

# TRADITIONAL USE OF MARINE RESOURCES AGREEMENTS

## Providing Traditional Owner-led Sea Country management

**The TUMRA program is an important component in better understanding, protecting, and promoting Sea Country Reef heritage values.**

Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRAs) are community-based agreements, developed and led by saltwater Traditional Owners/Clan groups to manage their Sea Country estate. The agreements are made in partnership with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the Queensland government.

TUMRAs are unique partnership agreements that recognise and support the Native Title rights, interests and responsibilities of Traditional Owners who hold an inherent spiritual connection to the Great Barrier Reef. They provide a robust legislative framework, built on a foundation of Traditional Lore and Customs. Cultural Authority is a foundational pillar in the development and implementation of TUMRAs.

TUMRAs help to protect cultural heritage values and manage activities in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and Great Barrier Reef Coastal Marine Park (the Marine Parks).



*Reef Authority staff and Traditional Owners working together.*  
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The Agreements, describe how Traditional Owner groups manage their traditional use of marine resources. Activities include employing marine resource agreement coordinators, running junior ranger programs, and recording, promoting and protecting heritage values, such as burial sites, songlines and storylines, women's and men's places, and fish traps. Groups also research and monitor seagrass, mangrove, coral and water quality.

## What is an accredited TUMRA?

- A genuine pathway for Traditional Owner groups to engage in effective co-management of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.
- A Traditional Owner led program built on Traditional Lore, Customs and Cultural Authority.
- A flexible tool that can be adapted to unique needs and aspirations of each Traditional Owner group.
- An effective and meaningful partnership between Traditional Owners and all levels of government.
- Essential in protecting cultural and heritage values, conserving biodiversity, and enhancing the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef into the future.
- The benchmark in Sea Country management in the Marine Parks.

*“TUMRAs aren’t just policies; they are the manifestation of our enduring spirit and the guardians of our legacy.”*

- Darumbal TUMRA coordinator, 2024

## Benefits to First Nations people and communities

Accredited TUMRAs are being leveraged by Traditional Owners to increase their capacity by partnering with research institutions, government and non-government agencies with initiatives such as, Indigenous Protected Areas Program, Indigenous Rangers Programs, Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation and others.

A flow-on benefit and the cornerstone of the TUMRA program is getting Traditional Owners back on country, looking after country. This is a high priority of the Closing the Gap program and is important to the saltwater Traditional Owner groups.



Traditional Owners from different TUMRA groups share knowledge together.

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## Environmental impact

For approximately 20 years, the TUMRA program has sustainably managed the protection of culturally iconic species such as turtle, dugong, sawfish, rays and other species.

Through culturally safe partnerships, Traditional Owners are able to share traditional ecological knowledge and experiences with research institutes, commercial users and all levels of government.

Traditional knowledge is playing a key role in the protection of Sea Country estate across the Reef.

*The TUMRA is a stand out from other funding sources... we look forward to continuing to take the relationship to the next level.”*

- Wuthathi TUMRA Chairperson, 2024

## Employment pathways

The long-term commitment and investment of the program provides TUMRA groups with funding certainty for Traditional Owner jobs.

The TUMRA program supports funding of full-time and part-time identified roles including but not limited to: TUMRA Coordinators, Traditional Owner professional consultants, and cultural advisors.

Members of TUMRA groups have also gained professional qualifications and experience such as commercial dive qualifications, coxswain certifications, water quality and seagrass monitoring, drone accreditation and more through the support of the program.

*“TUMRA is a tool that Woppaburra (Traditional people) can use to look at managing our country, it could be managing with Rangers, or sitting at the table with NRM Groups, Scientists, Marine Parks ... TUMRA is a good tool that actually helps us engage with community & the Govt....we wouldn’t be here today without the TUMRA.”*

- Previous Chair of Woppaburra TUMRA Steering Committee 2019

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