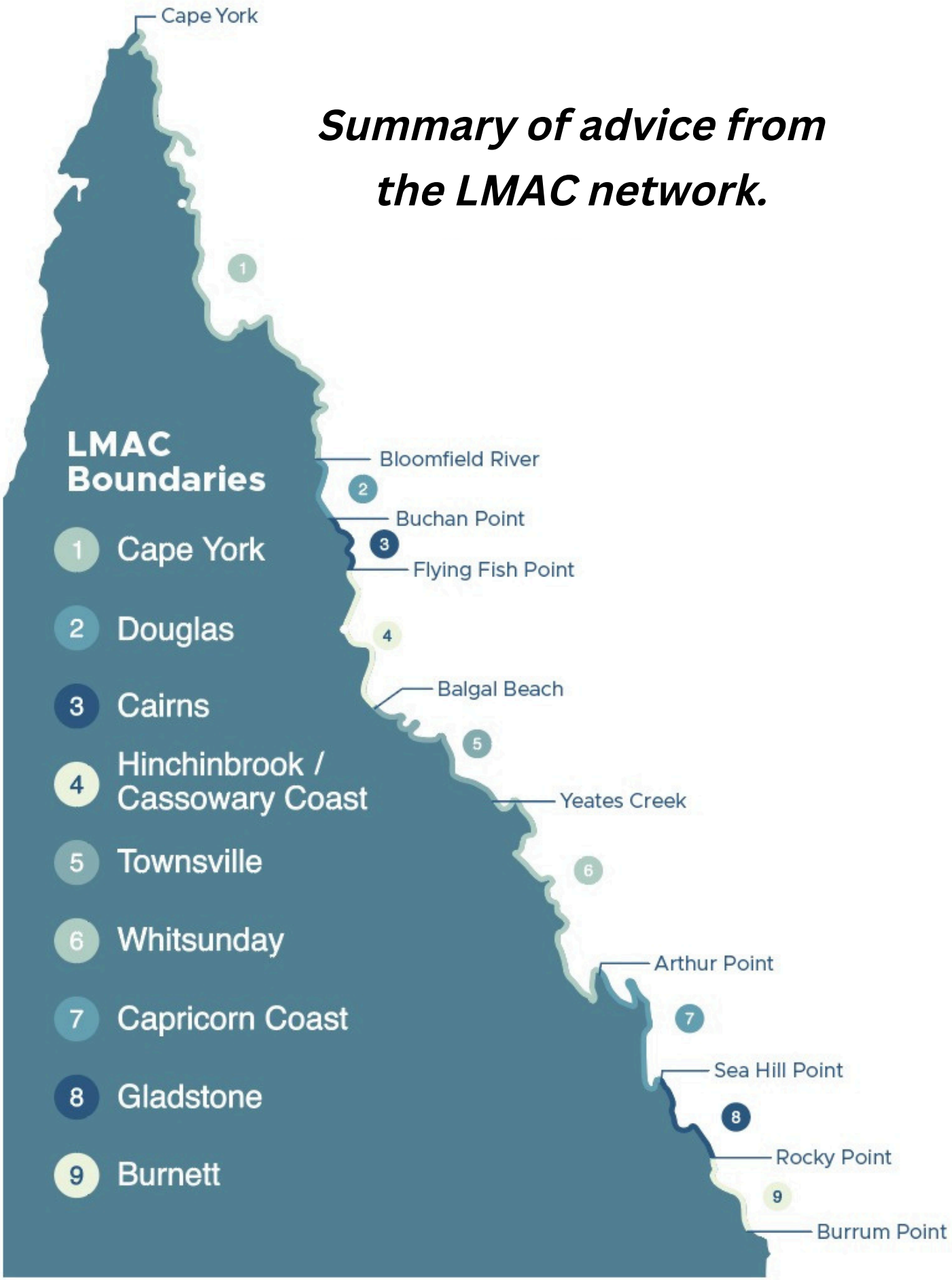
Australian Government
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

Reef Authority

LOCAL MARINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

MARCH 2025

Summary of advice from the LMAC network.



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Reef Authority | Local Marine Advisory Committee

Third meeting of the Local Marine Advisory Committees (LMACs) for the 2024-2027 term.

Reef Health

The attendees were given an overview of Reef Health, including:

- 2023/2024 Summer of cumulative impacts
- Key factors to assess bleaching impacts
- Coral bleaching prevalence, exposure and extent in 2023/2024
- Conditions in the Far Northern, Northern and Central regions based on aerial and in-water surveys
- Flooding impacts
- Cyclone impacts

It was noted that the Reef Authority takes point-in-time monitoring to assess the current state of Reef health, particularly during and immediately after the peak heat exposure.

The Reef Authority rely on the AIMS Long Term Monitoring Program to provide information on the longer-term trends in coral cover and mortality from extreme weather events, and the Reef Authority's Marine Monitoring Program to understand the impact of major flood events.

Members were asked for their advice on:

- Heat induced coral bleaching
- Flood impacts
- Storm damage

Members were encouraged to use the AIMS Reef Monitoring dashboard and provide observations through the Eye on the Reef App.

A summary of discussion items across LMAC's included:

- Activating community to assist in situational awareness
- Aerial surveillance compared to in-water surveys
- How could AI technology assist
- Bleaching event and actual coral mortality, as bleached coral isn't dead coral
- Capture what's happened and then what we can do in the future, which are the most vulnerable corals?
- Collaboration with partners and community
- Community knowledge and understanding of Marine Park zoning
- Extent of the impacts and damage: inshore, shallow, how far out did flood water reach?
- Eye on the Reef App navigation
- Access to data from last year's bleaching event
- Importance of collecting large marine debris items before they break up
- Importance of getting local information so that resources can be used in targeted areas
- Importance of sending information – especially images, what's impacted, any trends, even places that show no impact
- Links between COTS outbreaks and cyclones
- Impacts on tourism
- Media uptake of the flooding results
- Any reports of mortality in coral at depth compared to shallows?
- Possible correlation between *Drupella* outbreaks and coral bleaching
- Relationship between salinity levels and giant clam mortality
- Resources required in collecting marine debris
- Use of imagery of floods plumes

Members suggested:

- A rapid response mechanism for marine debris after flooding to stop the spread and further breakdown of rubbish into the Reef waters
- Corals located deeper than 20 meters being included in the data
- Meet with Traditional Owners to see if Ranger groups in the Hinchinbrook – Cassowary Coast region can assist with monitoring impacts
- Reef mapping could be done in conjunction with other data collection, such as sea grass mapping
- Use of drones (and similar devices) to collect data.

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