

Management Tool Card

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003 - (Amendment)

What it does?

- The Zoning Plan is an enforceable statutory tool.
- The primary planning tool for the conservation and management of the Marine Park.
- Provides the legal framework for spatial management of activities within the Marine Park. Each zone has different rules for the activities that are allowed as of right, the activities that are prohibited, and the activities that require a permit.

What's involved in implementing?

- A zoning plan is a legislative instrument and must be laid before each House of the Parliament.
- Development processes involves statutory environmental, social and economic assessments, and a Regulatory Impact Statement. Requires multiple statutory public consultation periods (minimum three months each).
- Initiated by the Reef Authority, endorsed by the Board, and accepted by the Minister.

How is it currently used?

- Provides legal framework for spatial management.
- Balances conservation within multiple uses including recreation, tourism, research, fishing, and Traditional Owner practices.
- Also sets rules for Remote Natural Areas, Shipping Areas, Fisheries, Experimental Areas, and Special Management Areas.

Timeframe for implementation

- 5-10 years.

Management Tool Card

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations- Amendment

What it does?

- Statutory tool.
- Prescribe matters required or permitted by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act and provide legal framework.

What's involved in implementing?

To amend the Regulations;

- Ministerial approval and adequate consultation.
- Governor-General approval.
- Can be disallowed by Parliament.

A Policy Intent must be developed, including;

- The detailed rules that are needed and what those rules are intended to achieve;
- Justification why additional management is needed.

How is it currently used?

- Used as the reference for Marine Park rules, day-to-day management and compliance.
- Enforces provisions of the Act, Zoning plan and Plans of management.

Timeframe for implementation?

- Up to two years depending on urgency and complexity.

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Plans of Management (POM) – Amendment or New

What it does?

- A POM is an enforceable statutory tool that apply at a finer scale than zoning (layered over the top of existing zoning rules).
- POMs regulate use of specific areas, species, or ecological communities to conserve values while enabling sustainable use.

What's involved in implementing?

- Initiated, endorsed and approved by the Marine Park Authority Board.
- Development and amendment processes include two statutory consultation phases.
- Amendments follow similar formal processes.
- Additional Regulation amendments may be required (see that card).

How is it currently used?

- Provides detailed management rules at regional or site-specific levels that applies to all Marine Park users.
- Regulates vessel sizes, group numbers, frequency of visits, tourism operation types, aircraft landing, mooring and anchoring, and water sports.
- Current POMs: Whitsundays, Cairns, Hinchinbrook, and Shoalwater Bay (Dugong).

Timeframe for implementation:

- Up to five years.
- Four+ years for new Plan of Management.
- Three years for amendment to existing POM.

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Special Management Area (SMA) – New

What it does?

A SMA is an enforceable salutatory tool that can prevail over one or more zones and provide additional protection of values beyond zoning or Plans of Management (POMs) by restricting access or use of specified areas of the Marine Park for conservation and management purposes.

SMA can restrict activities for:

- Conservation of species and natural resources.
- Protection of cultural and heritage values.
- Public appreciation and safety.
- Emergency situations.
- Buffering adjoining restricted areas.

May be temporary, seasonal or permanent.

What's involved in implementing?

The Marine Park Authority Board and the Minister must provide in-principle support/ direction for the development of a Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulation 2019 amendment.

To amend or introduce a Regulation a comprehensive policy intent must be developed.

This will require (among other things):

- The detailed rules of the SMA that are needed and what those rules are intended to achieve.
- The level of impact on rights and interests of Traditional Owners, the public or stakeholders.
- **Justification why additional management is needed.**

The Regulation amendment required to introduce an SMA is made by the Governor-General and tabled in Parliament (where it can be disallowed).

How is it currently used?

- Restricted Access (science and conservation).
- Public Appreciation Areas (limits extractive activities).
- Maritime Cultural Heritage Protection (wrecks).
- Seasonal Closures (pelagic species).
- No Dories Detached / One Dory Detached (fishing intensity).
- Species Conservation (dugongs).
- Lizard Island (pelagic fishery limits).
- Princess Charlotte Bay (dugong protection).

Timeframe for implementation:

- up to two years depending on urgency and complexity.

Management Tool Card

Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRA)

What it does?

A statutory tool that formalises how Traditional Owner groups manage traditional use activities on sea country in partnership with Australian and Queensland governments.

Recognises activities undertaken under customs/traditions for personal, domestic or communal needs, for example only:

- Fishing and collecting.
- Hunting.
- Caring for cultural/heritage places.

May also:

- Define roles in education, compliance and monitoring.
- Outline public education about Traditional Owner connections to sea country.

What's involved in implementing?

- Regulations prescribe accreditation, modification and revocation of TUMRAs.
- Must consult with representative Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander body to confirm Traditional Owner representation.
- CEO Reef Authority delegated powers under the GBRMP Act.

How is it currently used?

- Nine TUMRAs + One ILUA, ~25% of the Marine Park.
- Can operate alongside Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUA) under the Native Title Act 1993 and MOUs.

Timeframe for implementation:

- 2-5 years.

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Part 5.4 Management Action

What it does?

- Under Part 5.4 of the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*, the Reef Authority has the power to take or direct management actions to protect, conserve, or restore the environment, biodiversity, and heritage values of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.
- Marine Park Act: Section 118, 1321.

What's involved in implementing?

- CEO Reef Authority delegated powers under the GBRMP Act.

How is it currently used?

- A Part 5.4 Management Action is only used when other management tools (such as zoning provisions, permits, or voluntary compliance measures) are inadequate or too slow to address a specific risk.
- Undertaking physical removal of debris or pollutants following a marine incident.
- Ordering cessation of an activity likely to cause damage to coral or heritage sites.
- Coordinating reef restoration works under emergency or authorised circumstances.

Timeframe for implementation:

- Up to 2 years depending on complexity.

Management Tool Card

Fees and Charges (new)

What it does?

- Fees and charges are an important management tool used to recover costs associated with managing the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and to support environmental protection and visitor management.
- Marine Park Act: Section 122-124, 139ZA.

What's involved in implementing?

- The Reef Authority cannot impose a new fee or charge without legislative backing.
- Draft policy and justification in line with the Australian Government Charging Framework and the Cost Recovery Guidelines.
- A Regulation amendment is required after policy development and justification;
- Ministerial and Governor-General approval and adequate public consultation.
- Can be disallowed by Parliament.

How is it currently used?

Environmental Management Charge (EMC):

- A per-visitor fee collected mainly from tourism operators to contribute to the protection and management of the Marine Park.

Permit and Permission Fees:

- Application and assessment fees for commercial, research, and other permitted activities, ensuring cost recovery for assessment and administration.

Commercial Use and Mooring Fees:

- Fees applied to the installation, use, and maintenance of moorings, pontoons, and other structures.

Cost-Recovery Charges:

- For services such as environmental assessments, site inspections, or monitoring associated with permitted activities.

Timeframe for implementation:

- Up to 2 years depending on urgency and complexity.

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Permissions (new type, new conditions)

What it does?

- The Regulations and the Zoning Plan provide for the conduct of activities in a zone or a part of a zone. They also stipulate the process of obtaining permissions required for the use or entry of zones, therefore some activities and operations require a permission.
- A permit is a statutory legal tool that sets the conditions for how, when, how often, activities can be conducted.

What's involved in implementing a permission type for a new activity or operation?

- If the activity to be managed is not already listed in the Regulations, Zoning Plan and/or POM then amendment/s will be required (see those management cards).
- If the activity is listed, however, new permission conditions are required the permissions assessor can draft in collaboration with QPWS and the delegate can consider.
- If a new permission type is required, due to new Policy or Regulation implementation then the Reef Authority and QPWS will develop in partnership. Stakeholder consultation may be required.

What's involved in issuing a permission?

- Each application is assessed against 16 mandatory assessment criteria.
- Special Permissions (in Plan of Management Areas) are capped.
- All permit assessments are notified under the Native Title Act. Some permit applications require targeted Traditional Owner consultation and/or broader public consultation.

How is it currently used?

- Joint Reef Authority and QPWS permissions system.

Timeframe for implementation:

- New permission type up to 2 years depending on complexity.
- 2 – 6 months to receive a permit depending on complexity.

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Compliance and Enforcement

What it does?

The Reef Authority's Compliance program ensures effective enforcement of management arrangements to protect the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park while encouraging voluntary compliance.

What's involved in implementing?

Program governance across jurisdictions, partnership approach, strategic planning, tactical resources, operational capacity, evidence-based enforcement programs, sophisticated monitoring and reporting capacity, user education program.

How is it currently used?

The Compliance framework is built on education, presence, deterrence, and enforcement

Strategies include:

- Education and awareness campaigns
- Marine Park presence, surveillance and remote tracking
- Advisory and infringement notices
- Strong enforcement against illegal activities.

Reef Joint Field Management Program: vessels, aircraft, land-based surveillance.

Marine Park Inspectors:

- From the Reef Authority and partner agencies
- Trained under the Field Management Program.

Legislative powers:

- GBRMP Act 1975
- EPBC Act 1999
- Regulations, Zoning Plan, POM Delegations 2018.

Timeframe for implementation:

- Depends on need.

Management Tool Card

Reef Stewardship

What it does?

- Reef stewardship programs foster shared responsibility for the protection of the Great Barrier Reef.
- The Reef Authority partners with Traditional Owners, industries, local governments, and communities to empower people to actively care for the Reef through everyday actions, on-ground management, and advocacy. These programs translate awareness into action.

What's involved in implementing?

- Resources and good will.

How is it currently used?

- Community and Local Government: The Reef Guardian Program supports schools and councils, to adopt and promote best environmental practices that reduce threats to the Reef.
- Tourism Industry: The High Standard Tourism Program recognises operators who demonstrate high sustainability standards. The Tourism Reef Protection Initiative engages tourism operators to undertake site stewardship actions guided by an evidence-based Site Stewardship Plan.
- Traditional Owners: Sea Country partnerships and Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRAs) promote Indigenous-led stewardship based on traditional knowledge, governance, and cultural connections.
- Reef Communities and Volunteers: Support for Eye on the Reef citizen science and monitoring programs.

Timeframe for implementation:

- Up to 2 years depending on urgency and complexity.

Management Tool Card

Site Specific Plans – Amend or New

What it does?

- Site Plans are localised, non-statutory plans that outlines existing management arrangements.
- Site-Specific Plans seek to protect sensitive sites by balancing use at a finer scale.
- Provides guidance to permit holders and informs permit assessment decisions.

What's involved in implementing?

- Approved by Reef Authority General Manager.
- Research and preparation of documents.
- Consultation with Traditional Owners, users and the public.

How is it currently used?

- Lady Musgrave Reef Site Management Arrangements.
- 2007 Whitsundays POM site plans (limits on vessel length/group size).
- 2001 Cairns POM site plans (limits on moorings and anchorages).

Timeframe for implementation:

- up to 2 years depending on complexity (~6- 16 months).

Management Tool Card

Partnerships

What it does?

- The Reef Authority works collaboratively with Australian and Queensland government agencies, Traditional Owners, Reef-dependent industries, researchers, community groups, and international organisations to protect and manage the Reef.
- These partnerships leverage shared expertise, resources, and networks to deliver coordinated and science-based management outcomes.

What's involved in implementing?

- Target resources to developing and implementing an Engagement Plan, including systematically building relationships, identifying shared interests, values and mutually beneficial opportunities.

How is it currently used?

- To strengthen collaboration and shared stewardship, ensuring that collective action supports the resilience, protection, and sustainable use of the Great Barrier Reef.

Partnership Areas

Australian and Queensland Governments:

- Joint management under the Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement 2015 through the Reef Joint Field Management Program.

Traditional Owners:

- Co-design and delivery of projects such as Sea Country Partnerships and Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRAs).

Reef-dependent Industries:

- Collaboration with tourism, ports and shipping sectors to promote best practice, stewardship, and compliance.

Community and Local Government:

- Partnerships with, Reef Guardian Councils, schools, and Local Marine Advisory Committees to foster stewardship and local action.

Research and Science Organisations:

- To inform evidence-based management.

International Partnerships:

- Commonwealth government, UNESCO, IUCN, ICRI.

Timeframe for implementation:

- up to 2 years.

Management Tool Card

Reef Interventions and Adaptation

What it does?

- Reef interventions are targeted, science-based actions designed to support the recovery, resilience, and adaptation of the Great Barrier Reef in response to environmental pressures such as climate change, coral bleaching, and crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks.
- Enhance the Reef's capacity to resist, recover from, and adapt to cumulative and climate-related impacts.

What's involved in implementing?

- The Reef Authority coordinates, regulates, and partners on interventions that align with the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*.
- Dependent on the scale of the intervention, area and time.

How is it currently used?

- Crown-of-Thorns Starfish Control Program protecting high-value reefs.
- Reef Joint Field Management Program – delivering on-ground interventions, coordinating immediate action following natural or human-caused disturbances.

Timeframe for implementation: 2-5 years.

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Non-statutory Tools

Policy (new or update)

What it does?

- Policy sets the Reef Authority's management intent on a particular topic and guides users, stakeholders and decision-makers.

What's involved in implementing?

- Public consultation may be required.
- Approval MPA Board.

How is it currently used?

- Describes management intent for uses (e.g. cruise ships, bareboats), species (e.g. take of protected species), issues (e.g. moorings, and environmental impact management).

Timeframe for development: Up to 2 years, reviewed as required.

Position Statement (new)

What it does?

- Position statements express the Reef Authority's position on an issue where it has a strong interest but is outside its direct regulatory control.
- Position statements improve awareness of threats to the Great Barrier Reef and identify actions that would reduce that threat.

What's involved in implementing?

- MPA Board approval.

How is it currently used?

Position Statements on Climate change, Fisheries, Coastal Ecosystems, Water quality.

Timeframe for development: Up to 12 months.

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Non-statutory Tools

Guideline (new)

What it does?

- Guidelines support the Reef Authority's policies and provide general guidance on the application of legislation and processes.

What's involved in implementing?

Reef Authority delegated powers under the GBRMP Act.

How is it currently used?

Outline recommended practices and process where the Reef Authority has regulatory control.

Timeframe for implementation: Up to 12 months.

Strategy (new)

What it does?

- Strategies provide a long-term, big picture framework. Can define long-term management approach that may drive development of multiple management tools.

What's involved in implementing?

- Consultation as required.
- CEO / Marine Park Authority Board approval.

How is it currently used?

Used to strengthen partnerships, support best practice, guide education and awareness.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy.
- Tourism Management Action Strategy.

Timeframe for development: Up to 12 months depending on complexity.