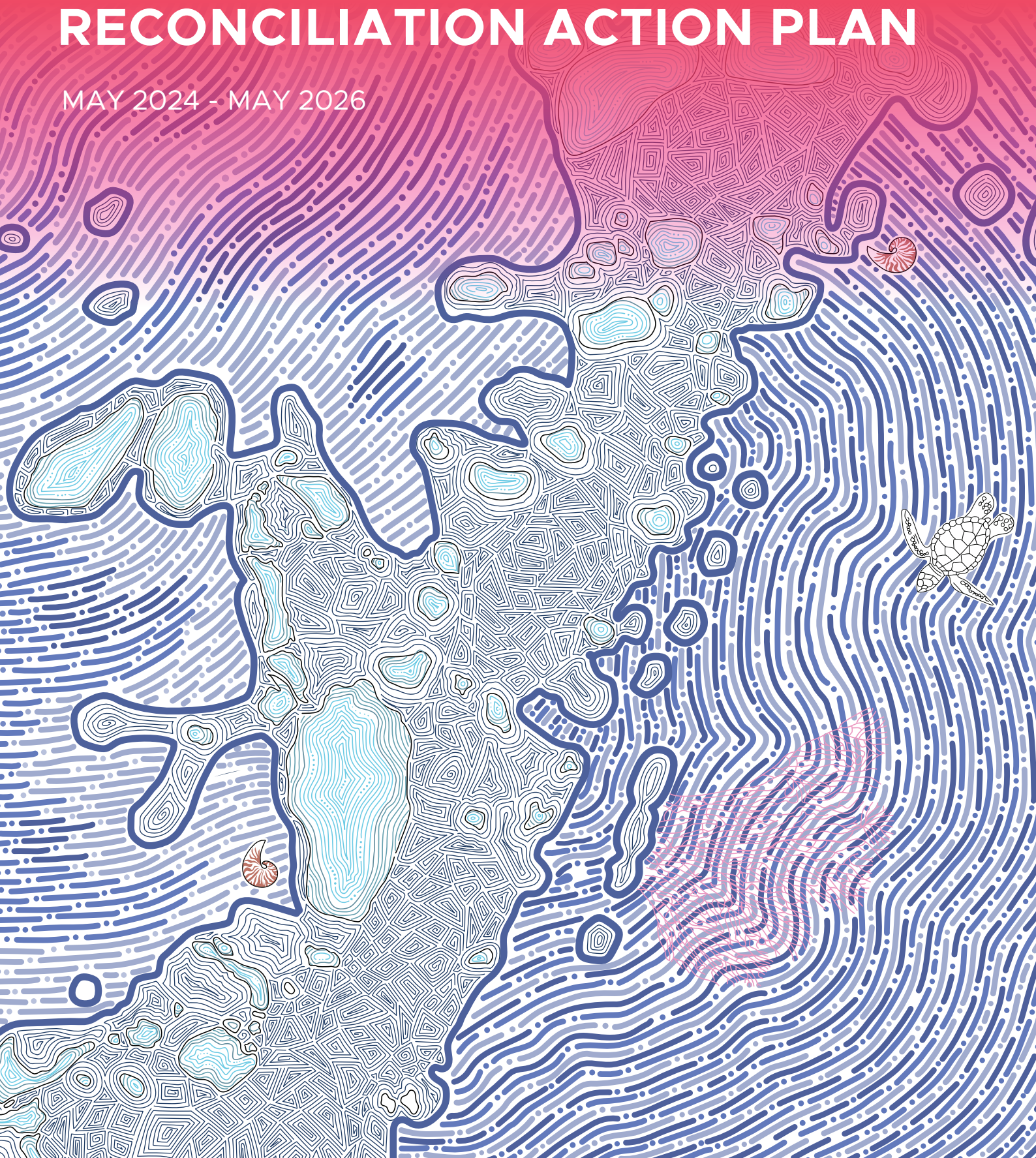


# INNOVATE RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

MAY 2024 - MAY 2026



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Front cover © Niketa Law.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised this publication contains names and images of deceased persons. Readers of this report should be aware that, in some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, seeing images of deceased persons in photographs may cause sadness or distress, and in some cases, offend against strongly held cultural prohibitions.

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# Acknowledgement of Country

*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.*

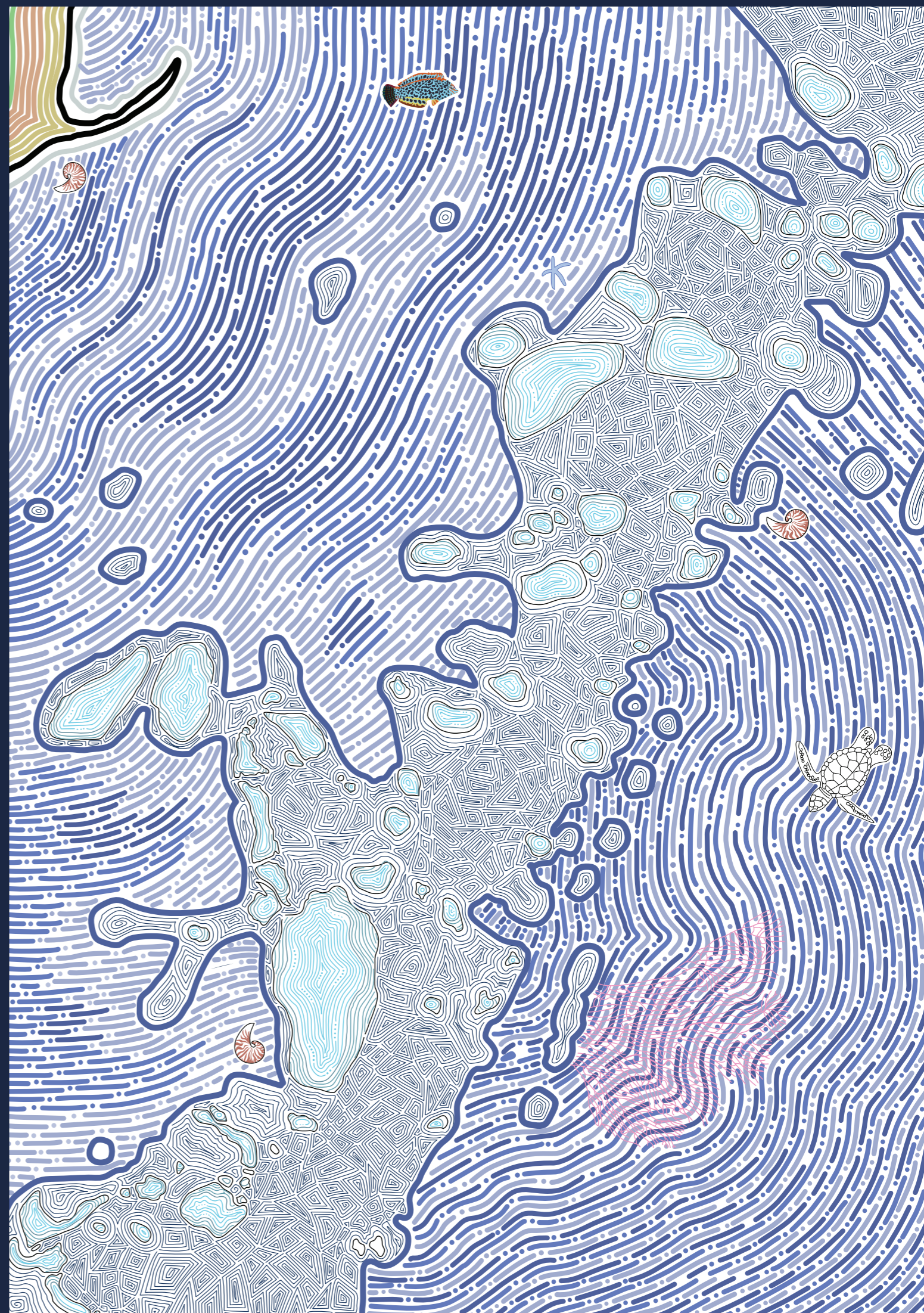


### Artist introduction statement

My name is Niketa Law a proud Bindal, Wulgurukaba, Wakka Wakka woman from Cherbourg Queensland. I am a self-taught traditional contemporary Aboriginal Artist. I pay homage to my traditional roots by using traditional painting styles and storytelling through my art. The contemporary aspect comes through in the colours I use. This has allowed me to transform into my own unique style. I express myself and my culture through my art. My technique as an artist has evolved over 10+ years. I feel a deep connection when I am creating a piece of art. Each piece is a journey from start to finish. My paintings are a spiritual representation of my own story telling built on feelings, values, and circumstances.

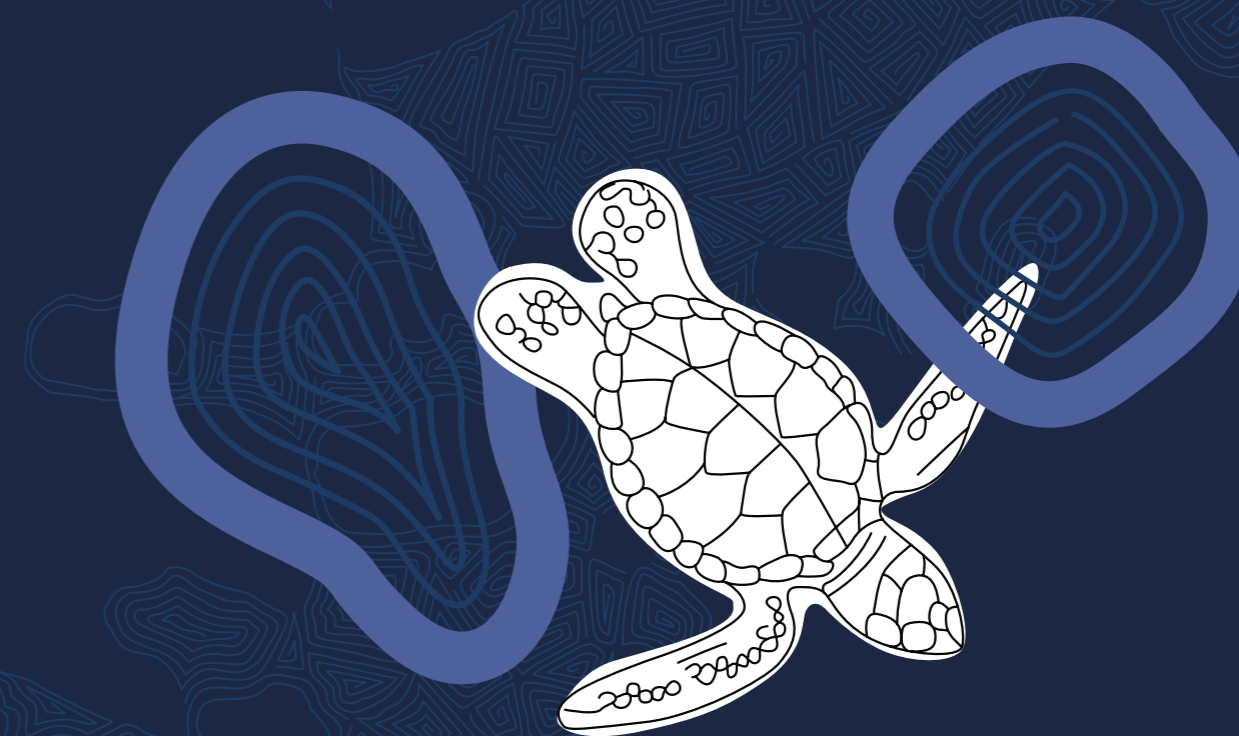
### Artwork description

*Caring for Country* - This is my view of my Great Grandmother's country. I pay homage to the sea where my ancestors have a continued connection. There are many beings that call these waters home, some of which are included in this piece. If we look after Country, it is my hope that we can maintain it as best we can for the next generation.



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## JOSH THOMAS CEO Statement



A reconciled Australia is one where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are sharing and participating across the spectrum of Australia's modern economic, social, cultural, and political life. It's an Australia in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, cultures, and identities are acknowledged, enriched, and celebrated as we work together to achieve shared aspirations, goals, and objectives.

The Great Barrier Reef is an amazing backdrop for the advancement of reconciliation. The iconic natural beauty of the Reef, together with the cultural significance it holds for First Nations peoples, presents a wonderful opportunity to work with reconciliation as a central theme. This can be achieved by listening to and learning from one another and by viewing our work through the lens of reconciliation. By doing this we can improve environmental, socio-economic, and cultural benefits for First Nations peoples and the wider Australian community.

The Reef Authority has a proud history of working with Traditional Owners with marked progress since the implementation of the Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (2019). This includes:

- Creating greater cultural safety for First Nations staff by implementing cultural competency training for all Reef Authority staff. The training consists of three online training modules equating to 10 hours of learning with an embedded assessment. Module 1 is currently mandatory.
- Providing Acknowledgements of Country and Welcome to Country practices at the beginning of significant meetings and all events.

- Expanding the Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRA) program, led by a First Nations Director, to further enhance our partnerships with Reef Traditional Owners.
- Improving our work with Reef Traditional Owners by employing a First Nations Assistant Director in 2021 to support better strategic direction-setting.
- Achieving our previous employment target and continuing to make great headway with First Nations employment.
- Developing an Engagement and Participation Framework based on best practice engagement to guide all Reef Authority staff in their engagement with Reef Traditional Owners.

We acknowledge continuous improvement and progress are required. One area in which we are committed to doing better is organisational-wide ownership and implementation of the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). To do better in this area, we will establish a Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Group reflecting the diversity of our organisation with roles and responsibilities to ensure RAP implementation is embedded in annual work programs and budgets.

Reconciliation and the implementation of our Innovate RAP is the responsibility of every Reef Authority employee and together we look forward to delivering our RAP by implementing practical actions that contribute to the five dimensions of reconciliation.

**KAREN MUNDINE**

# Reconciliation Australia CEO Statement

Reconciliation Australia commends the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority on the formal endorsement of its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Commencing an Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build strong foundations and relationships, ensuring sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff, and stakeholders.

By investigating and understanding the integral role it plays across its sphere of influence, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.

An Innovate RAP is the time to strengthen and develop the connections that form the lifeblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program's framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities emphasises not only the importance of fostering consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and

communities, but also empowering and enabling staff to contribute to this process, as well.

With close to 3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority is part of a strong network of more than 2,500 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's readiness to develop and strengthen relationships, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and pilot innovative strategies to ensure effective outcomes.

Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

**Karen Mundine**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia



## Our vision for reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation is Australia's First Nations peoples are guiding and participating in the management and protection of Australia's oceans and marine habitats.

The Reef Authority will achieve this by becoming a partner of choice for Reef Traditional Owners by acknowledging our shared histories while building and strengthening enduring relationships and partnerships where First Nations people's voices are heard, and decision-making is shared, with mutual co-benefits. For the Reef Authority, this is realised through supporting the resilience and sustainability of the Reef as a global natural and cultural treasure.



# OUR ORGANISATION

## Reef Authority

Since 1975, it has been the Reef Authority’s great privilege and responsibility to manage the Great Barrier Reef for its long-term protection and conservation.

As Australia’s lead management agency for the Reef - with more than 250 staff spanning almost the entire breadth of the Marine Park - we work in close partnership with government, industry, the scientific community, and Traditional Owners to provide world-leading management to protect the Reef’s Outstanding Universal Value for generations.

We recognise that the Reef is of critical cultural significance for the Traditional Owner groups who call it home and that the health of their culture is inextricably linked to a healthy Reef.

As the Reef faces unprecedented challenges from a changing climate, so too are we adapting our management practices to help build resilience, and address compounding threats including land-based run off, illegal fishing and coastal development. Our approach, underpinned by the latest marine science coupled with Traditional Owner partnerships is paramount to our success. To this end, we are proudly recognised as world leaders in global marine protected areas, thanks in large part to a sophisticated compliance program which governs all activity across the Marine Park.

On the water, the Reef Joint Field Management Program – a strategic partnership with Queensland Government – is not only responsible for enforcing compliance, but responding to incidents, maintaining infrastructure, welcoming visitors and monitoring Reef health across the marine and island national parks.

One of the most significant programs is the Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement (TUMRA), which delivers Traditional Owner-led on-ground management in partnership with the Reef Authority. To date there are 10 TUMRA agreements, operating at a Traditional Owner clan estate level

to protect Indigenous heritage values, which in turn further protects the Reef and its resources, as well as coastal ecosystems. The TUMRA is administered through a formal agreement between partners.

To nurture the next generation of Reef stewards, the Reef Authority also facilitates an extensive education program, spearheaded by the Reef Guardian School program which, in 2023, celebrated its 20th anniversary and 350,000th student participant.

Local government organisations are also equipped as key management partners through the Reef Guardian Councils program, which recognises and supports the important role of local government in the protection and management of the Reef catchment region. There are currently formal agreements with 19 councils between Bundaberg and Cooktown – spanning an area of more than 300,000 square kilometres – which are undertaking various actions to help address the key threats to the Reef.

The strategic direction of the Reef Authority is governed by the Marine Park Authority Board including First Nations representation. The Board 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 (LMAC). The LMAC program is a network of 11 committees consisting of 154 members and 70 management partners, including Traditional Owners, state, and local governments which provide advice to the Reef Authority on Marine Park issues and management proposals. LMAC’s promote the exchange of information between Reef stakeholders and encourage actions that reduce threats and build resilience of the Reef.



### REEF AUTHORITY GEOGRAPHIC FOOTPRINT

- Reef Authority office
- Great Barrier Reef
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park boundary

# THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

## A global icon

The Great Barrier Reef (the Reef) is a global icon with a profound cultural, historical, economic, and emotional significance to the world. The Reef is a place of immense biodiversity and beauty, and an economic powerhouse contributing billions of dollars and tens of thousands of jobs to Australia's national economy.

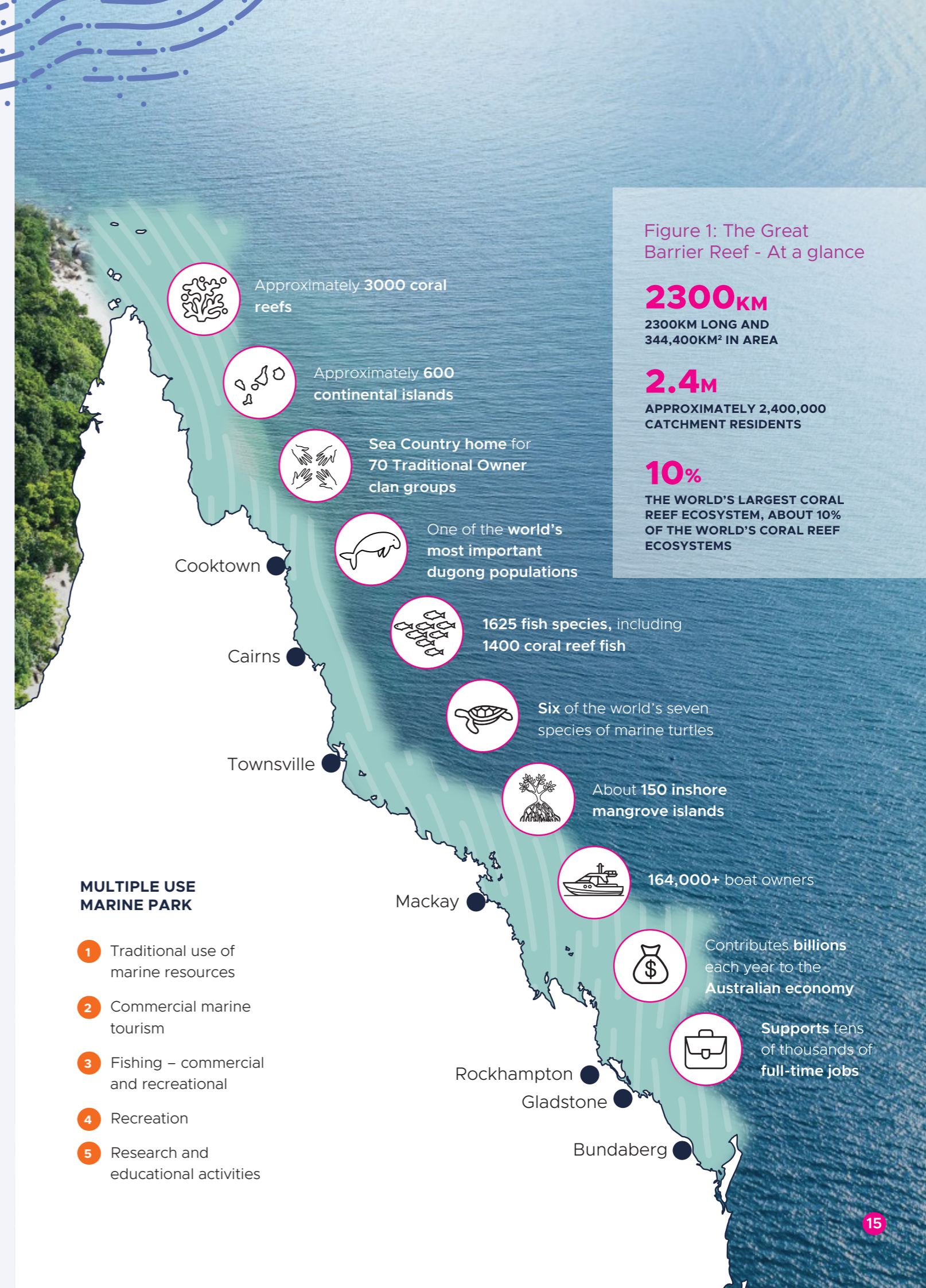
The Reef is a spectacular natural and cultural treasure and there is nowhere else like it on Earth. The Reef is a multi-use area where biodiversity, ecosystem health, heritage values, and commercial and non-commercial use, provide cultural, social, and economic benefits to local, national, and international communities. As the largest living structure on the planet, several factors influence the condition and health of the Reef, which can affect the benefits derived from this multi-use area. Therefore, the Reef Authority needs to ensure its knowledge, Marine Park management, and partnership approach enhance the resilience of the Reef, now and in the future. As a World Heritage

Area, it is internationally acclaimed and recognised for its Outstanding Universal Value. This natural World Heritage property is a complex ecosystem, comprising almost 3000 coral reefs, non-reef habitats, and iconic animal species.

This Reef is important to Australian societies, particularly those Australians who rely on it for their livelihoods – for most Australians, the Reef instils a strong sense of pride and responsibility. It is of great significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners who have a unique and continuing connection to the Reef.



Hardy Reef – Ngaro Country – Whitsundays Region

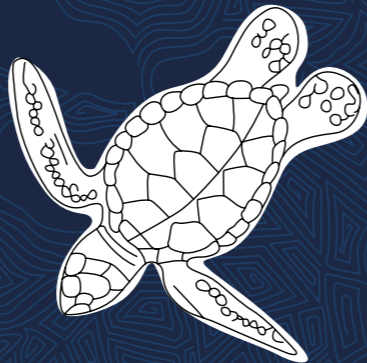


Our vision

# A healthy Great Barrier Reef for future generations.

Our purpose

Provide for 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 values



**We are one Reef Authority**

We are an inclusive community of diverse individuals, working collaboratively with trust and respect to achieve the Reef Authority's shared purpose.



**We are professional**

We are committed, professional public servants who are accountable and transparent, always acting in the best interest of the Reef Authority.



**We strive for excellence**

We bring our experience, skills and knowledge to everything we do and are committed to professional growth.



**We deliver**

We deliver meaningful and measurable outcomes by setting clear and achievable goals, managing risk effectively and accepting shared responsibility for results.

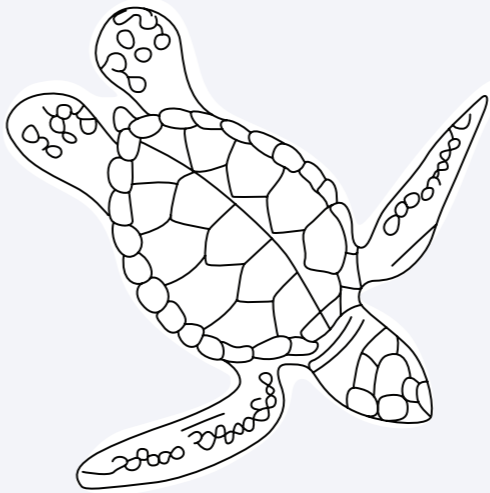
Our strategic objectives

We are the lead manager for protecting the environment, biodiversity, and heritage values of the Reef under the vision of a "healthy Great Barrier Reef for future generations".

With a broad remit – including as Reef stewards, policymakers, advisors, and science-led managers – we provide expert knowledge, manage, and regulate the park, and build capacity through partnerships and education.

We deliver toward our four objectives, as outlined in the 2023-24 Portfolio Budget Statement.

- 1 Enhancing Reef resilience by providing expert knowledge to advise key decision makers on managing, reducing, or avoiding threats to the Reef.
- 2 Enhancing Reef resilience through innovation, management, and regulation of the Marine Park and our in-field presence.
- 3 Enhancing Reef resilience through partnerships, collaboration, and education.
- 4 Supporting a high-performing organisation.



First Nations employment

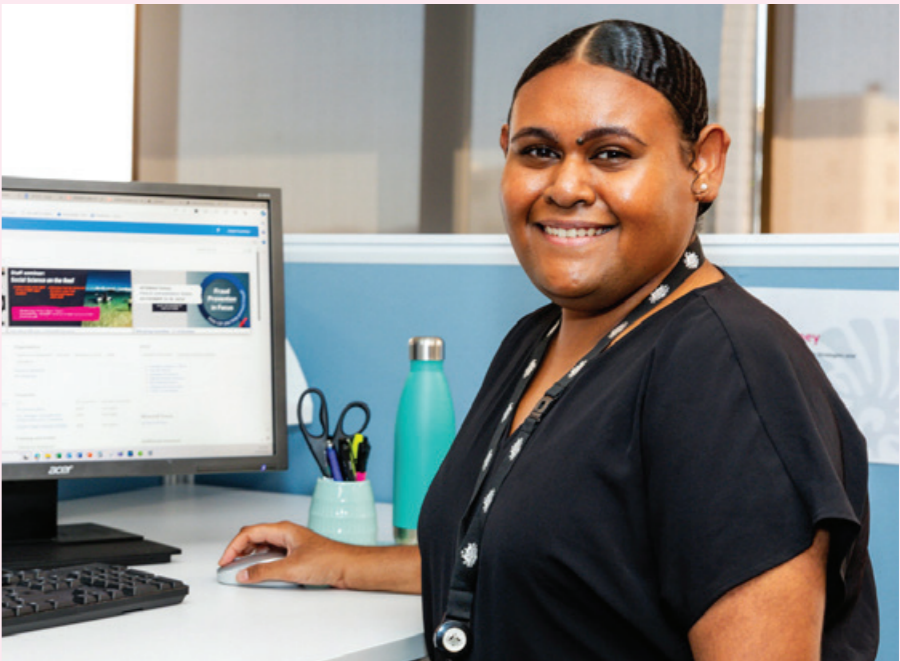
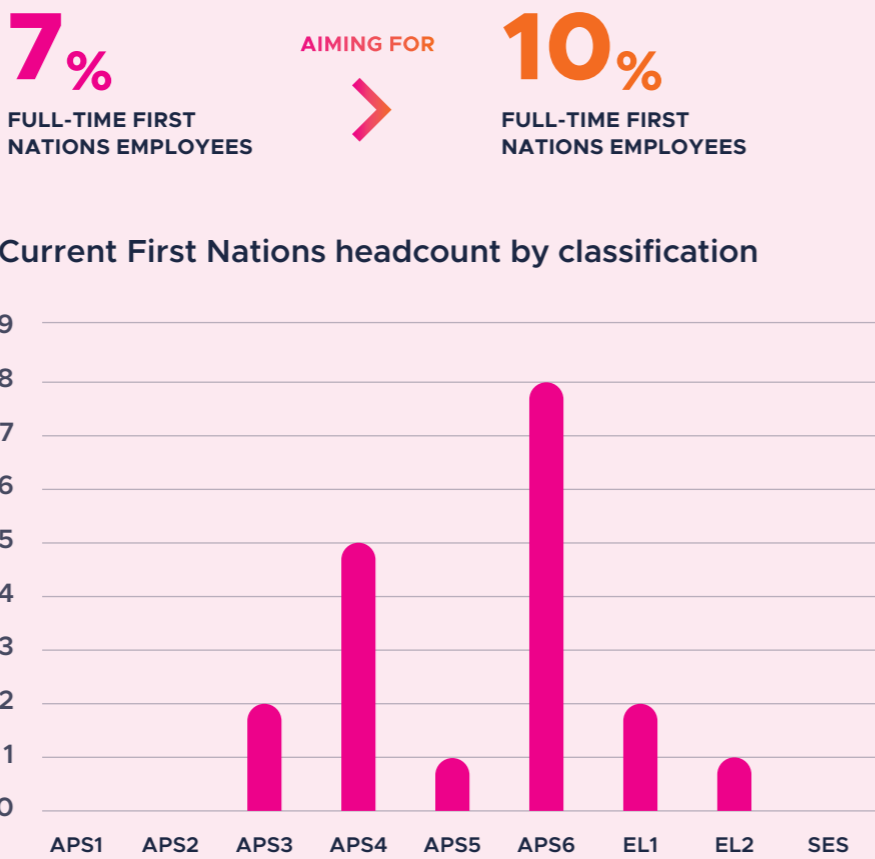
The Reef Authority will continue to diversify our workforce with First Nations staff by committing to a 10 per cent target coupled with the development of our First Nations Employment Strategy. This strategy will not only focus on lifting our diversity numbers but also create greater inclusion of First Nations staff at all levels within our organisation.

The Reef Authority is committed to being an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

As of 30 June 2023, the Reef Authority has approximately 258 employees with 19 employees identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Australian Public Services First Nations target is five per cent national parity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at each classification level in the portfolio workforce. However, the population of people who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander is potentially as high as 10 per cent within the Great Barrier Reef catchment.

Figure 2: Reef Authority First Nations employment analysis

- 43  
AVERAGE AGE OF FIRST NATIONS STAFF
- 22.1%  
FIRST NATIONS STAFF UNDER 30
- 15.8%  
FIRST NATIONS STAFF OVER 55
- 21.1%  
FIRST NATIONS MEN IN EXECUTIVE ROLES
- 5.3%  
FIRST NATIONS WOMEN IN EXECUTIVE ROLES



Photos clockwise from top left: Jason Ramsamy – Director TUMRA Program. Jess Ufer – Project Officer Program Management Office. Lindy Schmidt – Planning Officer and Renee Thompson – Policy and Planning. Jessie Courtney – Project Officer - Strategy and Partnerships - Traditional Owners. Duane Fraser - Marine Park Authority Board member and Ian Poiner Marine Park Authority Chairman.

# REEF AUTHORITY

## Innovate RAP

The Reef Authority is developing our Innovate RAP to build reconciliation between First Nations peoples and broader Australian communities. To achieve this, we need to effect programs and processes that implement the five dimensions of reconciliation. This RAP will deliver on the five dimensions of reconciliation by embedding new and innovative approaches as well as building on our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan achievements.

The Reef Authority is committed to greater **equality and equity** for First Nations peoples, as indicated by our 10 per cent employment target which better reflects the demographic profile of First Nations peoples within our footprint. Employing more First Nations staff across role classifications supports not only equality but contributes to **race relations** and **institutional integrity**. Creating a workplace culture where more non-Indigenous and First Nations staff can interact both professionally and personally, building relationships and consequently rebutting negative stereotypes creates greater understanding and awareness. These workplace relationships coupled with our mandatory cultural capability training will support **historical acceptance**, by acknowledging our Nation's shared history through education, awareness, and relationships.

The Reef Authority's **institutional integrity** will be modelled for all Reef Authority partners and stakeholders as we move on implementing our Innovate RAP. Through our sphere of influence, particularly with the tourism, research, local government, and education sectors, we will work to leverage each other's RAPs looking for synergies and opportunities to partner around reconciliation.

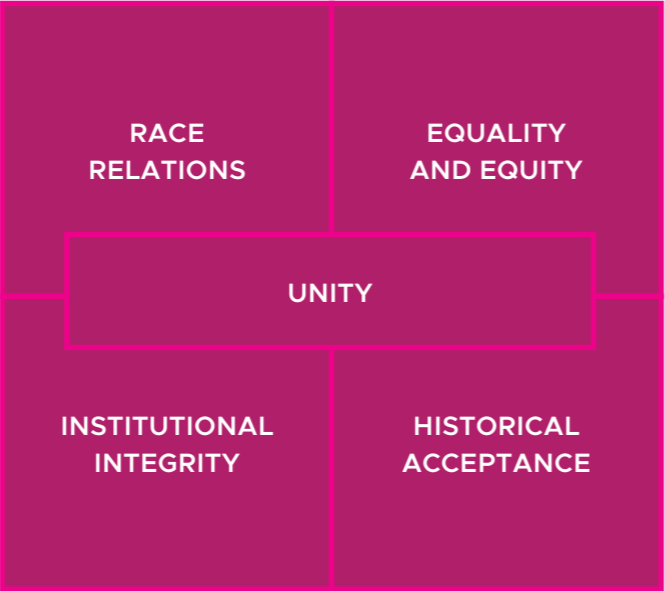


Figure 3: Five dimensions of reconciliation

The Reef Authority continues to embed reconciliation within our organisation and will focus on creating greater **unity** between First Nations and non-Indigenous peoples by walking with First Nations peoples to a better future and embracing our shared histories.

### Our RAP Working Group

An all-staff email was sent requesting expressions of interest to participate in the RAP Working Group (RWG) to develop our Innovate RAP. There was a large amount of interest among staff, however, members were carefully chosen based on the diversity requirements as suggested in resource materials from Reconciliation Australia on how to best structure the RWG.

The RWG has members representing 13 of the 18 Reef Authority sections. It includes two members of the Executive Management Group, two members from the Senior Management Team, three First Nations staff, and staff representing our various localities and classifications. Each RWG member also have a proxy to ensure continuity for the RAP's development.

### The RAP Working Group:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Josh Thomas (RAP Champion)</b><br/>Chief Executive Officer</p> <p><b>Kerry Sutton</b><br/>Environmental Assessment and Protection</p> <p><b>Margaret Johnson (RAP Sponsor)</b><br/>General Manager – Strategic Policy and Partnerships</p> <p><b>Djamaramée Close</b><br/>Reef Conservation Actions / Field Management Strategy</p> <p><b>Jean Fenton (RAP Chair)</b><br/>Strategy Policy – Traditional Owner Strategy and Partnerships</p> <p><b>Mel Cowlshaw</b><br/>Charging Structure Review</p> <p><b>Alice White</b><br/>Marine Park Policy and Planning</p> <p><b>Louie Luu</b><br/>Finance</p> | <p><b>Braden Smith</b><br/>Communications</p> <p><b>Niki Lyons</b><br/>Strategic Governance</p> <p><b>Guy Dugdale</b><br/>Technical Operations – Reef HQ</p> <p><b>Shanti Fatchen</b><br/>Legal Services</p> <p><b>Katie Finch</b><br/>Reef Education and Engagement</p> <p><b>Wade Mullings</b><br/>People Services</p> <p><b>Leon Jackson</b><br/>Traditional Use Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRA)</p> |
|--|---|

## Our Reflect RAP (2019) – Successes and challenges

The Reef Authority formally started its reconciliation journey in 2019 with the launch of its Reflect RAP. We recognise that our Reflect RAP laid important foundations for the Reef Authority's ongoing commitment to continue our reconciliation journey to innovate, transform, and ultimately work better with First Nations peoples.

In our Reflect RAP the Reef Authority put in place foundational pieces to build our reconciliation capability. We completed elements and experienced challenges along the way. One of the key challenges related to a limited level of ownership for delivery of the RAP as an organisation. We will look to mitigate this risk by having a member of the Executive Management Group champion the implementation of the RAP and putting in place a RAP Implementation Group (RIG) to leverage the RAP's implementation across organisational sections and branches.

Some of the progress we have made since our Reflect RAP includes:

- Introducing mandatory cultural capability training for Module 1 of a three-part program for all staff
- Delivering annually against our target spend with First Nations business amounting to

approximately \$11.2 million, approximately 17 per cent of our overall spend in the 2022–23 financial year.

- Providing an opportunity for all staff to attend external community NAIDOC events.
- Annual development of a communications plan for NAIDOC week
- Conducting Acknowledgement of Country for all significant meetings
- Two Reef Authority staff participating in the Jawun Australian Public Service secondment program to experience working in and with First Nations communities.
- The commencement of a candidate through the Indigenous Australian Government Development Program in 2021, and we have since employed four staff through this program.
- Launching of the Sea Country Newsletter to inform and engage the Traditional Owner community on our programs and projects.

Aspects of the Reflect RAP that we were challenged to deliver such as the First Nations Employment Strategy have been identified as a deliverable in the Innovate RAP.

## Our RAP and Closing the Gap – Influences affecting our approach to working with Traditional Owners

As a nation, we are observing a shift in the approaches of non-Indigenous peoples, organisations, and governments toward improving the inclusion of First Nations peoples in their strategic direction, programs, and processes. This shift is also observed within the Reef Authority where Traditional Owners increasingly continue to exercise their rights and interests in managing and protecting their Sea Country estates. This has been expressed through the growth of Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger programs, native title consent determinations and Traditional Owner-led advocacy and planning. For the Reef Authority to maintain its role and function as the key organisation for the management of the Reef, it is required to adapt and reinvigorate its approach to keep pace with the evolving rights, interests, and aspirations of Reef Traditional Owners.

One of the drivers of this change for government is the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (2021)

and four key priority reforms, representing the first co-designed Closing the Gap Implementation Plan since the process began in 2005 between the Australian Government and the Coalition of the Peaks. For the first time, the Australian Government, states and territories, local governments, and the Coalition of Peaks are jointly accountable for the outcomes and targets under the National Agreement.

The objective of the Closing the Gap Agreement is to overcome the entrenched inequality faced by too many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people so that First Nations people's life outcomes are equal to all Australians. The Australian Government, as a Party to the National Agreement, released its Closing the Gap Implementation Plan on 5 August 2021 which has been built around four Priority Reforms. These reforms are central to the National Agreement and will change the way the Australian Government engages and participates with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities over the next decade.

## THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

# A cultural icon

Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owners are knowledge holders of histories that stretch back to the last ice age when their ancestors lived on the coastal plains bordering the edge of the continental shelf. These are some of the oldest living human histories known on earth.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's occupation of the east coast of Australia dates to as early as 60,000 years ago. At that time sea levels were up to 130 meters lower than they are today, exposing the continental shelves surrounding Australia as dry land. An earlier version of the Great Barrier Reef sat on dry land as limestone hills and mountains. The Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) research suggests the modern Great Barrier Reef came into being after the last glacial maximum 20,000 years ago when sea levels started rising to present levels<sup>1</sup>.

*"It is believed that the Great Barrier Reef formed on a coastal plain that was flooded about 20,000 years ago due to rising sea levels. From 20,000 years to 6,000 years ago, there was a steady rise in sea levels. The submerged margins of the coastal plain's flooded hills provided shallow regions where eventually, the corals grew. Over the years, the corals grew over these submerged hills forming the present-day cays and reefs"*<sup>2</sup>

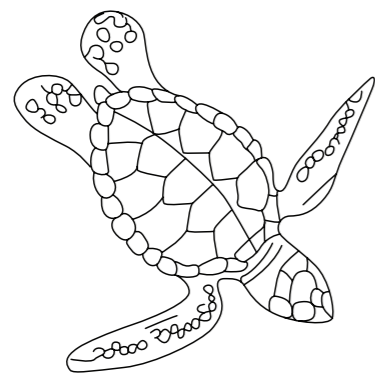


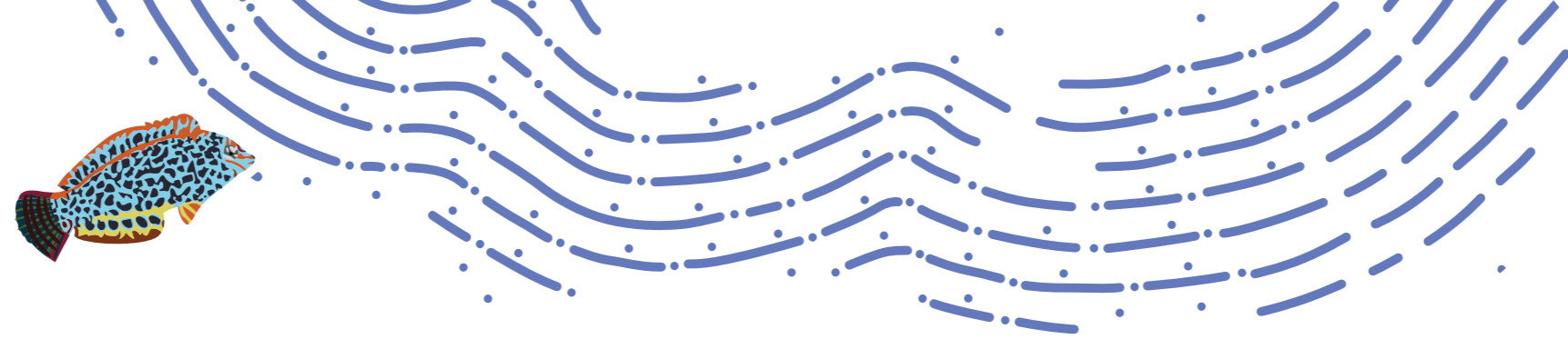
Figure 4: How the Sahul landmass would have looked more than 50,000 years ago<sup>3</sup>



<sup>1</sup> World Atlas. "How old is the Great Barrier Reef?" URL: [How Old Is The Great Barrier Reef? - WorldAtlas](https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/how-old-is-the-great-barrier-reef.html)

<sup>2</sup> Reid, N., & Nunn, P. (2015). Ancient Aboriginal stories preserve history of a rise in sea level. The Conversation, URL: [Ancient Aboriginal stories preserve history of a rise in sea level \(theconversation.com\)](https://theconversation.com/ancient-aboriginal-stories-preserve-history-of-a-rise-in-sea-level-154263)

<sup>3</sup> Crabtree, S, Williams, A.N, Bradshaw, C, J.A., White, D, Saltre, F, Ulm, S (2021). We mapped the 'super-highways' the First Australians used to cross the ancient land. The Conversation URL: <https://theconversation.com/we-mapped-the-super-highways-the-first-australians-used-to-cross-the-ancient-land-154263>



While geologists and climate scientists understand past sea levels with accuracy, what is truly remarkable is that “details of life before and after this significant sea rise, which flooded areas around the Australian coast, previously floodplains, were recorded in the oral histories of Australia’s Indigenous peoples”<sup>4</sup>.

Ernest Gribble, an Anglican Priest, and mission manager published stories in 1932 from Gunggandji informants at Cape Grafton that describe changes in sea level.

*“The barrier reef was the original coast here at a time when a man called Gunya (Goonyah) was living here. Having consumed a customarily forbidden fish, the gods caused the sea to rise in order to drown him and his family. He evaded his fate by fleeing to the hills but ‘the sea... never returned to its original limits’”.*

Aboriginal histories collected and recorded by Linguist Robert Dixon in the 1970’s and 80’s, from Hinchinbrook and Palm Islands discuss the possibility of walking from the mainland to the (offshore) islands. According to Western science, it would have been possible to walk to “Hinchinbrook (Island) when the sea level was 5 meters lower than today, and to Palm Island when the sea level was 22 meters lower”. Dixon recorded stories from coastal Yidinji people which recall ‘that the coastline was once where the barrier reef now stands. . . but the sea then rose, and the shore retreated to its present position’. Further to these oral histories, people “recall that the Aboriginal name of Fitzroy

Island is *gabar* or lower arm of a former mainland promontory that became partly submerged. Another recalls the name of a place halfway between Fitzroy Island and King Beach that is now submerged; its name was Mudaga (the Indindji [Yidinji] work for pencil pine, *Athrotaxis cupressoides*) after the trees growing there.” This species of native conifer no longer occurs in Queensland and is now endemic to western Tasmania.

These stories we still hear today confirming coastal flooding for the Great Barrier Reef and around Australia as sea levels reached their present level, are an incredible testament to the depth and longevity of cultural connections. These oral traditions are precious and “unique to the inter-generational scaffolding needed to transmit these stories over vast periods of time”<sup>5</sup>.

## Traditional Owner groups of the Great Barrier Reef

The Great Barrier Reef is unique in Australia in that both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples assert rights and interests in its resources, management, and protection. Torres Strait Islanders are Melanesian people with their distinct

languages, customs, traditions, and cultures and Aboriginal peoples possess equally varied and diverse languages, cultures, and customs across the footprint of the Reef. These people are known as the First Nations peoples of the Great Barrier Reef.

## Dispossession

The earliest European interaction for Reef Traditional Owners occurred on 22 August 1770 when Captain James Cook sailed through the Torres Strait and landed on Curare Country, at Possession (Bedanug) Island. It was here after sailing the 8000 kilometres along the east coast of Australia that Cook raised the English flag and took possession of the whole eastern coast of Australia. The event he recorded in his journal as:

*‘I now took possession of the whole eastern coast, from latitude 38 deg. to this place, latitude 10deg. 30min., in right of his Majesty King George the Third, by the name of New South Wales, with all the bays, harbours, rivers, and islands situated upon it. We then fired three volleys of small arms, which were answered by the same number from the ship.’*

After asserting possession, Cook sailed south and west past other inner islands and recorded: ‘We saw upon all the adjacent lands and islands a great number of smokes - a certain sign they are inhabited’<sup>6</sup>. Cook’s voyage was the precursor of the frontier wars as Europeans moved into “new” lands often leading to violent encounters, including

massacres, predominantly of Aboriginal peoples, with violence continuing for generations. The State removed Aboriginal peoples from their lands and into government and/or church-run reserves and missions. These actions damaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, languages, traditions, communities and families. Combined with the introduction of diseases, the forced removal of children from their families, and the destruction of ancestral lands and waters enduring legacies of this colonial period are dispossession, inequality, racism, and injustice.

## Identity and recognition

Despite dispossession and displacement, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples maintained and have since revitalised a cultural connection to their Traditional Country. In addition, over several decades, Traditional Owners have increasingly asserted their role in managing their Country through active engagement and participation in government-led management and policy and planning programs. As well as recently progressing their own approaches to manage and protect their Sea Country demonstrated through the development of the Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan. The Reef Authority will continue to engage and partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners of the Reef to keep Indigenous heritage strong, safe, and healthy.

<sup>4</sup> Phillips, N. (2015). Aboriginal stories of sea level rise preserved for thousands of years. The Sydney Morning Herald. URL: [Aboriginal stories of sea level rise preserved for thousands of years \(smh.com.au\)](https://www.smh.com.au/aboriginal-stories-of-sea-level-rise-preserved-for-thousands-of-years-20151077539)

<sup>5</sup> Patrick D. Nunn & Nicholas J. Reid (2016) Aboriginal Memories of Inundation of the Australian Coast Dating from More than 7000 Years Ago, Australian Geographer, 47:1, 11- 47, DOI:10.1080/00049182.2015.1077539

<sup>6</sup> [Nature, culture and history | Possession Island National Park | Parks and forests | Department of Environment and Science, Queensland \(des.qld.gov.au\)](#)

The Traditional Owner groupings<sup>7</sup> with rights and interests in Sea Country across the length of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park includes, but is not limited to:

Table 1: Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef

Darnley Island (Erub) Groups	Eastern Torres Strait Islands and Northern Great Barrier Reef region including Raine Island
Murray Island (Mer) Groups	Eastern Torres Strait Islands and Northern Great Barrier Reef region including Raine Island
Stephen Island (Ugar) Groups	Eastern Torres Strait Islands and Northern Great Barrier Reef region including Raine Island
Gudang	Newcastle Bay region
Yadhaigana	Captain Billy Landing region
Wuthathi	Cape Grenville region
Kuuku Ya'u	Portland Roads region
Kanthanumpun	Claude River region
Uutaalgnunu (Night Island) Group	Night Island region
Umpila	Cape Sidmouth South region
Lama Lama	Princess Charlotte Bay region
Angkum	Cape Sidmouth region
Guugu Yimithirr Warra Nation	Lizard Island to Hopevale region
Yuku-Baja-Muliku	Walker Bay to Walsh Bay region
Dabu Jajikal	Daintree/Cedar Bay/Hope Island/Agincourt Reef region
Eastern Kuku Yalanji	Cedar Bay to Port Douglas region
Wanyurr Majay	Fishery Falls, Babinda, Miriwinni, Mt Bellenden Kerr region
Yirrganydji People	Cairns to Port Douglas region
Gimuy Walubara Yidinji	Cairns/Trinity Inlet region
Gunggandji	Kings Beach/Fitzroy Island region
Guru Gulu Gunggandji	Yarrabah/Green Island region
Mandingalbay Yidinji - Gunggandji	Cooper Point region
Lower Coastal Yidinji	Russell River region

<sup>7</sup> Reef Traditional Owners | gbrmpa

Djiru	Mission Beach region
Gulnay	Tully region
Girramay	Cardwell to Murray Upper area
Bandjin	Hinchinbrook region
Warrgamay	Lucinda region
Nywaigi	Halifax Bay region
Mandubarra	Mourilyan Harbour to Maria Creek
Manbarra	Palm Island
Wulgurukaba	Magnetic Island/Townsville region
Bindal	Townsville region
Juru	Home Hill/Bowen region
Gia	Whitsunday region (Mainland)
Ngaro	Whitsunday region (Islands)
Yuwibara	Mackay region
Darumbal	Broad Sound to Rockhampton region
Woppaburra	Keppel Islands region
Taribelang Bunda	Bundaberg region
Byellee/Bailai	Gladstone region
Gooreng Gooreng	Gladstone/Bundaberg region
Gurang	Gladstone/Bundaberg region

While the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (Reef Authority) has exercised due care in ensuring the accuracy of the information provided, it is provided for general information only and on the understanding that neither the Reef Authority nor the Commonwealth of Australia is providing professional advice. Appropriate professional advice relevant to your circumstances should be sought rather than relying on the information provided. In addition, you must exercise your own judgement and carefully evaluate the information provided for accuracy, currency, completeness and relevance for the purpose for which it is to be used. The information provided is often supplied by, or based on, data and information from external sources, therefore the Reef Authority cannot guarantee that the information is accurate or up-to-date. The Reef Authority expressly disclaim any liability arising from the use of this information.This information should not be relied upon in relation to any matters associated with cultural heritage.

# The Reef Authority's Traditional Owner flagship program — TUMRA

A Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement (TUMRA) is a community-based agreement, Traditional Owner-led and developed by saltwater Traditional Owners / Clan groups to manage their Sea Country estate, in partnership with the Reef Authority and the Queensland Department of Environment, Science and Innovation.

TUMRAs are a unique partnership agreement which recognise and support the Native Title rights and interests of Traditional Owners who hold an inherent spiritual connection to the Reef. They recognise and support Traditional Owner Lore (Law) and customs within a legislative framework.

Under the agreements, Sea Country management tools describe how Traditional Owner groups manage their marine resources and their role in compliance, research, and monitoring of plants and animals. They also help protect Indigenous heritage values and the management of human activities in the Marine Park.

The TUMRA program is an important element in better understanding, protecting, and promoting Reef Indigenous heritage values. We have maintained 10 accredited TUMRAs covering approximately 43 per cent of the Great Barrier Reef coastline. This includes: Wuthathi, Lama Lama, Yuku Baja Muliku, Yirrganydji, Gunggandji, Mandubarra, Girringun (Djiru, Gulnay, Girramay, Bandjin, Warragamay, Nywaigi), Woppaburra, Darumbal and Port Curtis Coral Coast (Byellee, Gurang, Gooreng Gooreng, Taribelang Bunda) regions.

In 2022–23, the Reef Authority executed seven-year implementation contracts with the accredited TUMRAs and continued to support the management of Indigenous heritage values through funding four Sea Country Values Mapping contracts. These contracts included employment opportunities, permissions system cultural referrals, planning for access to cultural sites and place-specific guidelines as part of their Sea Country Values Mapping project activities.

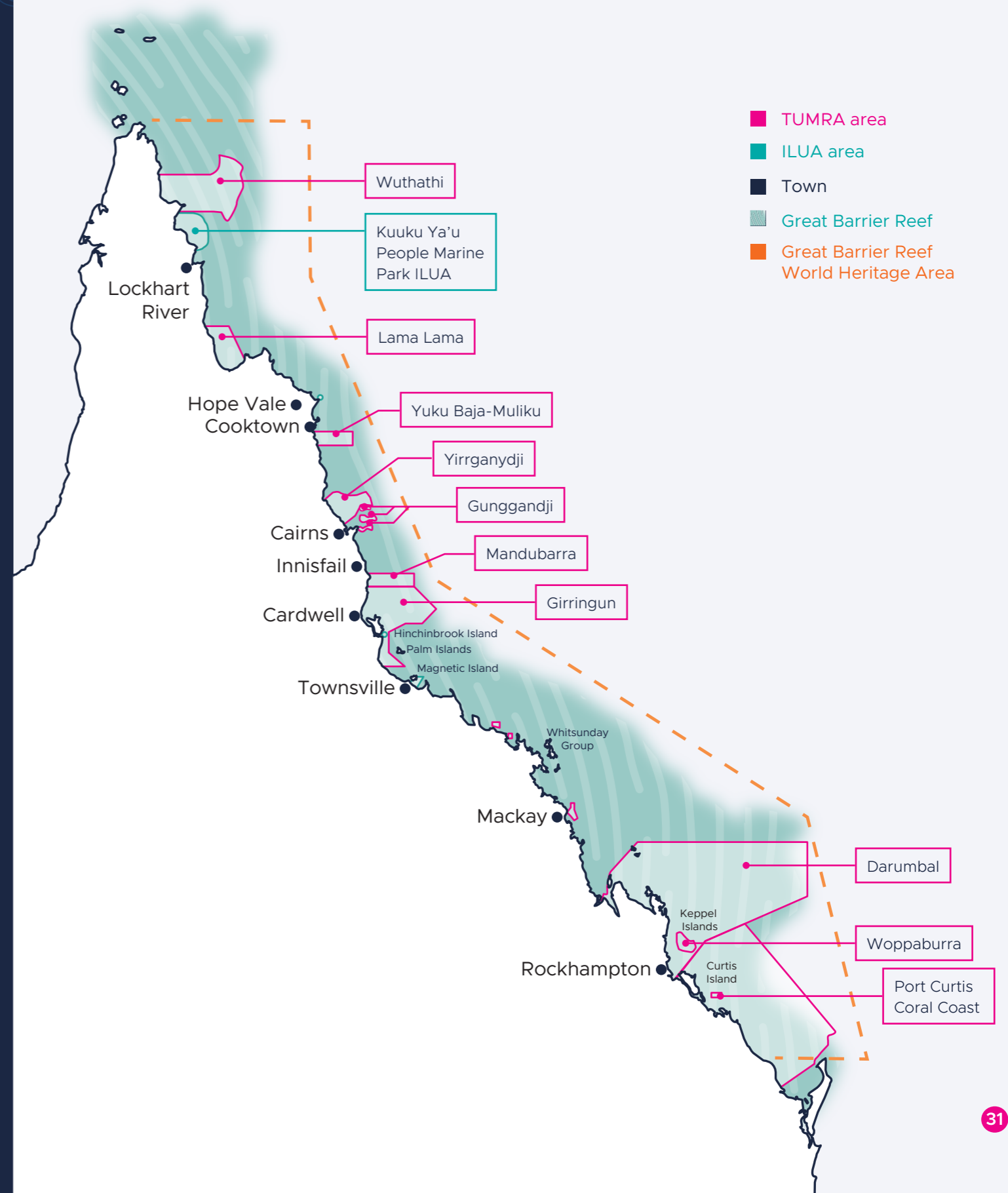
In addition, the Reef Authority supports four emerging TUMRA groups including Bagirbarra / Dyirrabarra, Dabu Jajikal, Wanjuru-Yidinji and Yuwi to undertake their Sea Country planning.

The TUMRA and associated Sea Country Values Mapping programs remain a high priority for the Reef Authority with staffing and funding for Traditional Owners increased to support growth and continued interest.

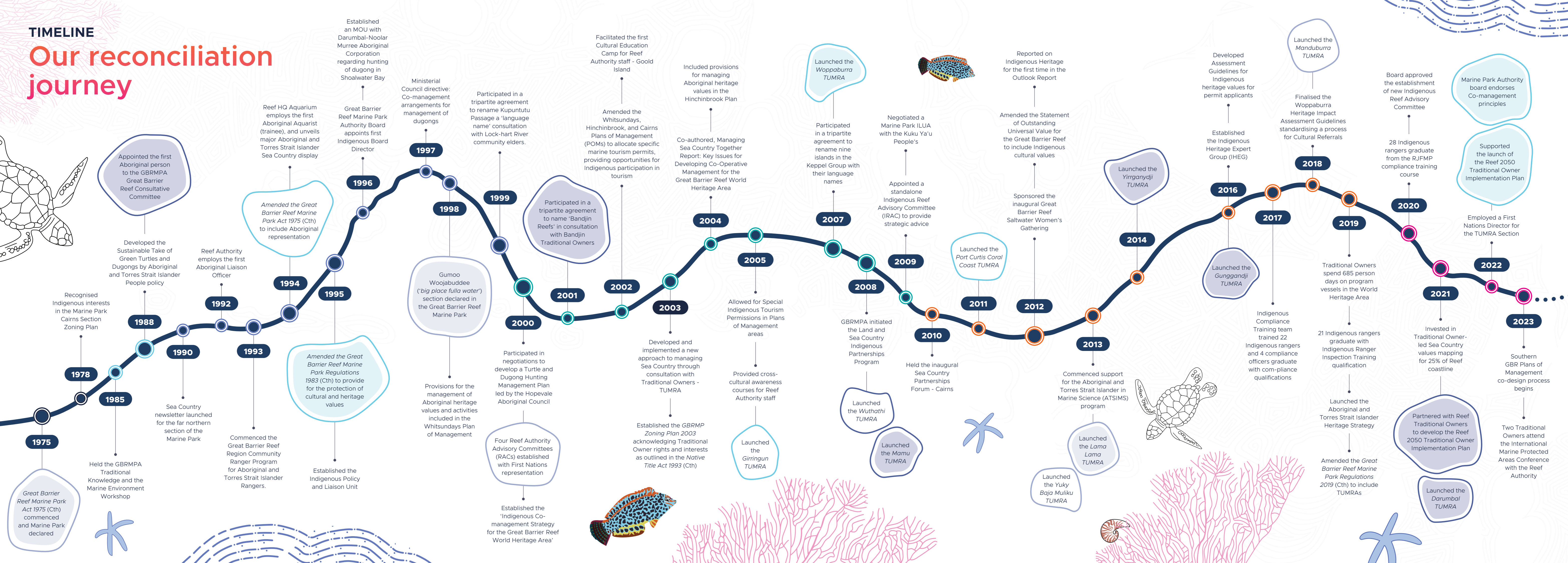
Both programs contribute to the Reef Authority's [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy](#) and the [Co-management Principles Policy](#), which are supported by management tools developed by the Reef Authority.

## TRADITIONAL USE OF MARINE RESOURCES (TUMRA) AND INDIGENOUS LAND USE AGREEMENT (ILUA) AREAS WITHIN THE GREAT BARRIER REEF MARINE PARK (AS AT DECEMBER 2021)

Figure 5: Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement



# Our reconciliation journey





## Case study 1

# FIRST NATIONS EMPLOYMENT – INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Indigenous Australian Government Development Program (IAGDP) is an entry-level program open to First Nations peoples interested in working for the Australian Public Service. The IAGDP provides a varied approach to learning and development over 12 months, to gain new skills and build confidence, while completing a nationally recognised qualification.

Djamaramée Close, whose connection to Country on her mother's side is Badjatala, and Githabul and on her father's side Pitta Pitta and Olkolo was the Reef Authority's very first IAGDP participant— joining the Reef Authority in 2021.

To provide her with the best possible development opportunity, Djamaramée's time as a trainee included rotations throughout different sections of the Reef Authority. These rotations enabled Djamaramée to fully experience the careers on offer at the Reef Authority, from enabling and strategy

roles to frontline and compliance monitoring roles. Djamaramée found her passion and purpose for the Great Barrier Reef in her last rotation — with the Reef Conservation Actions Team. Working in marine biology and learning about the biodiversity within the Marine Park was never something she thought possible. After completing her diploma, Djamaramée secured an ongoing role as the Project Officer - Reef and Islands, something she also never dreamed of achieving.

The IAGDP was more than a job for Djamaramée, it was the start of a career in the Australian Public Sector.

Since Djamaramée's successful traineeship, the Reef Authority has created an ongoing pathway for others with an additional two trainees recently completing their diplomas and two further trainees currently undertaking the IAGDP at the Reef Authority.



Photo 1: Djamaramée Close and Jerron Wagg (QPWS) participating in field training – Magnetic Island.

## Case study 2

# DOUGLAS SHOAL ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION PROJECT

When the vessel Shen Neng 1 ran aground in April 2010, it caused extensive damage to Douglas Shoal. With an impact area of more than 40 hectares, the site bears the largest ship grounding scar known in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, and possibly the largest reef-related shipping impact in the world.

The Commonwealth Government negotiated an out-of-court settlement with the owners and insurers of Shen Neng 1 to fund the remediation of Douglas Shoal. The project addresses contamination caused by the vessel's anti-fouling paint and rubble created as the ship ground across the shoal.

The contract between the Reef Authority and the remediation contractor contains an Indigenous Engagement and Employment Participation Plan which includes a fee-for-service agreement with the

Port Curtis Coral Coast (PCCC) Trust and Gidarjil Development Corporation to provide goods, services, sponsorships, and Traditional Owners' knowledge to the project.

Strong engagement with the PCCC Trust and Gidarjil will support increased capacity for Traditional Owner management of Sea Country and economic benefits to First Nations Bailai, Gurang, Gooreng Gooreng, and Taribelang Bunda Peoples.

Furthermore, capacity-building exercises including Gidarjil participation in the procurement process (with legacy benefit to the overall business acumen of Gidarjil) will deliver Sea Country management capacity and economic benefits to Traditional Owners.



Photo 2: Gidarjil rangers deploy a remote underwater video camera to guide remediation of Douglas Shoal

### Case study 3

## DARUMBAL TUMRA LAUNCH

In December 2021, Darumbal became the tenth Traditional Owner group to have an accredited Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement. The Darumbal TUMRA is a fifteen-year agreement and covers an area of approximately 36,606 km<sup>2</sup> of the Great Barrier Reef. The northern boundary extends from Broad Sound to Raglan Creek in the south, which abuts the Port Curtis Coral Coast Regional Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement.

The Darumbal TUMRA includes forty-four Commonwealth islands, dugong protection areas, a RAMSAR site, tourism, and significant fishery sites, and several Marine National Parks, Preservation zones, and Conservation Park zones.

The development of this agreement is a significant milestone for all Darumbal peoples, the broader community, and government.

The Darumbal TUMRA is based on cultural Lore, customs and practice, and contemporary science which will allow Darumbal and management agencies to better manage Sea Country. The Darumbal TUMRA will be a platform for establishing career pathways into vocational and professional fields, as well as business ventures such as fee-for-service arrangements, tourism, and ranger programs. It will create further opportunities for Traditional Owners to continue to live, study, and be employed on Darumbal Sea Country.



Photo 3 : Darumbal TUMRA Launch (Photo courtesy: Gus Burrows)

### Case study 4

## WORKING WITH MANBARRA TO DEVELOP THE JOHN BREWER REEF SITE PLAN

In 2020, the Reef Authority developed a Site Plan for John Brewer Reef. Site planning is a process that has been done throughout the Marine Park previously, however, Traditional Owner engagement has predominately been at an inform or consult level. The development of the John Brewer Reef Site Plan saw the Reef Authority collaborate with Manbarra Traditional Owners to conduct consultation with the wider community and make informed decisions on the management of the area.

Manbarra Peoples are the Traditional Owners of Palm Island, and their Sea Country includes John Brewer Reef.

As part of the Media Release for the Site Plan, Richard Cassady, a Traditional Owner and representative from the Manbarra Elders Counsel said "John Brewer Reef is part of the Manbarra

stingray dreaming story. Through this dreaming story, there is a cultural responsibility to care for our Land and Sea Country. In this day and age, this means engaging with the Reef Authority through this site planning process."

"The draft plan helps us to maintain the area's cultural values and that's really important to us."

It is now standard procedure to ensure Traditional Owners are engaged early in site planning and invited to participate in site plan development.

The development of the Site Plan occurred at the height of Covid-19 restrictions meaning Reef Authority staff were unable to visit John Brewer Reef with the Traditional Owners for the Site Plan project. However, in 2023 three Manbarra Traditional Owners joined Reef Authority staff on country for a capacity-building exercise at John Brewer Reef.



Photo 4: Manbarra Traditional Owners and Reef Authority staff discussing the John Brewer Reef Site Plan

# Relationships

Outstanding management of the Great Barrier Reef can only be achieved through respectful and meaningful relationships with First Nations peoples. Through a better understanding of Traditional Knowledge gained over millennia; the Reef Authority has a wonderful opportunity to walk together with Reef Traditional Owners for the future resilience of the Reef.

Action	Deliverables	Timeframe	Responsible
1 Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations.	1.1 Finalise and implement the Engagement and Participation Framework which, teamed with the cultural protocols, will guide engagement and participation with Reef Traditional Owners.	Dec 2024	Director – Reef Education and Engagement
	1.2 Embed the established Reef Authority Engagement and Participation Framework into the overarching Project Management Framework to guide our engagement with and participation of First Nations peoples, communities, and organisations.	Jul 2025	Director – Business Operations
	1.3 Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations to review principles for ongoing engagement.	Dec 2025	Director – Reef Education and Engagement
2 Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	2.1 Circulate Reconciliation Australia’s NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff, with our community stakeholders and partners (i.e., Local Marine Advisory Committee, Reef Guardian Councils and Reef Guardian Schools).	May 2024 May 2025	Director – Reef Education and Engagement Director – Communications
	2.2 RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	May 2024 May 2025	Champion – Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Group (RIG)
	2.3 Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW via all-staff email.	May 2024 May 2025	Champion – Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Group (RIG)
	2.4 Organise at least one NRW event each year.	May 2024 May 2025	Director – Communications
	2.5 Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia’s NRW website	May 2024 May 2025	Chair – Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Group (RIG)
	2.6 Develop and deliver a seminar during NRW on a legal topic relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s rights or legal interests.	May 2024 May 2025	Director – Legal Services
3 Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	3.1 Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.	May 2024 May 2025	Director – Communications
	3.2 Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sea Country e-newsletter</li><li>• Website, social media</li></ul>	Aug 2024 Aug 2025	Director – Communications
	3.3 Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes through leveraging opportunities with groups within our sphere of influence, including our Local Marine Advisory Committees, Reef Guardian Councils, and Reef Guardian Schools.	Jul 2024 Jul 2025	Champion – Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Group (RIG)
	3.4 Collaborate with RAP and other likeminded organisations to develop ways to advance reconciliation.	Jul 2024 Jul 2025	Chair – RAP Implementation Group
	3.5 Create a Reconciliation Award, recognising the outstanding contribution made by a Reef Authority staff towards reconciliation. Award to be presented at Reef Authority’s annual award ceremony.	Jun 2024 Jun 2025	Director – People Services
	3.6 Develop and publish material promoting to Permit Holders <sup>8</sup> the benefits of engaging with Traditional Owners	Jun 2024	Director – Environmental Assessments and Protection Director – Communications

<sup>8</sup> A person, company or entity who is granted a written permission by the managing agencies pursuant to the Acts and Zoning Plans to use or enter a Zone in the Marine Parks. Environmental Impact Management: Permission System

# Relationships

CONTINUED

Outstanding management of the Great Barrier Reef can only be achieved through respectful and meaningful relationships with First Nations peoples. Through a better understanding of Traditional Knowledge gained over millennia; the Reef Authority has a wonderful opportunity to walk together with Reef Traditional Owners for the future resilience of the Reef.

Action	Deliverables	Timeframe	Responsible
4 Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies	4.1 Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions and future needs.	Jun 2025	Director – People Services
	4.2 Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation	Dec 2025	Director – People Services Director – Communications
	4.3 Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff/advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	Jun 2025	Director – People Services
	4.4 Educate and share information with senior leaders and managers on the effects of racism, cultural load, creating a culturally safe workplace, and duty of care responsibilities.	Dec 2024	Director – People Services
5 Increase and strengthen partnerships with Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers	5.1 Investigate mechanisms to enable the full suite of Marine Park Inspector powers for Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers through a briefing paper for the Reef Joint Field Management Program Strategy Group.	Jun 2024	Director – Field Management Strategy Director – Field Management Operations
	5.2 Establish and utilise fee for services contracts with Land and Sea Rangers and the broader Indigenous Community Controlled Sector for compliance and other Reef Joint Field Management Program activities to provide economic and capability building opportunities.	Jun 2024 Jun 2025	Director – Field Management Strategy Director – Field Management Operations
6 Build greater collaboration with Reef Traditional Owner groups to support the development and strengthening of Reef Authority delivered programs and relationships.	6.1 Co-design aspects of the new aquarium design with the Gurambilbarra Wulgurukaba Traditional Owners.	Jul 2025	Director – Great Barrier Reef Aquarium
	6.2 Co-design a Traditional Owner Engagement and Participation Plan with the Reef Integrated Monitoring and Reporting (RIMReP) Traditional Owner Governance Members to support the promotion and engagement of RIMReP with Reef Traditional Owner communities.	Jun 2025	Director – Science for Management
	6.3 Facilitate inclusion of a Traditional Owner organising committee representative and Traditional Owner speakers and presenters for the Social Science Community for the Reef (SSCR) symposium.	Dec 2024 Dec 2025	Director – Science for Management

# Respect

The Reef Authority acknowledges the history of dispossession and exclusion of First Nations peoples to their lands, waters, and the broader Australian society since colonisation. This shared history created the inequity and inequality faced by many First Nations peoples today. We are committed to developing a culture of respect that not only acknowledges Traditional Owners’ inherent rights and interests but establishes an approach to respond to the inequality between First Nations peoples and the broader Australian community by upholding responsibilities under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Action	Deliverables	Timeframe	Responsible
7 Increase understanding, value, and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights through cultural learning.	7.1 Conduct a review of our cultural learning strategy to include cultural immersion learning needs within the organisation.	Dec 2024	Director – People Services
	7.2 Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to review our cultural learning strategy.	Jan 2026	Director – People Services
	7.3 Continue to implement and communicate our cultural learning strategy document for staff.	Jan 2026	Director – People Services
	7.4 Continue to provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, HR managers, and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	Jan 2026	Director – People Services
	7.5 Investigate opportunities to make Module 2 of our existing cultural competency training mandatory.	Dec 2024	Director – People Services
8 Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	8.1. Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocol for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	Sept 2025	Director – Strategic Policy Director – Communications
	8.2 Embed the cultural protocols documents, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols in the Reef Authority induction program.	Dec 2025	Director – People Services
	8.3 Continue to invite a local Traditional Owner to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocols at significant events, including visits, each year.	Jul 2024 Jul 2025	General Manager – Strategic Policy and Partnerships
	8.4 Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	Dec 2024	Chief Operating Officer
	8.5 Acknowledge First Nations peoples or places through naming meeting rooms in Reef Authority’s offices, in consultation with Reef Traditional Owners through an appropriate consultation process.	Jul 2025	Director – Business Operations
	8.6 Remove policy impediments to using First Nations/Traditional Owner imagery for Reef Authority publications and platforms to better support the Reef Authority’s work with Traditional Owners.	Jun 2024	Director - Technology & Digital Services
	8.7 Develop and install Acknowledgement of Country plaques/signs at all Reef Authority operated office locations.	Jul 2025	Director – Business Operations
9 Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	9.1 RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	Jul 2024 Jul 2025	Chair Reconciliation Implementation Group (RIG)
	9.2 Review HR policies and procedures to identify and remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	Jun 2025	Director – People Services
	9.3 Develop a NAIDOC communications plan to coordinate activities across the Reef Authority.	May 2024 May 2025	Director – Communications
	9.4 Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff	Jul 2024 Jul 2025	Director – Communications

# Opportunities

We recognise and value the diverse and extensive knowledge, skills, and experiences of First Nations people as the first scientists of the land and sea. We commit to prioritising employment, procurement, and partnership with Traditional Owners in collaborative management and understanding of the Sea Country of the Great Barrier Reef, sharing knowledge, understanding, and pursuing mutually beneficial shared outcomes.

Action	Deliverables	Timeframe	Responsible
10 Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	10.1 Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	Dec 2024	Director – People Services
	10.2 Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform our Indigenous Workforce Strategy.	May 2024	Director – People Services
	10.3 Develop and implement an Indigenous Workforce Strategy that covers recruitment, retention, professional development, and cultural safety.	Mar 2026	Director – People Services
	10.4 Create a diversity indicator in our existing Employment Register to identify First Nations candidates suitable for vacancies before advertising.	Dec 2024	Director – People Services
	10.5 Continue to support and promote the Jawun Australian Public Service Secondment Program to all Reef Authority staff.	Jun 2024 Jun 2025	Director – People Services
	10.6 Continue Crown of Thorns Starfish (COTS) Program contractor opportunities for First Nations people’s traineeships and employment opportunities.	Sept 2024 Sept 2025	Director – Reef Interventions
	10.7 Investigate additional avenues to advertise job vacancies to further reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander potential candidates.	Dec 2025	Director – People Services
	10.8 Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to identify and remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	Dec 2025	Director – People Services
	10.9 Increase the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed in our workforce to 10 per cent.	Jan 2026	Director – People Services
	10.10 Continue to offer at least one 12-month placement annually through the Indigenous Australian Government Development Program pending interest and availability of candidates.	Jul 2024 Jul 2025	Director – People Services
11 Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	11.1 Develop and implement a Reef Authority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	Dec 2024	Director – Finance
	11.2 Continue to utilise the Reef Authority Supply Nation members database to source Indigenous suppliers but also include options to source from the State government’s Black Business Finder and the Local Government Association Queensland Local Buy databases.	Dec 2024	Director – Finance
	11.3 Review our governance requirement to train staff on our obligations to implement the Indigenous Procurement Policy opportunities and processes.	Dec 2024 Dec 2025	Director – Finance
	11.4 Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	Dec 2025	Director – Finance
	11.5 Develop a one-pager for staff to use with Indigenous sole traders explaining the Reef Authority’s alignment to the Indigenous Procurement Policy to streamline the procurement process.	Dec 2024	Director – Finance

# Opportunities

CONTINUED

We recognise and value the diverse and extensive knowledge, skills, and experiences of First Nations people as the first scientists of the land and sea. We commit to prioritising employment, procurement, and partnership with Traditional Owners in collaborative management and understanding of the Sea Country of the Great Barrier Reef, sharing knowledge, understanding, and pursuing mutually beneficial shared outcomes.

Action	Deliverables	Timeframe	Responsible
	11.6 Develop guidance and training materials for staff regarding the Australian Government Indigenous Procurement Policy and its interpretation, and how to implement the First Nations Remuneration Policy.	Jun 2024	Director – Finance
	11.7 Ensure there are economic opportunities canvassed for the four Traditional Owner groups engaged in the development of the new draft Southern Plan of Management.	Jul 2025	Director – Marine Park Planning and Policy
	11.8 Actively promote information about longstanding Traditional Owners tourism permits supporting Indigenous tourism enterprises and businesses through the Sea Country newsletter and via the Reef Authority’s website.	Jun 2024	Director – Marine Park Planning and Policy
	11.9 Procure the services of Reef Traditional Owner organisations to deliver regional cultural immersion training programs.	Dec 2025	Director – People Services
12 Increase visibility of the Reef Authority’s Traditional Owner strategic direction by including it in our corporate initiatives.	12.1 Include Traditional Owner Initiatives in the Strategic Portfolio Works Plan.	Aug 2024 Aug 2025	Director – Strategic Governance
	12.2 Ensure the Corporate Plan and performance measures include Traditional Owner initiatives.	Aug 2024 Aug 2025	Director – Strategic Governance
	12.3 Communicate strategic advice provided by the IRAC to Traditional Owners in the quarterly Sea Country Newsletter.	Sept 2024 Apr 2025 Sept 2025	Director – Strategic Policy Director – Communications
13 Promote First Nations peoples voices, rights, and interests both nationally and internationally, to acknowledge the intrinsic and beneficial relationships Reef Traditional Owners possess with their Sea Country.	13.1 Increase First Nations peoples’ representation at relevant national and international events by developing an internal policy to guide our support for Reef Traditional Owners to represent their views and aspirations of their Sea Country.	Mar 2025	Director – Strategic Policy
	13.2 All new and revised position statements that express the Reef Authority’s position on an issue where it has a strong interest but is outside its direct regulatory control will acknowledge Traditional Owner inherent rights, interests and values, including the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Position Statement – Coastal ecosystems</li><li>• Position Statement – Marine debris</li><li>• Position Statement – Water quality</li></ul>	Dec 2025	Director – Strategic Policy
14 Facilitate an Indigenous data and analytics project to enable effective decision-making for program and project delivery and reporting.	14.1 Develop in collaboration with sections of the Reef Authority, KPI’s and performance measures for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy. Better enabling the Reef Authority to report against the CtG Implementation Plan Priority Reforms.	Dec 2025	Director – Strategic Policy

The success of the Reef Authority’s reconciliation journey will be underpinned by strong, accountable, and transparent governance arrangements. We are committed to regular and open reporting on the progress made, challenges encountered, and risks to the successful delivery of the Innovate RAP.

Action	Deliverables	Timeframe	Responsible
15 Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	15.1 Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	May 2024 Jan 2025 Jan 2026	Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Group (RIG) Chair
	15.2 Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	May 2024	Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Group (RIG) Chair
	15.3 Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	Mar, Jun, Sept, Dec 2024 Mar, Jun, Sept, Dec 2025 March 2026	Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Group (RIG) Chair
16 Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	16.1 Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	Jun 2024 Jun 2025	Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Group (RIG) Chair
	16.2 Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	Jun 2024 Jun 2025	Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Group (RIG) Chair
	16.3 Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure, and report on RAP commitments.	Jul 2024 Jul 2025	Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Group (RIG) Chair
	16.4 Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	May 2024 May 2025	Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Group (RIG) Chair
17 Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings both internally and externally.	17.1 Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	Jun 2024 Jun 2025	Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Group (RIG) Chair
	17.2 Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Survey.	Aug 2024 Aug 2025	Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Group (RIG) Chair
	17.3 Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	Sept 2024 Sept 2025 Sept 2026	Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Group (RIG) Chair
	17.4 Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	Jun, Sept, Dec 2024 Mar, Jun, Sept, Dec 2025 Mar 2026	Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Group (RIG) Chair
	17.5 Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings, annually in our Sea Country newsletter.	Jun, Sept, Dec 2024 Mar, Jun, Sept, Dec 2025 Mar 2026	Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Group (RIG) Chair
	17.6 Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia’s biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	May 2024	Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Group (RIG) Chair
	17.7 Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	Jun 2025	Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Group (RIG) Chair
18 Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	18.1 Register via Reconciliation Australia’s website to begin developing our next RAP.	Dec 2025	Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Group (RIG) Chair

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## Acknowledgements

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We acknowledge that the Reef Authority's Reconciliation Journey Timeline was informed by the [Reef TO Timeline](#).

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