

# SEA COUNTRY VALUES

Capturing cultural heritage to care and protect country for the future

**Traditional Owners are using their Traditional knowledge passed down for generations to guide the protection of their cultural values through Sea Country values mapping.**

The three principles of Sea Country values are:

- Traditional Owner led
- Recognises cultural lore
- Identifies, prioritises and protects cultural values



Nywaigi Traditional Owners participating in a Giringun Sea Country Values Workshop  
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## Identifying Sea Country values

Using cultural knowledge and thousands of years of connection to country, Traditional Owners are documenting culturally significant sites, songlines, storylines, animals, plants and more, across the Great Barrier Reef.

By identifying key values, Traditional Owners are prioritising and documenting the ways in which they want to see them protected.

Each Traditional Owner group engaging in identifying their Sea Country values through this program are embarking on their own unique journey with the support of Australian Government.

*“Cultural Sea Country mapping workshops have provided an opportunity for Elders and Traditional Owners to connect with country and discuss significant and sacred sea country sites. This allows cultural knowledge to be passed on to younger generations, preservation, protection and sustainability. It also allows mainstream community to have a stronger appreciation for the care and connection my people have with country. We don’t own the land, the land owns us for we as aboriginal people are connected mind, body and spirit to mother earth.”*

- Giringun TUMRA coordinator, 2024



Mandubarra Traditional Owners and Reef Authority staff participating in a Sea Country Values workshop  
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## Capturing values

In identifying Sea Country values, Traditional Owners across the Great Barrier Reef are establishing a baseline that guides protection.

The identified values can be prioritised in a way that guides the development and implementation of multi-jurisdictional sea estate management that sees Traditional Owners at the forefront of managing their Sea Country.

This may be through:

- the development of a Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement
- an Indigenous Partnerships Agreement
- undertaking cultural referral assessments for activities proposed to take place on country.



Darumbal traditional Owners educating local school children through their "Cultural Resilience" program  
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## Benefits to First Nations people and communities

Through this program, we are strengthening connections to country that are enriching lives and protecting it for the future.

It acknowledges the inherent responsibility, spiritual connection and cultural authority of Traditional Owners to care for Sea Country.

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.

*"Our vision is to provide sustainable outcomes for our members and community with cultural awareness and education. Mandubarra people are committed to caring for our country. To pass on knowledge and culture. To protect our cultural sacred sites, with Reef Authority and QPWS, as these are the responsibilities to our ancestors, children and our culture."*

- From Mandubarra TUMRA Aspirational Statement, 2018

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