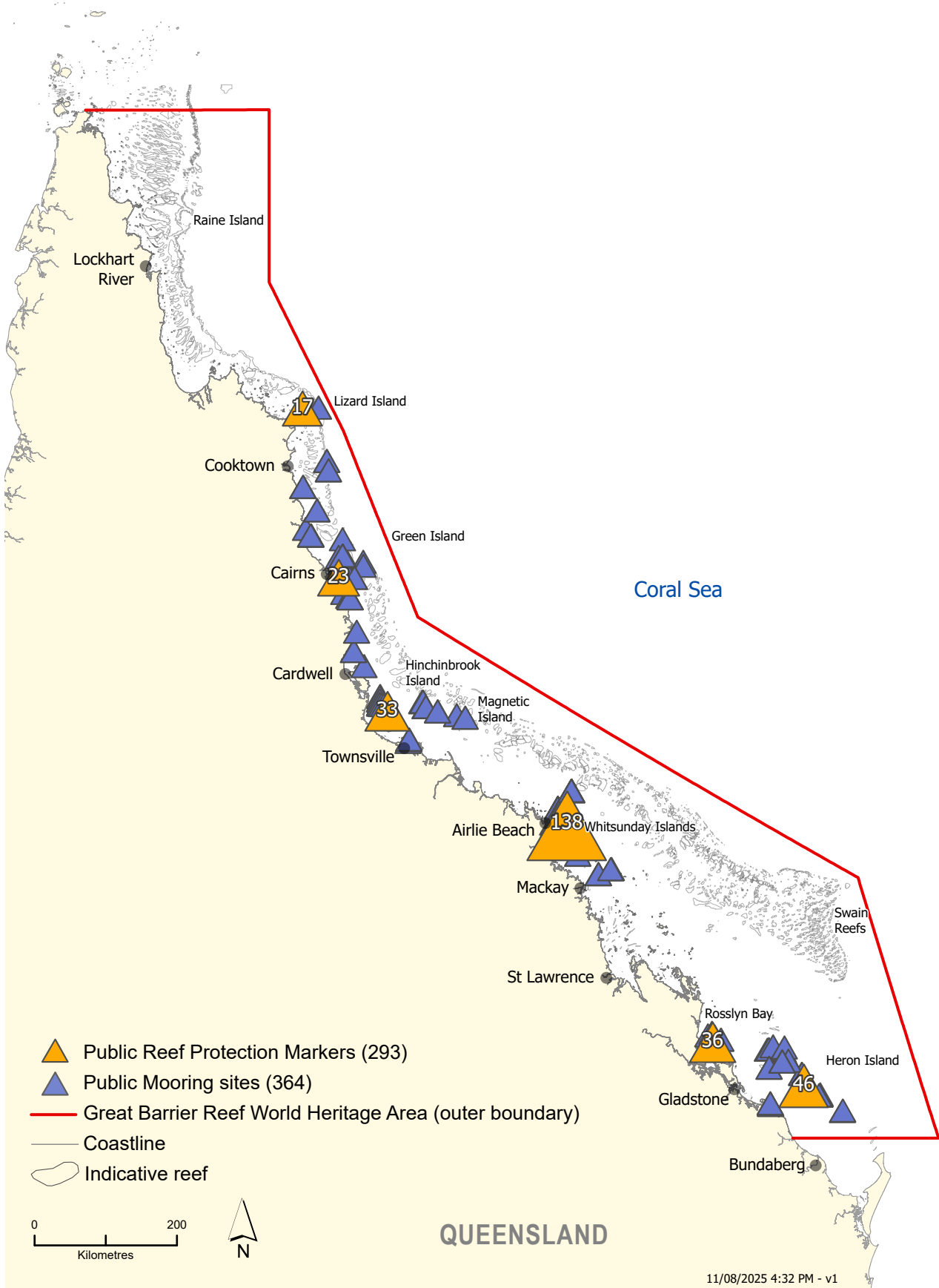
MAP 7: RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS - BUSHFIRES AND STRANDINGS



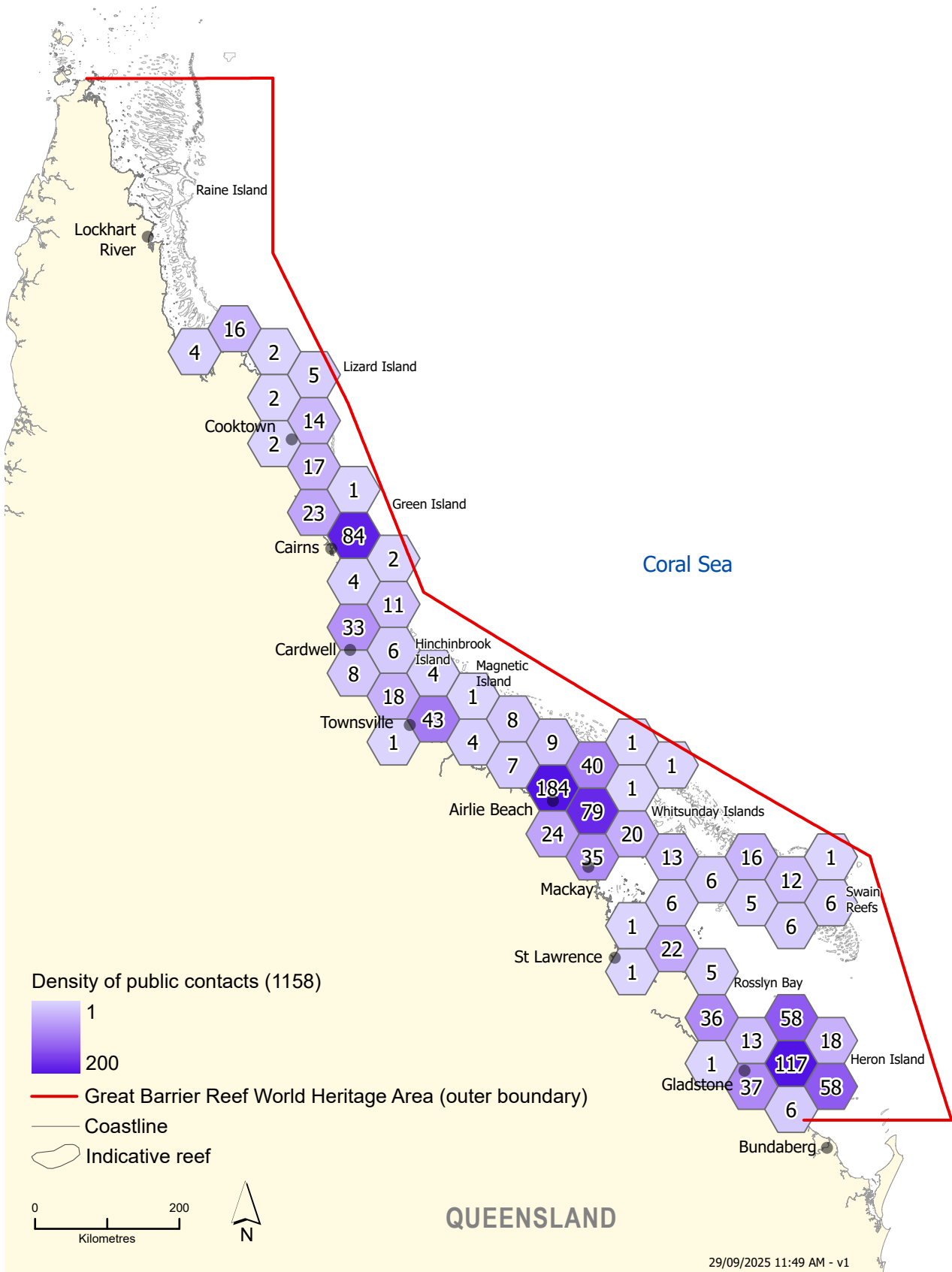
MAP 8: WELCOMING PEOPLE - CAPITAL WORKS



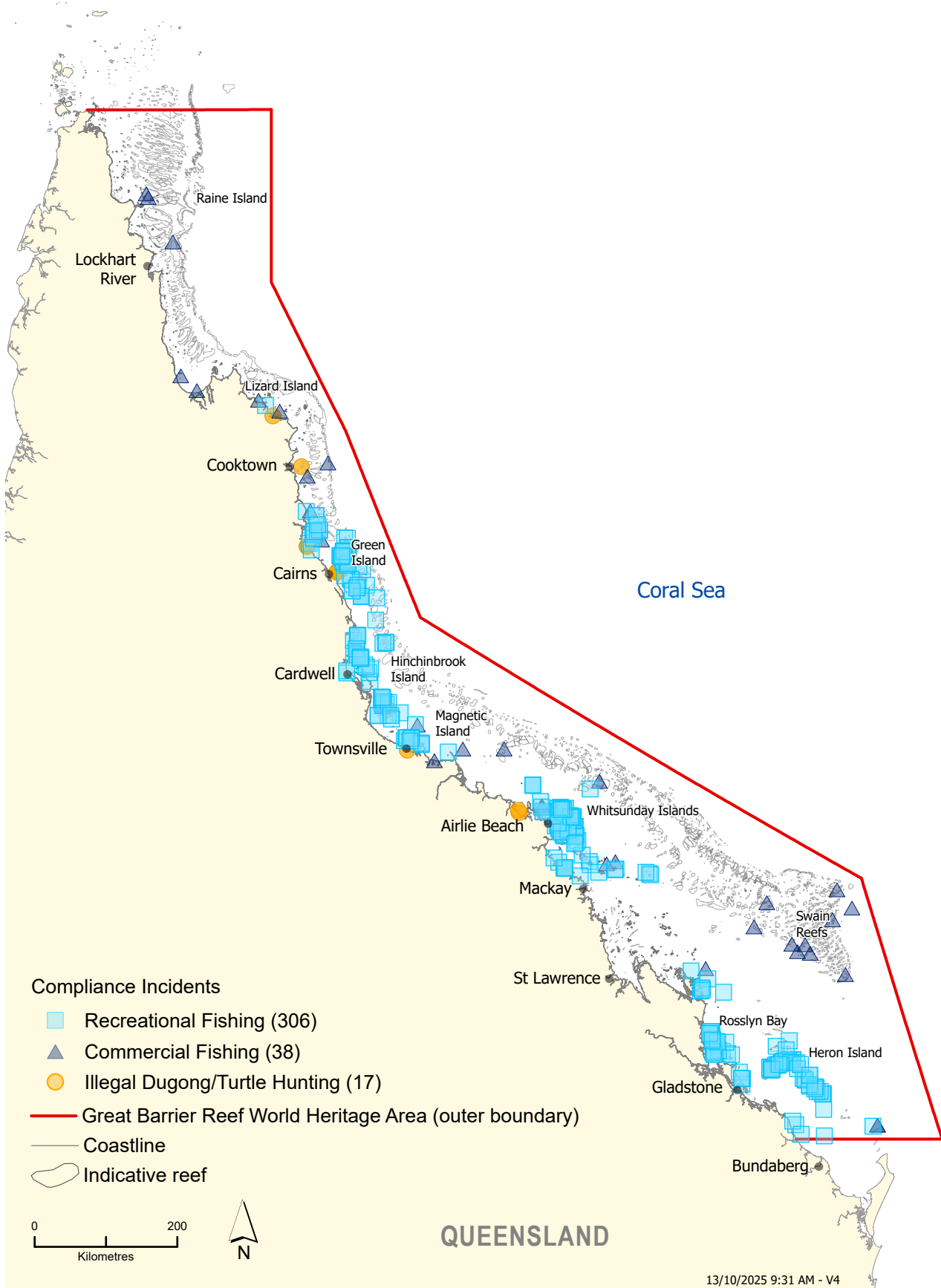
MAP 9: WELCOMING PEOPLE - MOORINGS AND REEF PROTECTION MARKERS



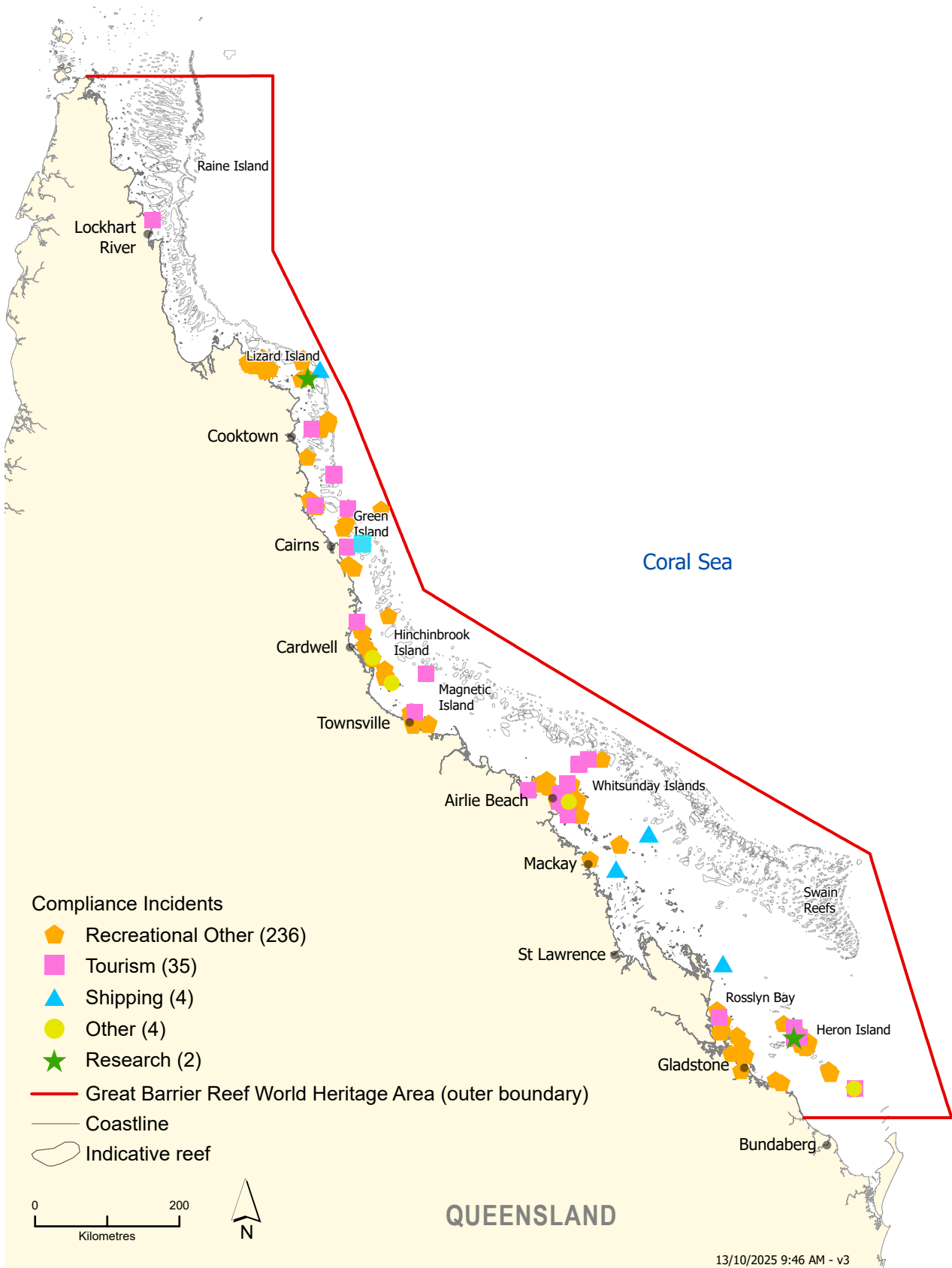
MAP 10: WELCOMING PEOPLE - PUBLIC CONTACTS



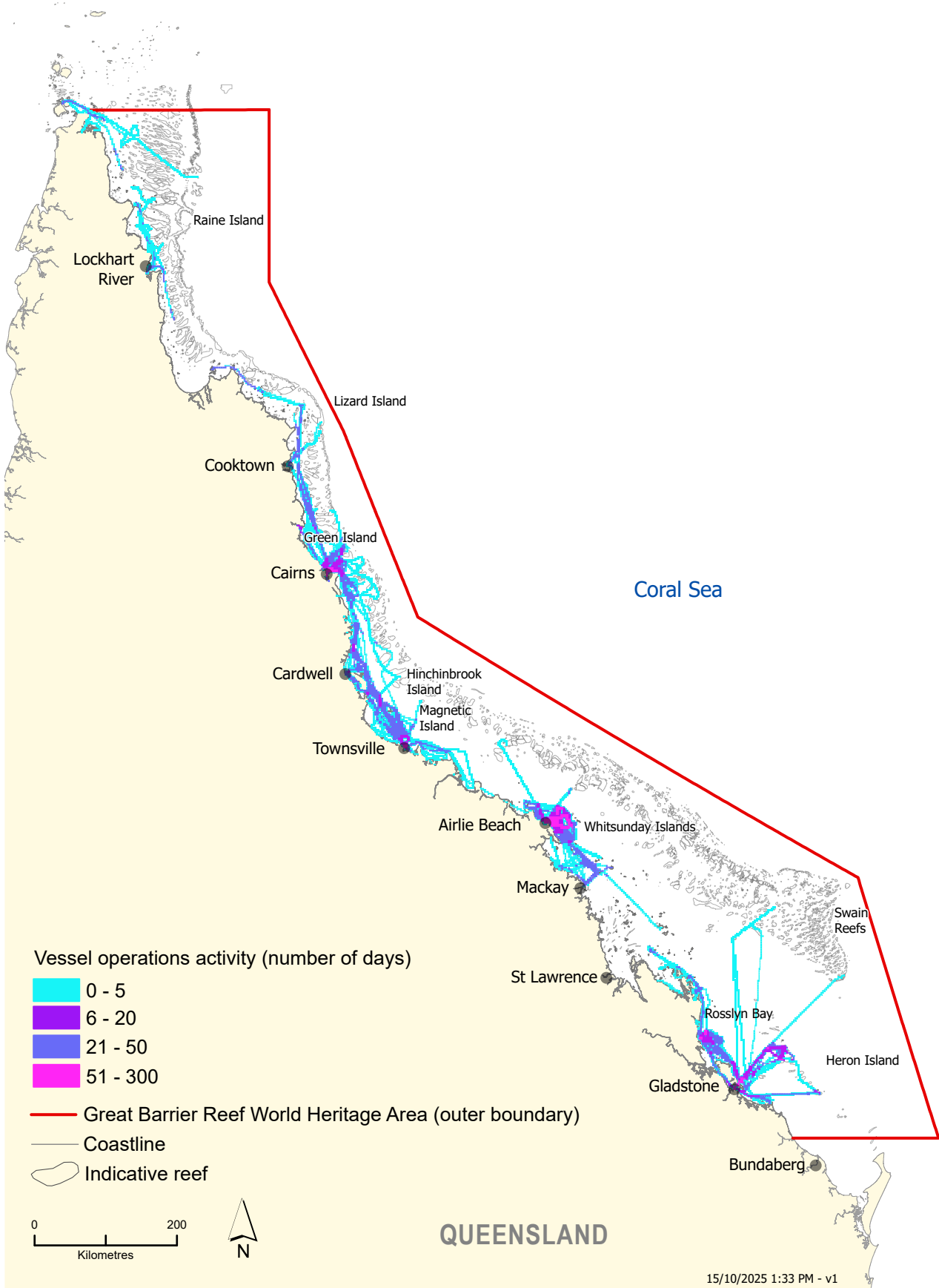
MAP 11: UPHOLDING COMPLIANCE - FISHING INCIDENTS



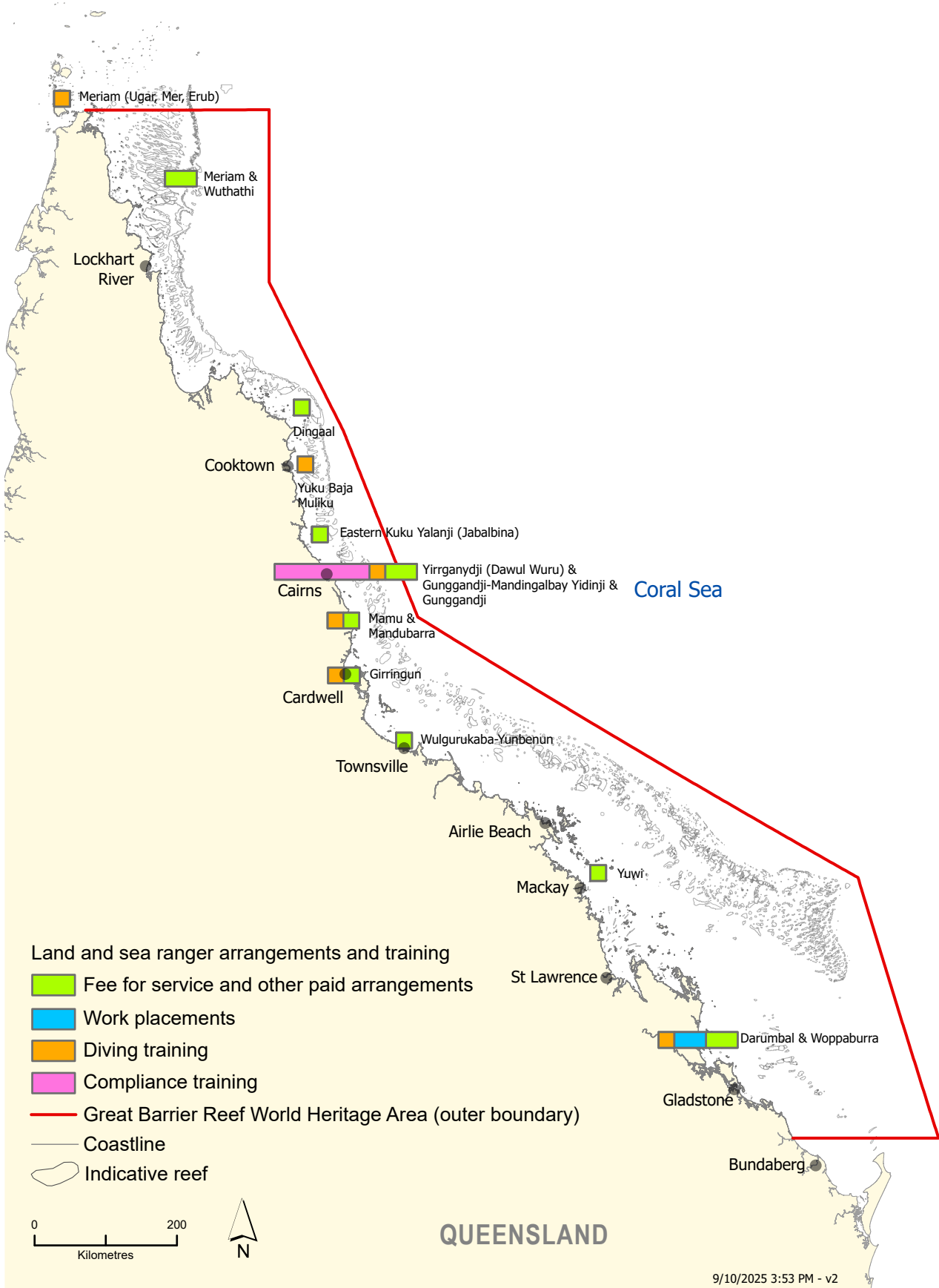
MAP 12: UPHOLDING COMPLIANCE - INCIDENTS OTHER



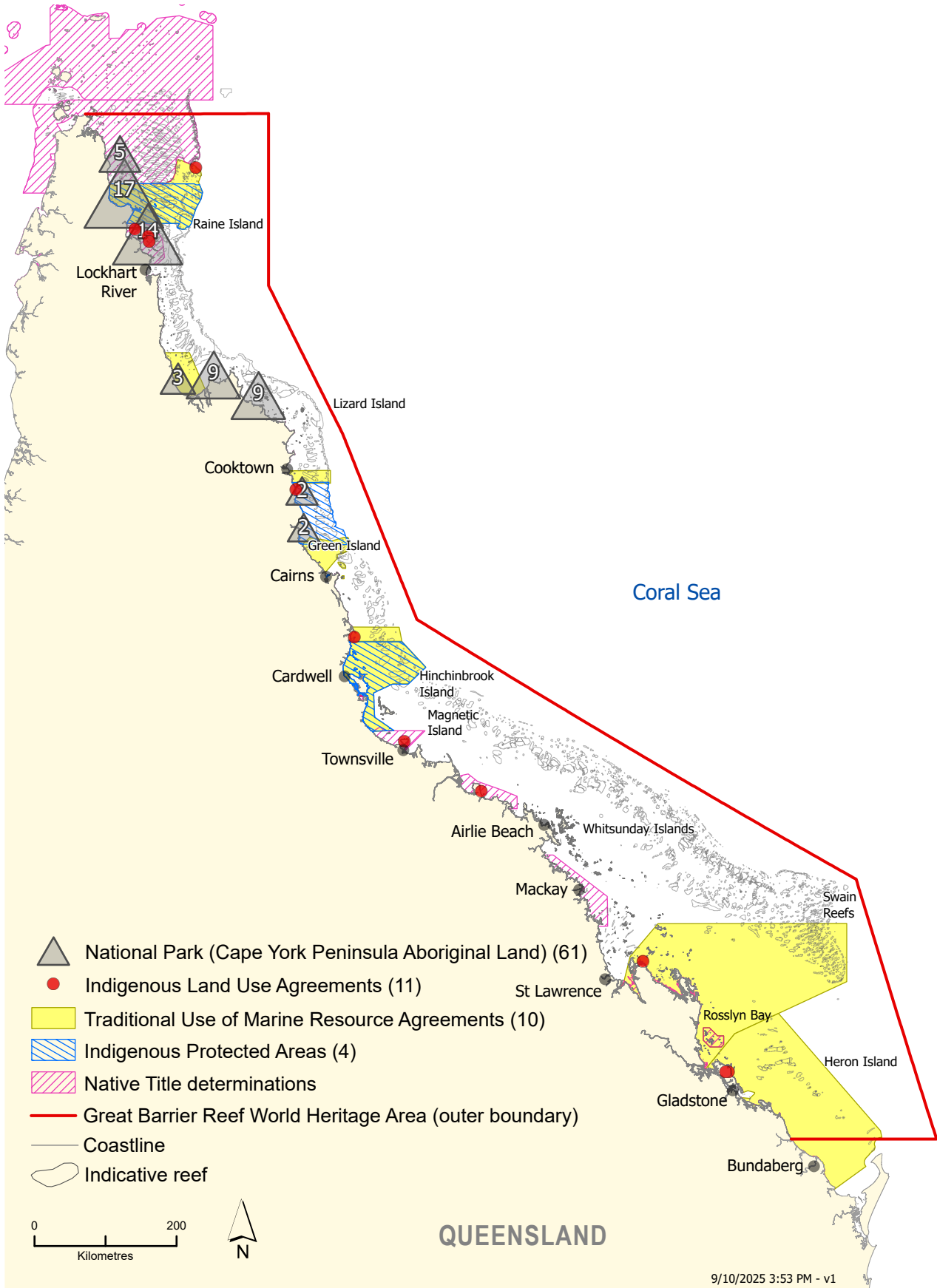
MAP 13: WORKING WITH TRADITIONAL OWNERS - VESSEL DAYS






MAP 14: WORKING WITH TRADITIONAL OWNERS - LAND AND SEA RANGERS SUPPORT



MAP 15: WORKING WITH TRADITIONAL OWNERS - AGREEMENTS AND ARRANGEMENTS



**Further information about the
Reef Joint Field Management Program**

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