Australian Government
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

Reef Authority

CORPORATE PLAN

2026–27



Statement of Preparation

I, Josh Thomas, as the Accountable Authority of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, present the Reef Authority's *Corporate Plan 2026–27*, which covers the reporting periods 2026–27 to 2029–30, as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. The plan is prepared in accordance with the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014.

The Marine Park Authority Board has endorsed the plan, as it is responsible for implementing the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975.*

Josh Thomas
Chief Executive Officer

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The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority acknowledges the expertise, wisdom, and enduring connections that have informed the guardianship of the Reef for millennia. We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners as the first managers of this land and sea Country, and value their traditional knowledge which continues to inform the current management and stewardship of the Reef for future generations.



Nautilus Shell Artwork
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Australian Government
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

Reef Authority

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Chairperson's opening statement

The Great Barrier Reef is a globally significant natural wonder facing immense challenges in a rapidly changing environment.

Its management requires strong partnerships, robust science, effective governance, and a shared commitment across Reef partners and stakeholders.

Building Reef resilience — through foundational management actions and new interventions — is critical, along with immediate local, national, and global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The Reef Authority's forward work program reflects the challenges and opportunities associated with the changing environment, and the need for innovative approaches based on expertise, evidence, and partnerships.

Over the next year the Reef Authority will continue to adapt, collaborate, and focus on the areas that matter most to the marine environment and the communities and industries that depend on it.

The Board will continue to provide strategic oversight and support the Reef Authority in delivering its responsibilities, managing risk, and achieving enduring outcomes for the Reef.

The long-term health and resilience of this vast marine system is up to all of us — the Reef's future relies on sustained collaboration, shared commitment, and collective effort.

Dr Ian Poiner

Chairperson
Marine Park Authority Board

Chief Executive Officer's foreword



I am pleased to present our Corporate Plan 2026–27 (the Plan), reflecting our commitment to protecting one of the world's greatest natural treasures in the face of a rapidly changing environment.

The Reef Authority's role is clear — guided by the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* (Marine Park Act), we are the regulators and managers of this vast, ecologically complex ecosystem with a global profile and deep significance to many people.

We are not just managing a marine area, we are working with people, building partnerships and fostering cooperation with Traditional Owners, communities, and industries for the Reef's long-term resilience.

Within this context, and the threats facing the Reef, we operate in a unique and complex operating environment. It is critical our efforts and resources are allocated to delivering the best outcomes for the Reef.

This Plan sets out our strategic direction and how we will deliver on our purpose and priorities for the year ahead, against three key activities:

- **Protect** the Reef through in-field activities and regulation to safeguard its unique environment while allowing ecologically sustainable use
- **Foster** a culture of Reef stewardship through strong partnerships, strategic engagement, and education programs
- **Adapt** our management to protect the Reef's resilience in response to a changing climate and other pressures.

These key activities are supported by an annual operating plan, which identifies delivery initiatives to guide the implementation of our work.

Critical corporate enabling services provide technological, legal, and financial support to operationalise our work — along with our highly capable and dedicated staff with expertise in a range of fields.

Among the delivery initiatives for the year ahead, and this Plan's reporting period, is our focus and commitment to progressing the redevelopment of the Great Barrier Reef Aquarium through staged capital works and business development, reimagining Australia's National Education Centre for the Reef.

This year, with support from the funding injection from the 2026–27 budget process, our in-field focus remains on delivering the Crown-of-thorns Starfish Control Program, and the compliance program, to protect coral habitats, ensure a strong in-field presence, and enforce recreational and commercial fishing compliance.

Through our permission system, we continue to manage activities in the Marine Park to ensure sustainable use. We are also enhancing regulatory best practice improvement through incremental reform.

With mounting environmental pressures, we will support demonstrated effective reef rehabilitation techniques and testing new interventions, and we are progressing innovative spatial planning approaches.

We remain focused on strengthening knowledge acquisition, data governance, and decision-support tool capabilities to better understand current condition and outlook and inform management actions.

Education and partnerships are at the heart of what we do — working with Traditional Owners and with broader local, national and international networks.

While challenges to the Reef, like many other World Heritage-listed sites, from climate change and other pressures remain, we are well-placed to continue building on our effective Reef management programs and supporting others by sharing our knowledge through the World Heritage system and other channels.

We will also continue to support the Australian Government in their broader engagements and reporting to UNESCO in relation to the Reef.

We are contributing to minimising our own environmental impact through a suite of sustainability initiatives within the organisation, many of which have been recognised as leading within the public service.

Alongside our external management, investing in our people is central to our approach — creating a safe and culturally inclusive workplace, and strengthening capabilities to meet future workforce needs to deliver on our key activities and achieve our purpose.

There is nowhere else on Earth like the Great Barrier Reef, and it is both a privilege and great responsibility to manage the Reef on behalf of all Australians and the international community.

Mr Josh Thomas

Chief Executive Officer
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

Our purpose, role and key activities

The Reef Authority is a non-corporate Commonwealth statutory authority established under the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* (Marine Park Act). The main object of the Act is to provide for the long-term protection and conservation of the environment, biodiversity and heritage values of the Great Barrier Reef Region.

The agency is governed by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Board (the Board) which has oversight of functions as set out in section 7 of the Marine Park Act and consists of seven members, including a part-time chairperson, five part-time members, and the Chief Executive Officer (accountable authority) of the Reef Authority.

As a portfolio agency of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, we advise the Australian Minister for the Environment and Water on a range of matters relevant to protecting and managing the Great Barrier Reef.

Corporate Plan on a page 2026–27

Reef Authority

Vision
A healthy Great Barrier Reef for future generations.

Purpose | Outcome Statement in Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS)
The long-term protection, ecologically sustainable use, understanding and enjoyment of the Great Barrier Reef for all Australians and the international community through the care and development of the Marine Park.

Program 1.1
Protects and manages the environment, biodiversity, and heritage values of the Great Barrier Reef Region, and ensures the ecologically sustainable use and benefits of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park for current and future generations.

Commonwealth Regulator Performance

Ministerial Statement of Expectations and Regulator Statement of Intent

Principles of regulator best practice:

- Continuous improvement and best practice
- Risk based and data driven
- Collaboration and engagement

Our key activities (strategic objectives)*

Key activity 1:	Key activity 2:	Key activity 3:
Protect the Reef through in-field activities and regulation to safeguard its unique environment while allowing ecologically sustainable use.	**Adapt** our management to protect the Reef's resilience in response to a changing climate and other pressures.	**Foster** a culture of Reef stewardship through strong partnerships, strategic engagement, and education programs.

To achieve our purpose, our key activities are operationalised through an annual operating plan.

Performance measures and annual performance statements

Performance measures, including targets, are set out in this plan for the required reporting period. Annual performance statements, included in our Annual Report, provide an analysis on the agency's performance in achieving its purpose for the reporting year — providing results for the targets in the PBS and Corporate Plan.

Achieving our purpose

Our strategic focus is centred on Reef management and protection, and this is operationalised through our key activities and supported by 17 delivery initiatives as outlined in our annual operating plan. Supporting delivery are our critical enabling services including legal, finance, technology, people and workforce planning, strategic governance, communication and business operations.

Our excellence in delivery, as well as our public facing engagement and strategic communication, underpins our world-leading Marine Park management.

In addition to our delivery initiatives outlined in the annual operating plan below, the agency uses section plans and other key internal strategies to guide the delivery of our work.

Key activities	Delivery initiatives
1 **Protect** the Reef through in-field activities and regulation to safeguard its unique environment while allowing ecological sustainable use.	1.1 Deliver the Crown-of-thorns Starfish Control Program to protect coral habitats.
	1.2 Deliver key priorities in the Reef Joint Field Management Program ensuring a strong in-field presence.
	1.3 Support compliance of recreational and commercial fishing in the Marine Park through the Reef Joint Field Management Program and engagement activities.
	1.4 Enhance regulatory best practice improvement through incremental reform.
	1.5 Deliver the permissions system in accordance with the service charter.
	1.6 Implement our Sustainability Strategy's annual initiatives, which contribute to minimising our environmental impact.
2 **Adapt** our management to protect the Reef's resilience in response to a changing climate and other pressures.	2.1 Support deployment of Reef rehabilitation techniques and test the efficacy and viability of new intervention technologies that may support the Reef's resilience.
	2.2 Strengthen knowledge acquisition, data governance, and decision-support tool capabilities, in collaboration with our partners, to enhance our understanding, facilitate knowledge exchange, and support decision-making for better conservation outcomes.
	2.3 Progress innovative spatial planning approaches that enhance the long-term protection of Marine Park values.
	2.4 Engage with our partners in government, industry, and the community to promote the management of fisheries to support Reef resilience in response to a changing climate and other pressures.

Key activities	Delivery initiatives
2 Cont.	2.5 Collaborate with Reef management stakeholders to review and update the *Reef 2050 Long-term Sustainability Plan.*
	2.6 Trial, and where beneficial, operationalise new technologies to improve conservation or compliance outcomes.
3 Foster a culture of Reef stewardship through strong partnerships, strategic engagement, and education programs.	3.1 Lead year-round reporting on Reef health to understand the state of the ecosystem and inform decision making.
	3.2 Develop local, national and international relationships and networks that engender Reef stewardship actions, support capacity building and education programs.
	3.3 Facilitate the deployment and implementation of Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRAs) and empower Traditional Owners in the stewardship and management of Sea Country.
	3.4 Build the Reef Authority's capacity to progress the development and implementation of a co-management roadmap.
	3.5 Continue the redevelopment of the Great Barrier Reef Aquarium through staged capital works and business development.

Our approach to planning and reporting

Planning approach

When setting the Reef Authority's strategic direction and developing programs, projects or strategies, we consider and respond to:

- government and ministerial plans, priorities, and direction
- Ministerial Statement of Expectations and responding Regulator Statement of Intent
- the Marine Park Act and other relevant legislation
- key external influences and factors
- the needs of responsible Reef users
- future capability needs of the Reef Authority
- key partnership strategies, and
- research information to inform evidence-based decision making.

The following key strategies and approaches guide our work:

The ***Reef 2050 Long-term Sustainability Plan*** (Reef 2050 Plan) is a strategic framework for the Australian and Queensland governments to work together to protect the Great Barrier Reef. It is further supported by the ***Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan***.

Great Barrier Reef Outlook reports are provided to the Minister every five years and contain a comprehensive assessment of the health, use, risks, resilience, current management, values, and long-term outlook for the Great Barrier Reef Region.

The Reef Authority is strengthening co-management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park with Traditional Owners. The **Co-management Principles Policy** sets out our vision, while the ***Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy*** provides the overarching framework for protecting and recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reef heritage. Delivered through an implementation plan, and aligned with the Co-management framework, it will guide the next phase of Traditional Owner partnerships and support healthy Sea Country.

The Reef Authority delivered its inaugural ***Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan*** and ***Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan,*** designed to translate reconciliation values into everyday actions across the agency. The Reef Authority is deeply committed to reconciliation through meaningful and enduring partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The ***Great Barrier Reef Blueprint for Climate Resilience and Adaptation*** (Blueprint 2030) provides high level guidance on adapting Reef management under a changing climate.

By creating a clear pathway from science to impact, our ***Science Strategy*** will support the delivery of key initiatives including those in this Plan, the Blueprint 2030 and the Reef 2050 Plan. It will provide a guiding framework that communicates and prioritises the science and knowledge needed to support us in effective management of the Great Barrier Reef.

Joint **permitting arrangements** under the Intergovernmental Agreement with the Queensland Government continue to develop to support practical implementation and high-impact improvements through process streamlining, risk-based assessment and conditioning, system efficiencies, improved ways of working, and regulatory reform, where practicable.

The **Portfolio Budget Statement** (PBS) and the **Corporate Plan** complement each other by providing a consistent performance framework and a clear line-of-sight from vision to key activities and outcomes. The PBS informs Members of Parliament and the public of the proposed allocations of resources for government outcomes by entities within the portfolio.

The **Corporate Plan** outlines the Reef Authority's purpose, key activities, and performance criteria against intended targets for the year in the context of a four-year strategic planning cycle.

The **annual operating plan** includes 17 targeted delivery initiatives which are key focus areas for the agency to deliver or make significant progress in the 2026–27 reporting period. The targeted delivery initiatives are supported by our critical foundational and corporate services and section plans that further operationalise the agency's work program.

Annual reports inform Parliament and other stakeholders of our performance — particularly through the annual performance statement chapter — in relation to the PBS and Corporate Plan.

Our operating environment

Governance framework

Minister for the Environment and Water

The Reef Authority is an agency within the Australian Government's Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water portfolio, and reports to the Minister for the Environment and Water. The Minister provides direction on Government priorities and expectations. Matters relevant to the management and health of the Great Barrier Reef are provided to the Minister by the Reef Authority.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Board

The Marine Park Authority Board (the Board) is established under the Marine Park Act. Members include a part-time Chairperson, the CEO, and five part-time members.

The Board has oversight of functions as set out in Section 7 of the Marine Park Act.

Accountable Authority and Executive Management Group

The CEO is the accountable authority for the agency and leads the Executive Management Group to advise the Board on policy, strategies and actions to give effect to the Marine Park Act.

The Executive Management Group provides strategic and operational leadership and direction for their respective branches within the Reef Authority.

Senior Management Team

Directors develop and drive the Reef Authority's work. Collectively as the Senior Management Team, directors work in partnership to ensure the Reef Authority is adaptable in its delivery of activities.

Reef Authority staff

Each director from the Senior Management Team leads their staff to implement the Reef Authority's annual operating plan, and section plans.

Reef Advisory Committees

The Board has established two external advisory committees – an Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee and Tourism Reef Advisory Committee – to provide advice on policy, strategies and management actions.

Local Marine Advisory Committees

The Reef Authority has established nine community-based Local Marine Advisory Committees to provide advice on local issues and management actions relevant to the Reef.

Audit and Risk Management Committee (ARMC)

Established by the accountable authority in accordance with section 45 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*, the ARMC provides independent advice and assistance on the appropriateness of financial reporting, performance reporting, the system of risk oversight and management and the systems for internal control.

Legislation

The way we manage and protect the Marine Park is guided by our legislative suite and policies. Our approach to best practice regulation is based on the three principles of the Commonwealth Regulator Performance framework — which includes continuous improvement and building trust, risk-based and data-driven, and collaboration and engagement.

Legislation relating to the Marine Park

The main object of the Marine Park Act is to provide for the long-term protection and conservation of the environment, biodiversity, and heritage values of the Region.

The other objects of the Marine Park Act are to allow ecologically sustainable use of the Region, encourage engagement in the protection and management of the Region, and assist in meeting Australia's international responsibilities for World Heritage so far as consistent with the main object of the act.

To achieve the objects, the Marine Park Act:

- provides for the establishment, control, care, and development of the Marine Park
- establishes the Reef Authority and outlines its role and functions
- provides for zoning plans — *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003*, and plans of management
- regulates the Marine Park, including through a permissions system and through the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 2019*
- facilitates partnerships with Traditional Owners in management of marine resources, including through Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements
- facilitates a collaborative approach to management of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area with the Queensland Government, through the Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement and its establishment of the Reef Joint Field Management Program.

Additionally, there is a vast array of other Commonwealth and State legislation that applies to the Region and governs how we manage the Reef. This ranges from national environmental law frameworks, and Native Title and cultural heritage legislation, to the relevant criminal codes and crimes legislation.

Organisational legislation relevant to the Reef Authority

Primary legislation relevant to the Reef Authority, as an entity, includes the following Acts (and the supporting legislation and associated instruments):

- *Archives Act 1983*
- *National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022*
- *Privacy Act 1988*
- *Public Service Act 1999*
- *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013*
- *Fair Work Act 2009*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982*
- *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*

Subsidiaries

The Reef Authority has no subsidiaries.

Factors influencing our operating environment

The Great Barrier Reef is a vast and iconic natural wonder, home to unique species and habitats, and deeply significant for some 70 Traditional Owner groups with connection dating back more than 60,000 years.

The Reef's size, location, ecological complexity, significance, diverse stakeholders and users, and global profile, create a unique and complex operating environment, for the Reef Authority. While the Reef Authority has a clear remit, guided by the Marine Park Act and further operationlised through corporate planning, there are factors that can influence our operating environment and impact achieving our purpose.

Climate-related drivers and pressures

Climate change is the most significant long-term threat that influences the Reef's current condition, resilience, and outlook. Rising temperatures, marine heatwaves, increasing frequency and magnitude of extreme flood plumes, ocean acidification, sea level rise and changed and intensified weather patterns are placing increasing pressure on the whole ecosystem. This is further exacerbated by declining water quality, outbreaks of coral-eating crown-of thorns-starfish, coastal development, fishing impacts, and invasive species and disease, including recent detections of H5N1 high-pathogenicity avian influenza (bird flu) in wild birds in Australia.

The Reef Authority is responding through its flagship Reef protection programs that build resilience —enforcing zoning rules that prohibit fishing in no-take areas, protecting coral cover through targeted crown-of-thorns starfish control, and undertaking spatial planning in the southern area of the Marine Park. Education programs and partnerships, including with researchers and with the tourism industry for Reef protection initiatives, also seek to build the collective capability needed for new and emerging climate challenges.

Economic and social factors

The Reef Authority recognises the Reef and the people who use it are strongly interconnected, and considers the ecological, social and economic factors in decision-making. The Reef has deep cultural, spiritual, social and economic significance for Traditional Owners, who hold enduring rights, interests, cultural authority and custodial obligations for Sea Country. The Reef Authority works with Traditional Owners through programs including TUMRAs, which support culturally grounded approaches to Sea Country management, traditional use, monitoring, compliance, research and protection of cultural heritage values.

The Reef and its connected coastal catchments support significant economic activity through tourism, fishing, agriculture, and associated industries. These sectors can be influenced by broader economic conditions as well as global economic drivers and geopolitical instability. Significant events have affected broadscale societal attitudes — including rising inflation and cost of living concerns.

The Reef Authority actively engages with stakeholders, including Reef industries — for example, the Reef Authority partners with the tourism industry to deliver Reef protection projects. As an entity, the Reef Authority considers operational cost pressures through careful resource planning and prioritisation, and effective financial management. Fuel costs and availability are a watch point

for in-field operations, and broader economic changes and challenges are being considered in our planning for the Great Barrier Reef Aquarium capital works redevelopment.

Regulatory landscape

The Reef is managed within a complex regulatory environment that includes the Marine Park Act, Marine Park regulations, and broader State and Commonwealth legislation, policies, and frameworks.

A range of recent environmental regulation changes have occurred including the Australian and Queensland governments committing to phase out gillnet fishing in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area by mid-2027 and transition to more sustainable fishing practices.

A national environmental regulator — the National Environmental Protection Agency — was established on 1 July 2026, bringing together regulatory functions of Australia's national environmental laws into one independent agency. This includes the assessment and approvals functions of the updated *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The interconnections between the EPBC Act and the Marine Park Act related to assessment and approvals remain unchanged. The Reef Authority is engaging with the National Environmental Protection Agency on such matters, as it previously has, with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

The Reef 2050 Plan is undergoing a scheduled review and we are engaging with management partners as part of this process. This includes consultation workshops to help inform the future direction of this overarching plan for the Reef.

We monitor regulatory developments and maintain effective governance, including reviewing the Marine Park regulations to meet sunsetting requirements of the Legislation Act 2003. Evolving Native Title, cultural governance and Traditional Owner-led management arrangements also influence expectations around how the Reef Authority supports participation, partnership and decision-making in Marine Park management.

Technology

Rapid advances in technology are improving understanding of the Reef. The scientific community uses a variety of technology — including remotely sensed satellite data, big data, machine learning, artificial intelligence, and drones (aerial and submarine) — to model, predict and monitor impacts on the Reef. Artificial intelligence is also accelerating change across the cyber threat and risk landscape, reinforcing the importance of strengthening cyber resilience to protect digital government assets.

The Reef Authority is progressively looking to partner with other agencies in the adoption of new technologies to better understand species, habitats, and reef conditions with increasing precision. Using such technology can provide efficiencies and improve ways to measure, monitor and model coral reefs, allowing resources to be redirected towards other priorities. Increased data storage, cloud computing technologies, efficient data pipelines, and evolving data visualisation tools help make collaboration between researchers, citizen scientists and Reef managers' increasingly real time.

Partnerships and governance

The Reef's size, scale and complexity require strong governance arrangements that support local management actions. The Reef is connected to coastal catchments, exposed to natural hazards, and is a multiple use area with an adjacent growing coastal population. Monitoring, compliance and

incident response occurs in dispersed locations, and there are interactions with multiple jurisdictions and stakeholders.

The Reef Authority manages this through formal partnerships and coordinated planning. This includes working with Traditional Owners through the TUMRA program to support Saltwater Traditional Owner-led Sea Country management, and through partnerships with local government through the Reef Guardian Councils program.

We also support 23 tourism operators at 25 locations along the Reef to undertake activities like Reef health monitoring, site rehabilitation, and targeted research. An Intergovernmental Agreement between the Commonwealth and State governments sets out the framework for working across jurisdictions, including operationalising the Reef Joint Field Management Program. The Reef 2050 Plan provides an overarching framework for the Reef, with its advisory committees providing science expertise and broader advice.

Our capability

Our Marine Park management — underpinned by a highly capable, and dedicated workforce — is supported by a range of critical corporate functions. This includes finance, legal, people services, technology and digital services, strategic governance, communication, and business operations.

These enabling services are critical for delivering against our key activities and priority outcomes for the long-term protection of the Reef.

The Reef Authority is committed to building an integrated, inclusive and high-performing culture. We are building a future-focused workforce, one that is flexible and adaptive, to ensure we are an agile and responsive organisation to meet both current and future needs.

People and workforce planning

Our workforce comprises Australian Public Service (APS) employees engaged under the Public Service Act 1999 and includes natural resource managers, regulators, compliance officers, community educators, policy and planning officers, data analysts, scientists, and corporate professionals.

As part of staff engagement, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Enterprise Agreement 2024−2027 outlines terms and conditions of employment for non-SES employees of the Reef Authority.

The *Reef Authority's Strategic Workforce Plan 2021–26* (Workforce Plan) details our commitment for investing in our people and strengthening capabilities to meet future workforce needs to deliver on our key activities and achieve our purpose. It identifies our challenges and a series of actions to align us with the public service ethos and seeks to position us as a high performing organisation.

The Workforce Plan builds on the five key elements of the Australian Public Service (APS) Strategic Workforce Plan and aims to align our skills as a workforce to be:

- Agile, collaborative, responsive, and able to navigate complexity
- Skilled, knowledgeable, and committed to life-long learning
- Maximising data and technology and digital engagement
- Professional, engaged, and committed to integrity
- Citizen-centred in approach, inclusive, and representational of our diverse communities.

The Reef Authority remains committed to attracting, developing, supporting and retaining First Nations employees.

We invest in staff development in a variety of ways — one of which includes a dedicated learning management system. This system provides staff with access to a diverse range of courses to enhance their skills or develop new skills.

Through our annual performance and development agreement process, there is a shared understanding of expectations, deliverables, behaviours and goals for our staff, and opportunities for development and growth are identified.

APS Strategic Commissioning Framework

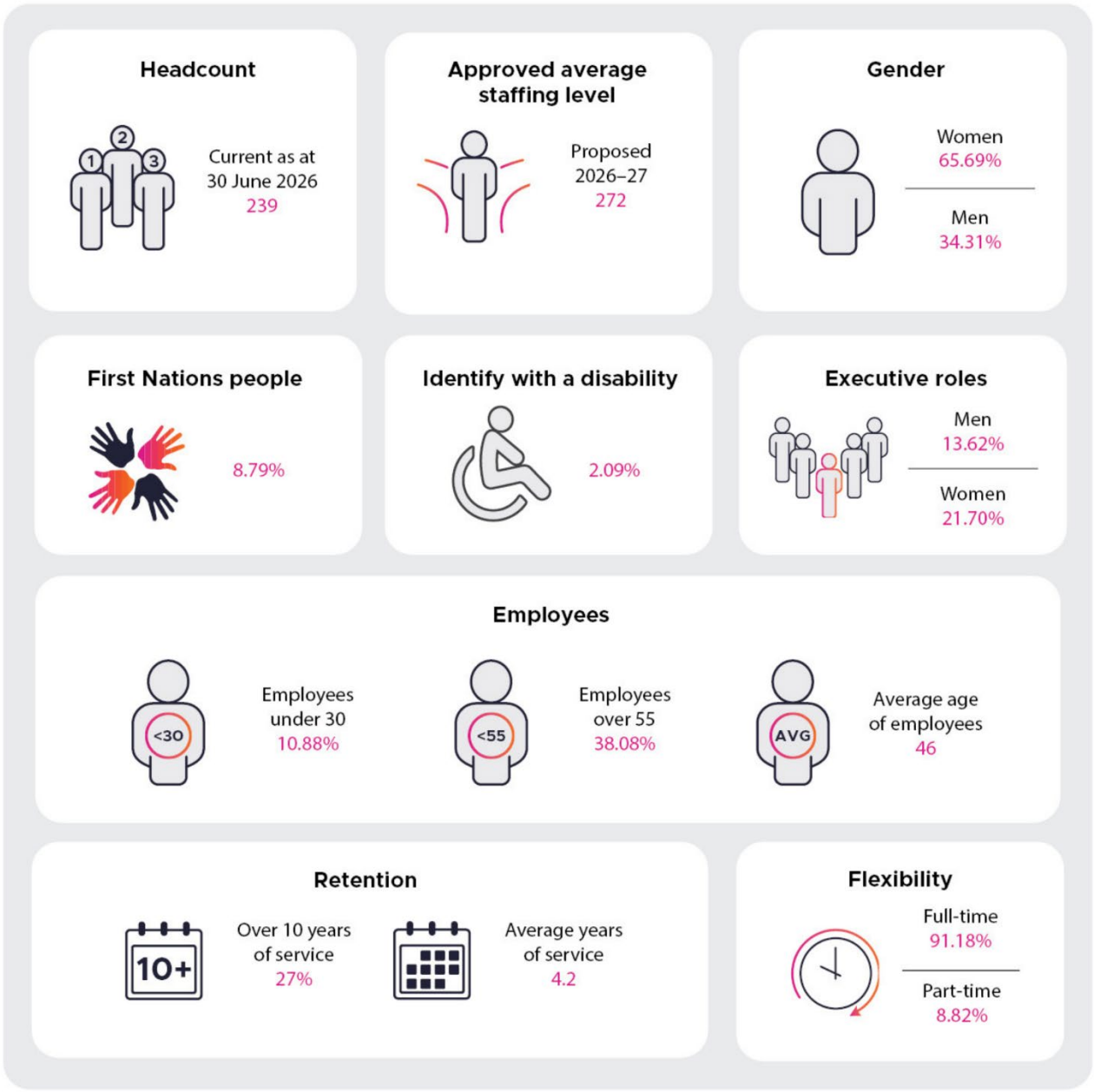
In 2026–27, the Reef Authority will continue working to bring core work in-house in line with the APS Strategic Commissioning Framework. While processes have been initiated to bring this core work in-house, progress has been constrained by a highly competitive labour market and skills shortages in regional Queensland. Accordingly, due to the Reef Authority's outsourcing of core work being minimal and in line with limited circumstances, the Reef Authority has not set a target for 2026–27.

As required by the APS Strategic Commissioning Framework, for 2026–27 the Reef Authority has identified the following job families are core work:

- Accounting and finance
- Compliance and regulation
- Intelligence
- Legal and parliamentary
- Policy
- Portfolio program and project management
- Science and health
- Senior Executive
- Trades and labour

In 2026–27, the Reef Authority will take steps to further embed the APS Strategic Commissioning Framework and strengthen capability. To embed the Framework, the steps proposed include continuing to review our core work, and, where appropriate, considering a range of locations where work can be performed. To strengthen capability to delivery core work, steps include succession planning, upskilling of our existing staff, and knowledge transfer.

Staffing statistics



Work, health and safety

The Reef Authority is committed to the safety and wellbeing of our staff. We continue to further improve our work, health and safety (WHS) processes. This enables us to be more responsive to safety incidents and risk management matters.

Under the banner of 'Safety by Choice, Not by Chance', we proactively address emerging safety issues. We actively engage staff, contractors, and internal and external stakeholders to improve how safety is applied in the workplace through regular communication, training, audits and streamlined reporting. Improved reporting allows us to monitor and evaluate WHS metrics for

relevant stakeholders and, in turn, inform subsequent decision-making and address emergent issues.

We have deployed comprehensive and increasingly robust WHS management and administration systems. A commercial off-the-shelf WHS information management and reporting system was rolled out in 2025–26.

In delivery our work, we upload the Australian Public Service (APS) values and adhere to the APS Employment Principles and the APS Code of Conduct.

An agreed set of Reef Authority values and behaviours complements the APS value. We invest in numerous initiatives to support a healthy and productive workforce and positive culture. These initiatives include:

- Proactive early intervention when incidents, hazards and near-misses are reported through our WHS information and reporting system, including ergonomic assessments, risk assessments in accordance with the Psychosocial Code of Practice, and support via our Employees Assistance Program (EAP) and wellbeing counsellor.
- Proactive return-to-work strategies to encourage employees back to work following an injury or incident (including non-work-related illnesses and injuries) as soon as reasonably practicable (subject to medical clearance and guidance).
- Monthly group seminars aimed at providing advice, guidance, and support on a variety of subjects such as managing mental health, adapting to change, dealing with difficult people, leading in times of stress, and resilience.
- Enhancing the personal and professional capability of our managers and employees through one-on-one coaching and formal training such as ‘in person’ training on resilience, conversation feedback (giving and receiving), and difficult conversations; enhancing and communicating early intervention processes for conflict and informal workplace complaint resolution; and an adaptive leadership and coaching program for all people leaders.
- Reef Authority culture initiatives such as monthly staff networking opportunities (coordinated by the Culture Champions Network), the annual Reef Authority Excellence Awards, a digital acknowledgement board for promoting staff work and positive behaviour, and other activities initiated by the Culture Champions Network whose purpose is to support change, build engagement, and shape a positive and productive workplace culture.

Dive operations remain subject to extensive oversight to mitigate risks. The Reef Authority remains engaged with partner agencies, contractors, regulators, and commercial interests to ensure safety is embedded in all underwater activities. The WHS team works cooperatively with the Field Operations Health and Safety Manager to ensure best practice is applied at every opportunity across the Reef Authority’s field activities.

Financial sustainability and asset management

A lifecycle approach is used to manage assets, underpinned by a strategic management plan, to maximise operational efficiency and generate greater return on investment.

The Reef Authority’s written down values of major asset categories include $7.301 million in buildings, $4.681 million in capital works in progress, $2.550 million in plant and equipment, and $4.550 million in leasehold improvements.

The Reef Authority continues to promote financial sustainability and lift the financial maturity of the organisation. This is being achieved through contemporary financial management systems, support, and reporting; business and technology improvements; and education and training.

Environmental sustainability and Net Zero by 2030 target

We are strongly committed to the environment and sustainability. Our *Sustainability Strategy 2024–27* (Sustainability Strategy) aligns with the Australian Public Service Net Zero by 2030 target (and Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy) and identifies four key focus areas:

- Strategy, governance, and reporting
- Clean energy and clean air
- Circular economy
- Nature positive.

Our Sustainability Strategy empowers staff to take a well-considered approach to the use of resources and embed our approach into our organisational culture.

Under the strategy we continue to implement pollution prevention practices, reduce emissions, and efficiently use resources to meet specified targets using recognised government methods. Our efforts demonstrate our commitment and assist in positioning the Reef Authority as a role model for others to follow.

Our sustainable procurement framework further enables emission reduction using government purchasing, building on previous reduction initiatives like renewable electricity and electric vehicles.

We continue to set and work toward achieving our targets and report on our progress annually to align with the Department of Finance's Climate Action in Government Operations and the Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water, Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Policy (ESP Policy).

The strategy is reviewed annually to ensure specific targets and actions align with the APS Net Zero commitments. As required by the Department of Finance under the Climate Action in Government Operations, the Reef Authority updates its Emissions Reduction Plan annually which is made available on the Reef Authority website.

Information communications technology

The Reef Authority's information and communications technology (ICT) capability underpins operational effectiveness, delivery of core services, and ability to respond to changing business and environmental needs across a diverse range of functions, technologies, and locations.

Day-to-day operations are supported through a combination of internal capability, technology partners, and commercial providers, with a focus on:

- Maintaining reliable, secure, and resilient ICT services
- Protecting systems, data, information, and digital assets
- Supporting core applications and technology platforms
- Strengthening data, information, and geospatial capabilities to support evidence-based decision-making.

The Reef Authority will continue to uplift its ICT capability by strengthening cyber security, data and information governance, and digital resilience, while modernising technology and exploring where emerging technologies may deliver value and support business outcomes. Through continuous improvement and effective partnerships, we will ensure our ICT capability remains secure, adaptable, and aligned with Reef Authority and Commonwealth strategic priorities and policies.

Co-investment

The Reef Authority maintains a Memorandum of Understanding with the Queensland Government under the Reef Joint Field Management Program. As part of the program, information technology systems and services — such as the Field Reporting System and Eye on the Reef — are shared to ensure the continued business operations with our partners in the management of the Marine Park.

Infrastructure

Great Barrier Reef Aquarium

The Reef Authority is committed to deliver the Australian Government's National Education Centre for the Great Barrier Reef to provide people of all ages and abilities the opportunity to experience a living tropical coral reef on land. The Great Barrier Reef Aquarium's mission will be to advance the protection, understanding and ecologically sustainable use of the Great Barrier Reef through world class learning experiences, powerful storytelling and community engagement that inspires stewardship, drives conservation action and connects people with this living wonder, now and for the future. The Reef Authority is working towards opening the Great Barrier Reef Aquarium in 2029.

Vessels

The Reef Joint Field Management Program — jointly managed by the Australian and Queensland governments — is essential for delivering the Reef Authority's key in-field operations, including conservation actions, monitoring, incident response, engaging with Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area users, and upholding compliance. The vessel fleet facilitates the program's collaboration and work on Country with Traditional Owners.
Vessel capability is managed through the program's five-year business strategy. This process ensures field officers have the capacity to be in the field at the place, time, and durations necessary to deliver activities that make the most difference to protecting and managing the Reef.

The program maintains a vessel fleet of 19 vessels. The composition of the fleet has changed to support the program's delivery of field activities across the World Heritage Area, guided by the five-year vessel replacement program.

There has been consistent work across many years to achieve a safe, fit-for-purpose vessel fleet capable of operating across the World Heritage Area, particularly in remote locations. The program has four vessels over 17 metres: two 24-metre long-range patrol vessels, a 17-metre catamaran to support in-water operations and maintenance of public moorings and incident response, and a 20-metre high-speed landing barge to support island infrastructure and maintenance projects. The fleet composition ensures rangers can undertake a broad range of activities simultaneously and strategically and can be mobilised quickly and tactically to respond to emerging issues or major environment events such as maritime emergencies, tropical cyclones and associated impacts, and coral bleaching events.

Managing our risks

As the managers of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, we are committed to fostering a positive active approach to risk management, contributing to the long-term protection and ecologically sustainable use of the Reef.

We maintain a robust and comprehensive risk management framework, in accordance with the *Public Governance Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy. Our risk management framework is built on clear risk ownership, integration with Reef Authority objectives, and adaptability to address the emerging challenges facing the Reef.

Consistent with the Australian Government's Climate Risk and Opportunity Management Program, we recognise the importance of integrating climate-related risks into our strategic and operational decision-making. By embedding climate risk assessments into planning and governance, we strengthen our ability to anticipate, prepare for, and adapt how we manage the Reef in a changing climate.

We are committed to applying a risk-informed approach to our strategy and operations, aligned with ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management Guidelines. Supported by strong governance arrangements, we foster a positive risk culture by equipping our people with the tools, capability and information needed to identify, assess and manage risk effectively.

Our approach is supplemented by overarching governance, ensuring alignment with regulatory requirements and best practice. Our Board provides oversight of our strategic risks and our Audit and Risk Management Committee has oversight of our risk framework and practices.

In managing risk, we adopt key principles including accountability, oversight of our strategic, operational, and project risks, and consider emerging risks.

The Reef Authority works together with the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) for independent oversight of compliance, financial and operational performance. Our internal audit program provides assurance across our business processes and performance, and our compliance with relevant statutory requirements under the PGPA Act. Our audit program is informed by our risk profile.

The Reef Authority is also committed to maintaining the highest ethical standards and continues to actively support the *National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022* through robust policies, transparent practices and ongoing staff training. By fostering a culture of integrity, we ensure compliance with relevant regulations and promote accountability at all levels.

Overview of the Reef Authority's risk profiles

Emerging risks
Risks that could, in the future, affect the achievement of our strategic objectives.

Executive Management Group (EMG)
Oversight by the Board, Audit and Risk Management Committee, and management by the EMG.

Focus activities:
- Identify, validate and document
- Ownership over individual risks
- Monitoring and treatment of strategic risks
- Reporting of strategic risk status to the Board and relevant committees



Program Management Office / project managers

Focus activities:
- Everyday management of project risks
- Task and process focus
- Designing and implementing controls
- Escalation of issues, concerns and hazards
- Incident reporting

Strategic, operational and major project risks can overlap

Operational and major project risks can be elevated where there is potential to impact the whole organisation and the achievement of strategic objectives.

Senior Management Team
Oversight by General Managers, and managed by Directors and Assistant Directors

Focus activities:
- Responsible for the management of risks arising from execution of business unit plans including delivery of services
- Understand causes of risk and trends
- Designing and implementing controls
- Managing risk and control performance
- Responding to risk events

Executive Management Group	Senior Management Team	Program Management Office/project managers

Governance
- *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (s16)*
- Commonwealth Risk Management Policy
- Accountable Authority Instructions and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Risk Management Framework
- Framework evaluation, assurance and improvement

Process
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Risk Management Framework Guideline
- Process/project specific risk assessments (e.g. fraud, security, safety, compliance)
- Risk reporting and escalation
- Incident/near miss investigation

Tools
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Strategic and Operational Risks, now managed in Governance, Risk and Compliance IT system
- Risk assessment and management templates
- Hazard, incident and near miss reporting forms/templates
- Control assurance process
- DCCEEW Climate Risk and Opportunity Management Program resources

Strategic risks and mitigation

	Risk and description	Significant mitigation strategies and controls
1	**Reef-wide or regional-scale environmental event(s), including climate change impacts.** Inability to anticipate and respond to potential impacts of catastrophic, system-wide event or the incremental and increasing impact of a series of events, leading to the collapse of the ecosystem across signification regions of the Reef.	• Ongoing in-field management programs — including the Crown-of-Thorns Starfish Control Program, marine monitoring, and Reef health — and incident reporting for early detection and timely interventions. • Our policies and processes support effective and appropriate use of the Marine Park, including the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003* and through our permissions system. • Collaboration with partners, stakeholders, and communities to address threats, minimise damage, raise awareness, and promote education to support a resilient and sustainable Reef.
2	**Business challenges due to extraneous events.** Unable to respond to various threats including global events (such as pandemics, warfare, tourism fluctuations) impacting operations and finances, challenges in adapting to funding variations for Reef programs, and significant changes with external partners that impact on our core obligations and programs.	• Our business continuity plan and corporate services enabling framework includes financial planning, annual operating plans, performance planning and reporting. • Business planning, review processes, and periodic reporting occurs in the Reef Joint Field Management Program and other areas. • The Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement defines joint arrangements between the Australian and Queensland governments. This enhanced coordination provides increased stability and supports long-term strategic planning to better anticipate and respond to future risks.
3	**Reef Authority priorities or direction out of step with community expectation.** Unable to align its priorities and direction for the Marine Park with global community expectations, resulting in scrutiny from various stakeholders including government (Federal and State), the public, non-government organisations, and other interested stakeholders.	• Engagement and activities are delivered under the Reef 2050 Plan. • Engagement with partners and stakeholders — through technical, industry and community advisory groups — provides expert insights, local knowledge, and feedback to inform planning and decision-making. • A dynamic, multi-channel communication strategy is implemented that fosters two-way engagement, ensuring transparency, public trust, and responsiveness to emerging concerns. • Insights from inter-government and scientific agencies, published reports, recognised forums, market research, social media and local networks are used to ensure our actions are well-informed and aligned with community expectations.

Risk and description		Significant mitigation strategies and controls
4	**Unable to adapt to evolving aspirations of Traditional Owners.** Unable to implement policy and legislation to meet the expectations of Traditional Owners within legislative frameworks.	• Ongoing engagement with Traditional Owners through Traditional Owner advisory groups and other consultative forums, and activities undertaken through our Traditional Owner partnerships work, enables our adaptive response to evolving needs and priorities, while building trust. • Through Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRAs), Traditional Owners work in partnership with the Australian and Queensland governments to manage Sea Country. Each TUMRA steering committee makes cultural decisions and manages the individual agreement. TUMRAs are in place for over 43 per cent of the Marine Park.
5	**Compromised technical capability and innovation culture reducing effective Marine Park Management.** Inability to adapt and evolve in an innovative way to ensure informed decision making and service delivery.	• Continual development and adaption of our information technology strategic planning, transformation, systems, and assets. • Investment in innovative knowledge management and decision support tools. • We partner with science agencies and the Queensland Government to develop decision support capabilities. • Continued maturity uplift in alignment with the Commonwealth Protective Security Policy Framework.
6	**Reef Authority is not engaged and strategically influencing the direction of activities that impact the Reef.** Reef Authority operations are uncoordinated, reactive, short-term, and irrelevant with limited capacity to mitigate strategic threats to the Reef.	• Participation in inter-departmental strategic forums to foster collaboration, aligning efforts that effectively shape strategic direction and policy making. • Engagement with key stakeholders at ministerial, agency, and community levels, aimed at shaping policy, securing influence, and building trusted relationships. • Effective governance and delivery of flagship initiatives, including TUMRAs, Reef 2050 and priority stewardship programs, that demonstrate leadership, generate significant environmental and cultural outcomes, and strengthen the Reef Authority's position as the principal manager of the Great Barrier Reef.
7	**The Reef Authority's decisions unintentionally amplify the threats to the Great Barrier Reef.**	• Policies, processes and management of permits under the Zoning Plan support effective and appropriate use of the Marine Park. • Collaboration with research and industry partners to develop Reef restoration tools that are safe and effective.

	Reef Authority policies, decisions and operational activities, such as those relating to novel Reef interventions, amplify climate change impacts and/or negatively impact the values of the Reef.	• Our Sustainability Strategy includes actions like a 6 Green Star certification rating for our head office building, National Australian Built Environment Rating System (NABERs) ratings for buildings generation or purchase of renewable electricity, a zero or low emissions vehicle fleet, waste management plans to minimise waste to landfill.

Collaboration and Cooperation

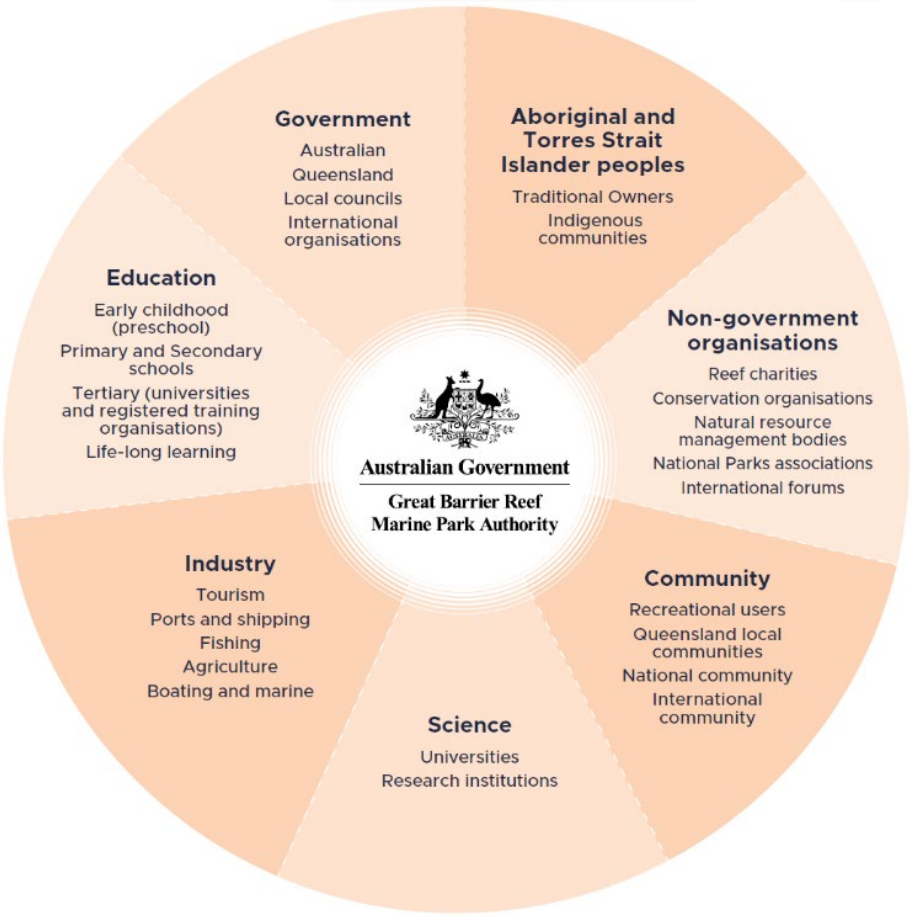
Partners and stakeholders

As a Marine Park manager and regulator responsible for an area bigger than the size of Italy, we collaborate, partner and cooperate with a wide range of partners and stakeholders to achieve our purpose.

The Reef Authority is proud to partner with Traditional Owners, Australian and Queensland government agencies, non-government organisations, science institutions, industry, community organisations, and educational institutions to provide world-leading Marine Park management.

We have a range of agreements with organisations as well as memorandums of understanding (MoU) and collaboration agreements that articulate the mutually agreed expectations for cooperation or information sharing. An MoU allows each partner to make the most of the other's specialist skills, knowledge or jurisdiction.

Communication with our partners and stakeholders about Reef management activities and timely advice about the health of the Reef is a core focus for the Reef Authority. Information is shared through multiple channels including our advisory committees, face-to-face engagement with partners and stakeholders, briefings, and via mainstream media, digital media platforms, and key publications.



Commonwealth, state and local governments

As a portfolio agency of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), we advise the Australian Minister for the Environment and Water on Reef health and management. We are involved in developing and delivering the joint Australian and Queensland governments Reef 2050 Plan, along with broader policy matters.

We work with other Commonwealth departments and regulators across a range of portfolios to ensure we are delivering the best outcomes for the Reef and adhering to governance requirements as a Commonwealth agency.

We have a Master Services Agreement and Collaboration Agreement with the Australian Institute of Marine Science, and a memorandum and understanding with the Department of Defence. We partner and collaborate with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO); Bureau of Meteorology; Australian Maritime Safety Authority; Director of National Parks; and Australian Fisheries Management Authority.

The *Intergovernmental Agreement on the Great Barrier Reef 2024* sets out how the Australian and Queensland governments work together to protect the Reef. Through this agreement, we cooperatively and strategically plan, fund, and deliver an integrated Reef Joint Field Management Program. This collaborative approach with the Queensland Government has existed since 1979 when the first Intergovernmental Agreement was signed.

Key Queensland Government departments we work with include the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation; Queensland Department of Primary Industries (Queensland Fisheries); and Department of Transport and Main Roads.

We also work closely with Tourism and Events Queensland to deliver our globally visible Master Reef Guide Program. We work with local governments throughout the Great Barrier Reef catchment, particularly through our Reef Guardian Council program.

Advisory Committees

The Board, through the Reef Authority, receives advice from two committees — an Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee, and a Tourism Reef Advisory Committee. The Reef Authority's Marine Park management is also supported at a local level by voluntary community-based Local Marine Advisory Committees.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Our partnering approach with Traditional Owners is evolving to support our alignment with "Priority Reform One – Formal partnerships with shared decision making" under the Australian Government's Closing the Gap Implementation Plan.

Our focus is on increasing co-management of the Reef; shared responsibilities for stewardship that recognise leadership, rights, and knowledge; mapping Sea Country values; and strengthening cultural governance to inform the future care and management of Sea Country. This is supported through partnerships and programs such as:

- Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRAs) which are a nationally significant model for Traditional Owner-led stewardship of the Reef. Ten accredited TUMRAs cover 43 per cent of the Reef coastline, enabling Traditional Owners to shape

management priorities and work in partnership with government partners. TUMRAs deliver practical benefits across the Reef by strengthening cultural governance, supporting on-Country stewardship and improving how Traditional Owner knowledge informs management decisions. They also build enduring partnerships and capability that contribute to healthier Sea Country and more effective Reef management.

- Spatial planning activities with Traditional Owners to map Sea Country values, which will strengthen cultural governance and inform the future care and management of Country.
- The Crown-of-thorns Starfish Control Program includes formal partnerships with First Nations businesses to deliver on-water operations, facilitate capacity building, training, and employment pathways for First Nations peoples.
- Permit application assessments include cultural referrals — for Woppaburra, Girringun, Mandubarra, and Wuthathi Traditional Owners — to improve understanding of potential impacts of an activity on cultural heritage values.
- Engaging with the Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner (ReefTO) Taskforce as part of our broader Reef management, and through intersections with the Reef 2050 Plan.

International

Our expertise in marine protected area management, regulation and compliance, education and engagement is recognised globally. We engage internationally with Governments, NGOs, and through various international committees and forums, as well as host virtual and visiting knowledge exchanges to strengthen Marine Park management across the globe.

We provide technical expertise to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for engagement with the World Heritage Committee, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

We are a founding member of the International Coral Reef Initiative and remain active to exchange expertise and collaborate with other members on education, deploying resilience and adaptation frameworks and actions, and improving local and global Marine Park governance.

Science

Research and science institutions — with a particular focus on the Great Barrier Reef — provide important evidence-based information for how we manage the Reef. We collaborate with a range of universities across Australia.

Our Science Strategy will foster collaboration between Reef managers, funders, scientists, knowledge providers and industry to better inform our management actions.

This information and knowledge will deepen our understanding of the Reef and the current pressures on the ecosystem and provide an opportunity for support and collaboration on innovative solutions for Reef protection and management.

Education

Educating, collaborating, and working in partnership is critical to protecting the Reef for future generations and enhancing Reef resilience. Our Reef Guardian Schools program is a global initiative that encourages teachers and students to take actions that help protect the Great Barrier Reef and its connected ecosystem. Our Virtual Learning Experiences and our online Reef Education portal are other offerings.

Industry

We partner with the Queensland Ports Association to strategically improve coordination with associated port activity within or adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

The Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators is the peak body for marine tourism on the Reef and partners with the Reef Authority to enable programs that support site stewardship, research, tourism development, training, and environmental sustainability. This also includes delivery of the Master Reef Guide program.

Through contractual agreements, we work with a range of tourism operators to effectively deliver the Tourism Reef Protection Initiative. Ecotourism Australia and EarthCheck provide independent (external) certification as part of our High Standard Tourism Operator program.

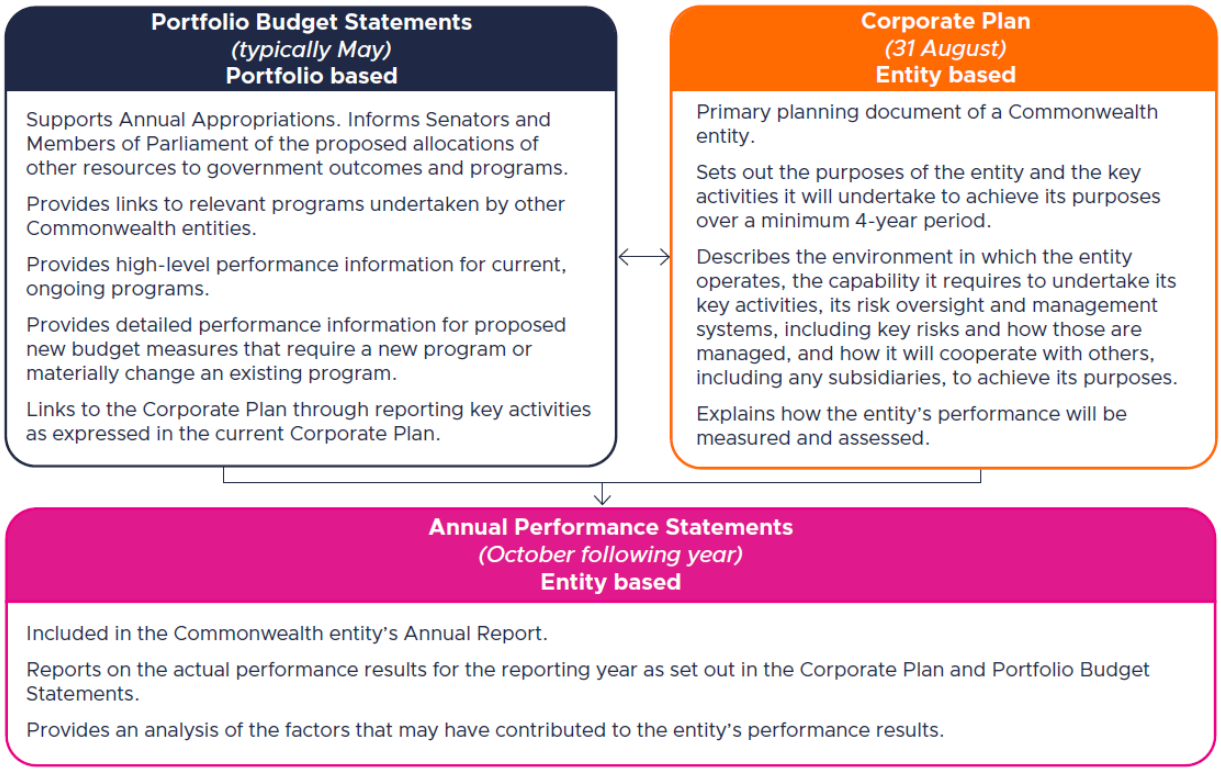
Non-government organisations

We provide in-kind support, skills interchange, cooperative research, and other forms of collaboration to the Great Barrier Reef Foundation. We also work closely with the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre.

Performance reporting framework

Commonwealth Performance Framework

The Reef Authority has an integrated planning and reporting approach that continues to evolve and mature over time. Foundational to our planning approach is the Commonwealth Performance Framework.



Regulatory

Our approach to best practice regulation is based on the following three principles of Commonwealth Regulator Performance:

1. **Continuous improvement and building trust:** ensuring the Reef Authority takes a whole-of-system perspective and is committed to improving performance, capability and culture — to build the public's trust and confidence in our protection, management and regulation of the Reef.

2. **Risk-based and data-driven:** managing risks proportionately and maintaining essential safeguards, while minimising regulatory burden and leveraging reliable data and digital technology to support Marine Park users to comply and grow.

3. **Collaboration and engagement:** implementing regulations in a modern and collaborative way through transparent and responsive communications, including regularly engaging with stakeholders, seeking feedback where appropriate, providing guidance and information that is relevant, clear and concise.

Statement of Expectations and Statement of Intent

The Reef Authority adheres to its Ministerial Statement of Expectations and our responding Statement of Intent that outlines how we give effect to our responsibilities as a regulator. This includes our responsibilities to administer legislative and regulatory functions, manage the Marine Park in a changing climate, continuous improvement, and whole-of-system stewardship across all regulatory functions and reforms. Both statements are available on our website.

In delivering its regulatory functions, and as part of the whole-of-government objective for Commonwealth regulators, the Reef Authority seeks to take a proportionate and risk-based approach to regulation to balance risk mitigation with efficiency, growth and dynamism. This includes considering the impact on productivity of regulatory activities and proactively reducing unnecessary regulatory burden, encouraging innovation, and supporting regulatory enhancements, where relevant and applicable.

Performance measures

Our performance measures outlined in the Portfolio Budget Statements and our Corporate Plan reflect the outcomes our key activities are intended to achieve. They support measuring and assessing the agency's performance in achieving our purpose for the 2026–27 reporting period, and outward four-year reporting period.

Our structure for measuring performance against our key activities includes:

- **Performance measures** are set criteria used to track progress towards delivering against our key activities
- **Targets** include specific targets (intended results) for each performance criteria
- **Rationale** provides an explanation on why measuring this performance is important
- **Methodology** outlines how the performance criteria is measured
- **Data sources** are the information and sources used as evidence for reporting on our performance
- **Tolerances** are used to evaluate achievement (further explained below)
- **Regulatory best practice principles** are included (for regulatory measures) to indicate alignment with the principles of regulatory best practice.

The Reef Authority continues to review and monitor its performance in line with best practice principles.

Targets and composite measures

Targets against individual performance measures are identified, and a rating 'tolerance' scale is set to evaluate the achievement for each performance measure, where reasonable. It is important to note, targets can be affected by a variety of influences, including operational changes (management) and environmental (natural).

The overarching tolerance scale uses three criteria headings — achieved, partially achieved and not achieved — to give an overall rating for composite measures.

Linking to the Portfolio Budget Statements performance information

Under the 2026–27 PBS, **our outcome** is:

> The long-term protection, ecologically sustainable use, understanding and enjoyment of the Great Barrier Reef for all Australians and the international community, through the care and development of the Marine Park.

Our program:

> Protects and manages the environment, biodiversity, and heritage values of the Great Barrier Reef Region, and ensures the ecologically sustainable use and benefits of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park for future generations.

Key activities outlined in the PBS align with those listed in this corporate plan (page 8).

The performance information identified in the 2026–27 Portfolio Budget Statements follows below.

The outcome statement in the Portfolio Budget Statements is the same as the Reef Authority's purpose statement, on page 8 of this plan.

Year	Performance measure	Planned performance result
Budget year 2026–27	1. Crown-of-thorns starfish densities are at sustainable levels in the cull sites on targeted reefs that are actioned for surveillance and culling operations.	75%
	2. Proportion of Reef Joint Field Management Program Annual Business Plan targets achieved or with significant progress in 2026–27.	85%
	3. Participants in Reef Authority education and engagement programs are taking actions that support the Reef's long-term protection.	85%
Forward Estimates 2027–30	All performance measures.	As per 2026-27.

Performance measures

Key activity one:
Protect the Reef through in-field activities and regulation to safeguard its unique environment while allowing ecologically sustainable use.

Performance measure 1.1	Targets			
Probability that coral trout biomass in Marine Park green zones exceeds that of General Use blue zones, as an indicator for Reef health.	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
	95% probability that coral trout biomass in green zones exceeds that of blue zones.	Maintain at 95% or above		
Rationale	The difference in coral trout biomass in no-take Green Zones compared to take/General Use Blue Zones is one indicator of the environmental benefits of Marine Park zoning and Reef health. This measure (and target) may be impacted year-to-year by external factors, including cyclones and coral bleaching. The probability measure is reported because it is consistently available across all survey years since the Reef's re-zoning in 2004.			
Data sources	Australian Institute of Marine Science Long-Term Monitoring Program database.			
Methodology	The Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) Long Term Monitoring Program (LTMP) surveys between 80 and 130 reefs in the northern, central, and southern areas of the Marine Park for coral trout biomass and other aspects of coral reef health. Previously undertaken every second year, this data is now available yearly following the release of the AIMS LTMP annual report. The intent is to track the likelihood that coral trout biomass is higher in no-take zones. More detailed comparison information is being evaluated in partnership with AIMS for future reporting metrics. It is important to note that data may not be available at the time of reporting and therefore may be reported outside of reporting timeframes (or be for a reporting period that does not neatly align with the annual performance reporting framework as it's dependent on the monitoring timeframe and publishing of results).			
Tolerances	Tolerances are not applied for this measure.			

Performance measure 1.2	Targets			
(a) Number of dedicated compliance days completed in the Marine Park.	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
	1000 days	Reach or exceed result from previous year		
(b) Number of offences detected in the Marine Park.	Maintain the decreasing five-year trend	Maintain the decreasing five-year trend		
Rationale	Individual targets have been set to measure different elements of the Compliance Program. Collectively they support part of the performance narrative of the Program. (a) Dedicated compliance days in the Great Barrier Reef, undertaken by the Reef Joint Field Management Program, is a way to assess and			

	ensure effectiveness of management efforts in protecting the ecosystem and enforcing Marine Park zoning rules. The target result will fluctuate as there are factors and variables influencing annual results including business continuity needs, prioritisation of program resourcing and variability in weather. Delivery of compliance days is further guided by continuous improvement of compliance planning, patrol effectiveness, changes in patrol priorities, technological advancements, and promotion (through communication channels) of Marine Park rules and regulations.
	(b) The number of offences in the Marine Park is used to evaluate the level of voluntary compliance with Commonwealth and State legislation designed to protect the Great Barrier Reef and inform effective enforcement and management strategies. A risk-based, intelligence-driven approach — using a range of compliance tools — is used to monitor activities in the Marine Park and promote voluntary compliance. Offence data is highly variable from one year to the next, with the level of Marine Park use and the number and focus of monitoring operations influencing the type and quantity of offences detected.
Data sources	(a) Collected through the Field Reporting System (FRS), which is a digital platform that is used by the Reef Joint Field Management Program to record field activities, including compliance patrolling in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. The FRS allows for in-field capture of incident reporting, public contacts, sightings (use), and intelligence collection. The system is a primary source of business intelligence for the Reef Joint Field Management Program.
	(b) Data is collected and stored through the Reef Joint Field Management Program's compliance management system (compliance database) and the Permits Compliance database. The data is analysed each quarter and reported through the Compliance Quarterly Report.
Methodology	(a) The data is taken from the planned compliance schedules, undertaken quarterly by the Compliance Operation Group, which is part of the Reef Joint Field Management Program and includes representatives from the Reef Authority, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services, and Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol. The scheduling is informed through the compliance risk framework, analysis of intelligence, and compliance data, and reviewing the previous quarters compliance activities performance in achieving the set objectives.
	(b) The narrative regarding the status of the compliance in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area is developed throughout the year. Long-term trends (5+ years) information is provided in broader performance reporting to strengthen program analysis and support strategic planning. Overall, the annual targets are ‘decreasing’ as part of longer-term trend targets. Additionally, data and analysis of non-compliance is provided. This allows for a measure of the level of threats posed to the values of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and the performance of the compliance program’s efforts to mitigate.

Tolerances	Achieved = Targets are met Partially achieved = At least one target is met or partially met Not achieved = No targets are met or partially met
Alignment with principles of regulatory best practice	Principle 1: Continuous improvement and building trust Principle 2: Risk-based and data driven

Performance measure 1.3	**Targets**			
Permit applications, for activities in the Marine Park requiring a permission, are decided in accordance with the service charter.	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**	**2029–30**
	95% of routine and 80% of tailored assessment decision notices are in accordance with the Permission Service Charter.	95% of routine and 80% of tailored assessment decision notices are in accordance with the Permission Service Charter.		
Rationale	Our delivery standards for assessing and deciding on permit applications, against our Service Charter, is a way to assess our commitment to timely responses to customer and stakeholder requests.			
Data sources	Data is obtained from the Reef Management System permit assessment and decision data.			
Methodology	Data on permit decisions is analysed to determine performance against the service charter standards.			
Tolerances	Achieved = Targets are met Partially achieved = At least one target is met, or partially met Not achieved = No targets are met or partially met			
Alignment with principles of regulatory best practice	Principle 1: Continuous improvement and building trust Principle 2: Risk-based and data driven			

Performance measure 1.4	**Targets**			
Environmental Management Charge, paid by visitors on commercial vessels, s received in accordance with Great Barrier Reef Regulations.	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**	**2029–30**
	99% of Environmental Management Charge, paid by visitors on commercial vessels, are received in accordance with Great Barrier Reef Regulations.	99% of Environmental Management Charge, paid by visitors on commercial vessels, are received in accordance with Great Barrier Reef Regulations.		
Rationale	Measuring Environmental Management Charge payment demonstrates the level of compliance with the Australian Government legislative changes.			
Data sources	Data is obtained from Environmental Management System logbooks and payment/reconciliation data.			
Methodology	Data from our financial management system is used to determine the amount received each quarter.			
Tolerances	Achieved = Target (99%) is met Partially achieved = Result is between 90 to 98% Not achieved = Result is 89% or below			
Alignment with principles of regulatory best practice	Principle 1: Continuous improvement and building trust Principle 2: Risk-based and data driven			

Key activity two
Adapt our management to protect the Reef's resilience in response to a changing climate and other pressures.

Performance measure 2.1	Targets			
Crown-of-thorns starfish densities are at sustainable levels in the cull sites on targeted reefs that are actioned for surveillance and culling operations.	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
	Crown-of-thorns starfish densities are at sustainable levels in at least 75% of cull sites on targeted reefs that are actioned for surveillance and culling.	Crown-of-thorns starfish densities are at sustainable levels in at least 75% of cull sites on targeted reefs that are actioned for surveillance and culling.		
Rationale	The Crown-of-thorns Starfish (COTS) Control Program protects coral and supports the Reef's resilience by detecting and systematically suppressing starfish outbreaks to ecologically sustainable levels across hundreds of reefs. Target reefs are assigned annually via a data-driven and consultative reef prioritisation process that is informed by the best available science, field intelligence, model predications, Traditional Owner knowledge and tourism industry information. The reef prioritisation process ensures that the COTS Control Program surveillance and cull effort is assigned and targeted to achieve safe, effective and efficient operations that deliver broadscale coral protection outcomes. The target represents the proportion of cull sites on actioned reefs in which crown-of-thorns starfish are at sustainable density. It is an appropriate metrics for assessing the efficacy of the Program in protecting coral reef habitat from COTS predation.			
Data sources	Data sources include crown-of-thorns starfish culling data, Reef Health Impact Survey (RHIS) data, and Manta Tow surveillance data collected by the COTS Control Program and stored in the Eye on the Reef database.			
Methodology	Analysed through routine crown-of-thorns starfish reporting. With current Program capacity, approximately 150 target reefs can be actioned each year to suppress COTS numbers to sustainable levels. Each target reef is spatially partitioned in cull sites (~10ha each). COTS culling effort is directed to cull sites based on information from manta tow survey data.			
Tolerances	Achieved = Target 75% is met Partially achieved = Target is partially achieved result between 67-74% Not achieved = Target is not achieved if it is 66% or below			

Performance measure 2.2	Targets			
Enhance spatial management of the southern Great Barrier Reef through the development of the Southern Plan of Management.	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
	Prepare supporting documents and refine management strategies in partnership with Traditional Owners that minimise conflicting use, protecting significant values, and reduce regulatory impact, achieving readiness for legislative drafting.	Target/s will be set based on project plan activities for the financial year.		
Rationale	A Southern Plan of Management is being developed in partnership with Traditional Owner groups and in collaboration with Queensland Parks			

	and Wildlife Services for 42% of the Marine Park that seeks to protect and conserve Marine Park values while supporting ecologically sustainable use. This measure considers our modernised approach to spatial planning taking into consideration co-management and adaptive management principles to ensure they are embedded in project governance, decision-making, and implementation.
Data sources	Southern Plan of Management project plan and associated timelines. Microsoft Azure DevOps planning and reporting tool.
Methodology	This is an annual assessment of our delivered project milestones to determine the progress of our spatial management planning for the Southern area of the Great Barrier Reef.
Tolerances	Achieved = Target is met Not achieved = Target is not met
Alignment with principles of regulatory best practice	Principle 1: Continuous improvement and building trust Principle 2: Risk-based and data driven Principle 3: Collaboration and engagement

Performance measure 2.3	**Targets**			
	2026–27	**2027–28**	**2028–29**	**2029–30**
Reduce Reef Authority reportable direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions: (a) Scope 1 – direct emissions (b) Scope 2 – indirect emissions (c) Scope 3 – other reportable indirect emissions	(a) (b) Decrease reportable net emissions from previous year (Scope 1 and Scope 2) or maintain at net zero (once achieved) (c) Improve Scope 3 tracking and establish mechanisms to decrease reportable Scope 3 emissions	(a) (b) Decrease reportable net emissions from previous year (Scope 1 and Scope 2) or maintain at net zero (once achieved) (c) Improve Scope 3 tracking and establish mechanisms to decrease reportable Scope 3 emissions		
Rationale	Reducing Reef Authority greenhouse gas emissions demonstrates progress towards net zero emissions in Reef Authority operations by 2030, as outlined in Reef Authority Sustainability Strategy 2024–27, Emission Reduction Plan, and broader Net Zero commitments outlined in the Australian Government's – Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy.			
Data sources	Annual emissions data calculations.			
Methodology	(a) (b) The National Greenhouse Accounts (NGA) Factors provided by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water are used to estimate greenhouse gas emissions for Scope 1 (direct emissions occurring from onsite burning of fuels), and Scope 2 (indirect emissions from the generation of purchased electricity). Note: for the hardest to abate emission, carbon offsets may be used to achieve net zero whilst feasible alternatives to non-renewable fuels are established. (b) To calculate Scope 3 (all other indirect emissions occurring upstream and downstream in the value chain of entity) emissions, factors from either NGA or other nationally recognised methods will be used to assess greenhouse gas emissions. Any alternative method suggested by DCCEEW will be adopted once guidance becomes available.			

Tolerances (for 2.3)	Achieved = Targets are met Partially achieved = At least one target is met or partially met Not achieved = No targets are met or partially met

Performance measure 2.4	**Targets**			
Cumulative number of citations from Great Barrier Reef Outlook Reports (2019 onwards).	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**	**2029–30**
	525	530	535	540
Rationale	Citations of the Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report, the Reef Authority's key report series on Reef health and management, is a way to assess the utility and influence of the series.			
Data sources	Scholarly database citation count for Great Barrier Reef Outlook reports.			
Methodology	Use scholarly database tools and extract the citation count number, which includes citations from a wide range of scholarly publications, essentially, any publication that is considered academically relevant and may be indexed by Google Scholar (or similar). Sum the citation counts (since publication) for each edition of the Outlook report. Only editions for which citation counts are readily available are included.			
Tolerances	Achieved = Targets are met Partially achieved = Result is within five per cent of the target set			

Key activity three
Foster a culture of Reef stewardship through strong partnerships, strategic engagement, and education programs.

Performance measure 3.1	**Targets**			
Participants in Reef Authority education and engagement programs are taking actions that support the Reef's long-term protection.	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**	**2029–30**
	85% of participants surveyed report they have taken stewardship action	85% of participants surveyed report they have taken stewardship action		
Rationale	If the Reef Authority has worked effectively with Reef Guardians, High Standard Tourism Operators and Local Marine Advisory Committee members, at least 85% of participants will undertake one or more stewardship actions that contribute to the protection, conservation, sustainable use, resilience, or understanding of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. This measure assesses the extent to which our Reef Guardians, tourism, and community partners take stewardship action and is important for evaluating the effectiveness of our flagship programs; particularly in how the programs influence inter-generational change through education, support local government action to reduce threats to the Reef, build the capacity of the tourism industry to respond to impacts and share the values of World Heritage with visitors, and involve local communities in Reef protection.			
Data sources	Annual stakeholder survey			
Methodology	An impact tracker and targeted surveys is used to determine results across the four criteria – Care – Learn – Act – Share. The result is a			

	weighted average of results across survey participant groups. A standardised evaluation criteria is sued to determine the level of stewardship following involvement in Reef Authority programs including the High Standard Tourism Operator Program, Reef Guardian School, Reef Guardian Councils, Master Reef Guides, Eye on the Reef, Virtual Learning Experiences, and Local Marine Advisory Committees.
Tolerances	Achieved = Target (85%) is met Partially achieved = Result is between 65% (inclusive) to 84% (inclusive) Not achieved = Result is 64% (inclusive) or below

Performance measure 3.2	**Targets**			
Reef Authority online communication tool usage for (a) Websites (engaged sessions) (b) Social media channels (organic reach)	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**	**2029–30**
	(a) 295,500 engaged sessions (b) 10,000,000 organic reach	Maintain or increase		
Rationale	(a) Understanding how many users are accessing the information on our website informs our communication planning. (b) Information on social media organic reach across our social channels is used to understand reach and demographics and inform our communication planning.			
Data sources	(a) Google Analytics for key websites: www.reefauthority.gov.au, https://reefknoweldgesystem, http://greatbarrierreefaquarium.au, and https://www.reefed.edu.au (b) Analytics from social media platforms including LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and Instagram.			
Methodology	(a) Google Analytics is used to measure the average number of engaged sessions (an engaged session includes the number of sessions that lasted longer than 10 sections, or had a conversion event, or had two or more screen or page views) on key websites including: www.reefauthority.gov.au, https://reefknoweldgesystem, http://greatbarrierreefaquarium.au, and https://www.reefed.edu.au (b) Social platform and external social media analytic tools are used to measure the total organise reach for social media platforms including LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and Instagram.			
Tolerances	Achieved = Targets are met Partially achieved = At least one target is met or partially met Not achieved = No targets are met or partially met			

Performance measure 3.3	**Targets**			
Improved trust level sentiment score.	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**	**2029–30**
	Maintain over 8 points	Maintain over 8 points		
Rationale	Understanding public and stakeholder sentiment towards the Reef and its management is used to inform our communication and engagement approaches. A representative portion of the Australian Census population enables us to gauge the level of trust sentiment stakeholders have in relation to the Reef Authority.			
Data sources	Annual market research survey results			
Methodology	An annual market research survey is sent to more than 1000 participants, comprising a representative sample of the Australian			

	Census population. The survey is conducted by an external research agency targeting participants 18 years and older. All data is de-identified and rigorous quality assurance processes are followed. The sentiment scores range from 0 = low trust sentiment, and 10 = high trust sentiment.
Tolerances	Achieved = Result is over 8 points Partially achieved = Result is over 7 points Not achieved = Result is less than and including 6 points or lower

Performance measure 3.4	**Targets**			
Number of Traditional Owners groups with formal partnerships in place.	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**	**2029–30**
	Maintain or increase	Maintain or increase		
Rationale	The number of formal partnerships demonstrates our commitment to supporting and working with Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owners. Formal partnerships are those with document arrangements between Traditional Owners and the Reef Authority for the management of Sea Country within the Marine Park.			
Data sources	Internal inventory list which includes the number of documented agreements between the agency and Traditional Owners.			
Methodology	The cumulative number of documented agreements for Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements, delivery of field activity by Land Indigenous Ranger Groups, the Southern Plan of Management, research projects and partnerships through the Reef Joint Field Management Program.			
Tolerances	Tolerances not applied for this measure.			

Performance measure 3.5	**Targets**			
Percentage of Marine Park coastline covered by Traditional Owner agreements.	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**	**2029–30**
	43%	Maintain (43%)		
Rationale	The spatial extent of Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRAs) shows the portion of the Marine Park with collaborative conservation efforts.			
Data sources	Internal inventory list on number of Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements in place and their area of coverage against proportion of coastline.			
Methodology	The percentage of the Marine Park coastline at low water covered by accredited Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements as mapped in accreditation documentation.			
Tolerances	Tolerances not applied for this measure.			

Appendices

Appendix A

As part of the Reef Authority's commitment to continuous improvement, the agency reviewed its key activities and performance measures in preparation of this Plan.

This Corporate Plan includes 13 performance measures for the reporting periods 2026–30. A summary of the changes is in the table below.

Performance Measures 2026–27	Changes made	Rationale for changes (for 2026–27)
1.2 (c) Number of high and very high-risk offences detected in the Marine Park.	Removed	Removed
2.1 Crown-of-thorns starfish densities are at sustainable levels on targeted reefs that are actioned for surveillance and culling operations.	Amended	Minor editorial change made to the description of the measure for clarity (to better reflect the program's outcomes).
2.4 Cumulative number of citations from the 2019 Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report onwards.	Amended	Minor editorial change made to the description of the measure and data sources for clarity.
3.1 Participants in Reef Authority education and engagement programs are taking actions that support the Reef's long-term protection.	Amended	Minor editorial changes were made to rationale for clarity and methodology.

Appendix B

PGPA Rule reference	Required element	Legislative requirement	Page number (s)
s16E(2) item 1 of the PGPA Rule	Introduction	The following: (a) a statement that the plan is prepared for paragraph 35(1)(b) of the Act; (b) the reporting period for which the plan is prepared; the reporting periods covered by the plan.	2
s16E(2) item 2 of the PGPA Rule	Purposes	The purposes of the entity.	8
s16E(2) item 3 of the PGPA Rule	Key activities	For the entire period covered by the plan, the key activities that the entity will undertake in order to achieve its purposes.	9-10
s16E(2) item 4 of the PGPA Rule	Operating context	For the entire period covered by the plan, the following:	13-14
s16E(2) item 4(a) of the PGPA Rule	Environment	(a) the environment in which the entity will operate;	15-17
s16E(2) item 4(b) of the PGPA Rule	Capability	(b) the strategies and plans the entity will implement to have the capability it needs to undertake its key activities and achieve its purposes;	18-23
s16E(2) item 4(c) of the PGPA Rule	Risk	(c) a summary of the risk oversight and management systems of the entity, and the key risks that the entity will manage and how those risks will be managed;	24-28
s16E(2) item 4(d) of the PGPA Rule	Cooperation	(d) a summary of the risk oversight and management systems of the entity, and the key risks that the entity will manage and how those risks will be managed;	29-32

s16E(2) item 4(e) of the PGPA Rule	Subsidiaries	(e) how any subsidiary of the entity will contribute to achieving the entity's purposes.	14
s16E(2) item 5 of the PGPA Rule	Performance	For each reporting period covered by the plan, details of how the entity's performance in achieving the entity's purposes will be measured and assessed through: (a) specified performance measures for the entity that meet the requirements of section 16EA; and (b) specified targets for each of those performance measures for which it is reasonably practicable to set a target.	36-43

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