

Great
Barrier
Reef Marine
Park
Authority

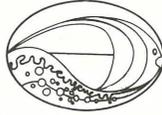
ANNUAL REPORT 1976-77

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Reef Marine
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ANNUAL REPORT 1976-77



Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority

The Honourable R. J. Groom
Minister of State for Environment,
Housing and Community Development
Parliament House
Canberra, A.C.T. 2600

Dear Mr Groom,

It is my pleasure to submit to you the first Annual Report of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, as required under section 60 (1) of the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*.

The Authority was constituted in July 1976, and during the year under review has begun to carry out the functions and duties imposed on it by the Act. In this it has been ably assisted by the Great Barrier Reef Consultative Committee, which is widely representative of Queensland and Commonwealth bodies having an interest in the Great Barrier Reef Region.

I should like to take this opportunity of acknowledging the very high level of co-operation which the Authority has received from departments and authorities of both the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments. Particular mention should also be made of the support provided by the Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development, and the enthusiasm and energy displayed by the Authority's small but capable staff.

Yours sincerely,

D. F. McMICHAEL
Acting Chairman

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The Marine Park concept

INTRODUCTION

The concept of parks as places of beauty offering people opportunity for contemplation and recreation goes back many centuries. Parks of one kind or another have become accepted as both desirable and necessary features of modern society. Over a century ago, the concept was broadened by the identification of 'national parks' — places which were recognised as having ecological, scenic and recreational value of more than local significance and which therefore warranted special protection by governments.

While the need to preserve suitable areas on land against destructive alteration by man was largely self-evident, the case for protecting underwater areas, and particularly those in the sea, was much less obvious. Whilst man's use of the world's oceans is extensive the major impact of this use is in the shallower waters close to the continents where direct and indirect effects have now become evident.

Further, as a consequence of the development of the snorkel and face-mask and, particularly in the last decade, the ready availability of self-contained underwater breathing apparatus (SCUBA), large numbers of people can now appreciate at first hand the beauty of the underwater world and communicate their experiences through film and television. The need to preserve representative marine systems has now been recognised.

The protection of small areas as marine parks or reserves is an important first step in the conservation of marine environments. However, the complexity of physical and biological systems in the seas is such that their long-term survival depends ultimately upon integrated planning of all human activities that have significant impacts upon them.

The establishment of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, with comprehensive planning powers over an extensive marine environment, is the first Australian example of a total approach to the problem and is of considerable international significance.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AUTHORITY

Awareness of environmental issues Australian public awareness of the environment increased significantly during the 1960s as the interdependence of man and his environment became more widely understood. Concurrent expansion of the metropolitan areas, in which over 80 per cent of Australians live, made the preservation of natural environments doubly desirable. Conservation groups were formed and focused attention on matters of environmental concern.

Long-standing recognition of the Great Barrier Reef as a biological phenomenon intensified.

The Great Barrier Reef Committee, which had been a focus for coral reef research since 1922, actively supported the establishment of a statutory body with power to protect the Reef.

*Opposite page: A rich cover of hard corals —
Acropora and Turbinaria — on a reef slope,
with a coral trout in the background.
Photo: Queensland Government Tourist Bureau*

Recreational uses Queenslanders have long regarded the Reef as 'a special place', both a natural and recreational asset. As coastal centres grew, the affluence and recreational expectations of their populations rose. Local use of the Great Barrier Reef increased.

More Australian and overseas tourists were visiting the area. An upsurge in populations of the Crown of thorns Starfish and its dramatic intrusion into popular tourist areas focused attention on the possible fragility and need for scientific understanding of coral reef ecosystems.

Official inquiries In 1972, the House of Representatives Select Committee on Wildlife Conservation recommended that a program of conservation for the Great Barrier Reef be established and that the Great Barrier Reef be set aside as a marine national park.

The commencement of exploratory oil drilling in Barrier Reef waters evoked considerable public concern and led to the establishment in 1970 of joint Commonwealth and Queensland Royal Commissions to investigate this issue. The Royal Commissions reported in 1974. They noted the risks of environmental damage, and recommended that a major research program should be conducted to determine the effects of spilt oil on coral reef ecosystems.

In 1973, the Committee of Inquiry into the National Estate supported the proposal to establish a marine park. The Committee recommended the formation of a statutory authority which would recognise the joint responsibilities of the Commonwealth and Queensland to preserve and manage the Reef.

Each of these inquiries played an important part in the decision to introduce Commonwealth legislation — the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act — which was passed with the support of all political parties in 1975. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority was established under this Act.

Functions of the Authority Many aspects of the legislation are innovatory. The scope of the Authority's multi-purpose planning powers over a large area of the sea and sea-bed is of international significance. The Authority plays a major role in promoting joint Federal-State involvement and co-operative arrangements in environmental management.

The principal function of the Authority is to recommend areas within the Great Barrier Reef Region (see Figure 1 on page 3) for declaration as parts of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Following declaration, zoning plans must be prepared and appropriate regulations promulgated and implemented. The Authority is responsible for carrying out research relevant to the Marine Park, either by itself or in co-operation with other organisations.

THE MARINE PARK CONCEPT

World-wide concern for marine environments As concern for the conservation of the Great Barrier Reef has been increasing in Australia the concept of marine parks has been developing in the United States, Japan, Kenya, the Caribbean, the Mediterranean and elsewhere in the world. For the most part, these marine parks are of relatively small size and designed to protect some feature of special scientific, historic or recreational value. Only a limited range of activities is permitted and preservation is the prime objective. The United States Marine Sanctuaries Program, introduced in 1972, envisages multiple use of marine sanctuaries, provided that such uses are compatible with the conservation, recreation, ecological or aesthetic values of the areas.

However, it has become recognised that the large number of existing parks and reserves provides at best a fragmented approach to the problems of marine conservation.

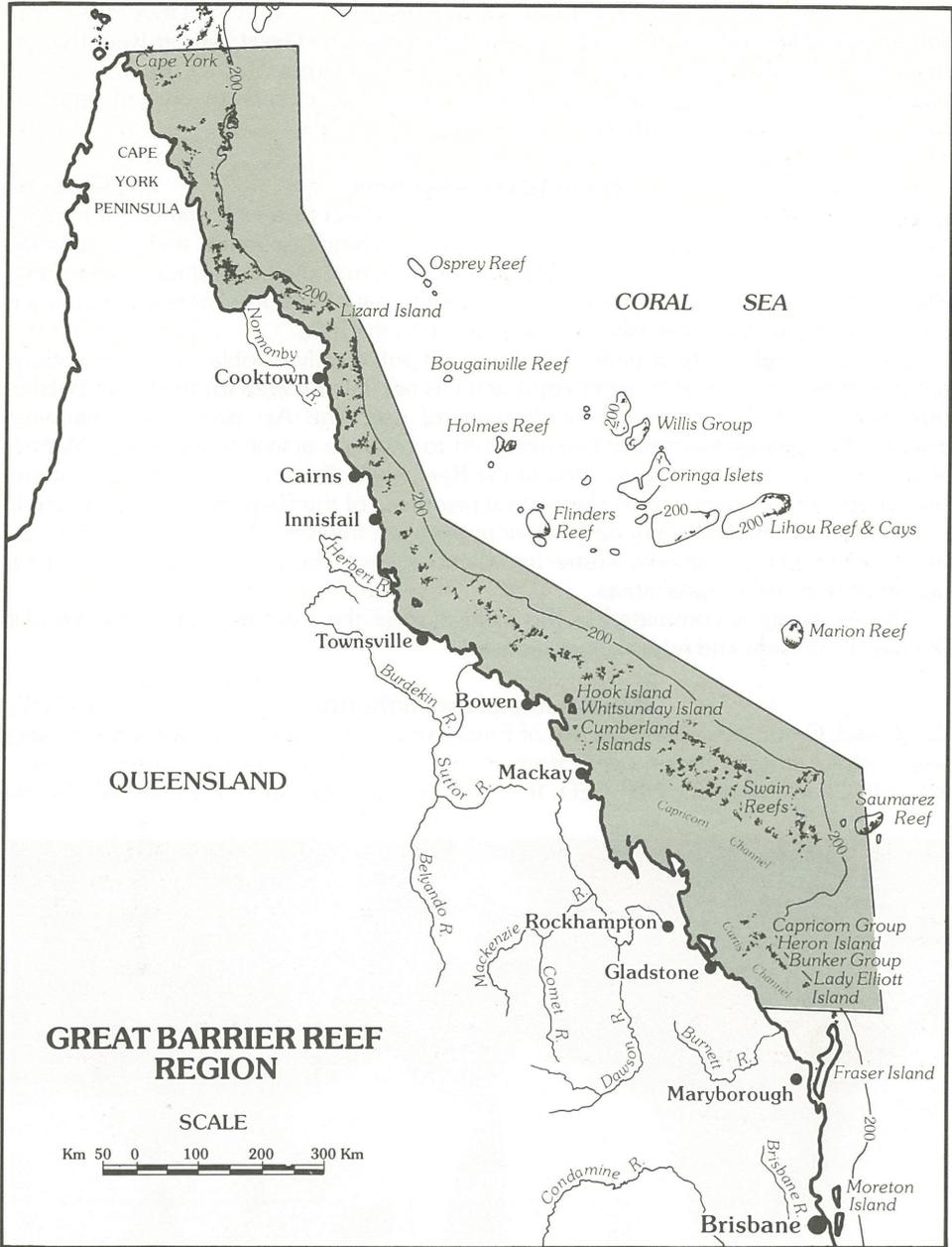


Figure 1

Uniqueness of the Great Barrier Reef

The Great

Barrier Reef provides an opportunity to test the feasibility of large-scale marine environmental planning.

No marine environment elsewhere in the world approaches the scale, diversity and beauty of the Great Barrier Reef. The Reef is characterised by a series of complex and interdependent ecosystems. Any marine park capable of conserving the Reef has, of necessity, a totally different nature to the marine parks already in existence.

It is anticipated that ultimately the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park will include the entire Reef and adjacent waters in one park extending from Lady Elliott Island in the south to the tip of Cape York.

Great Barrier Reef Region

Under the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* an area known as the Great Barrier Reef Region has been defined. The Region includes the entire Great Barrier Reef with the exception of its northern extremity in Torres Strait and covers an area of approximately 230 000 square kilometres.

Multiple use of the Reef

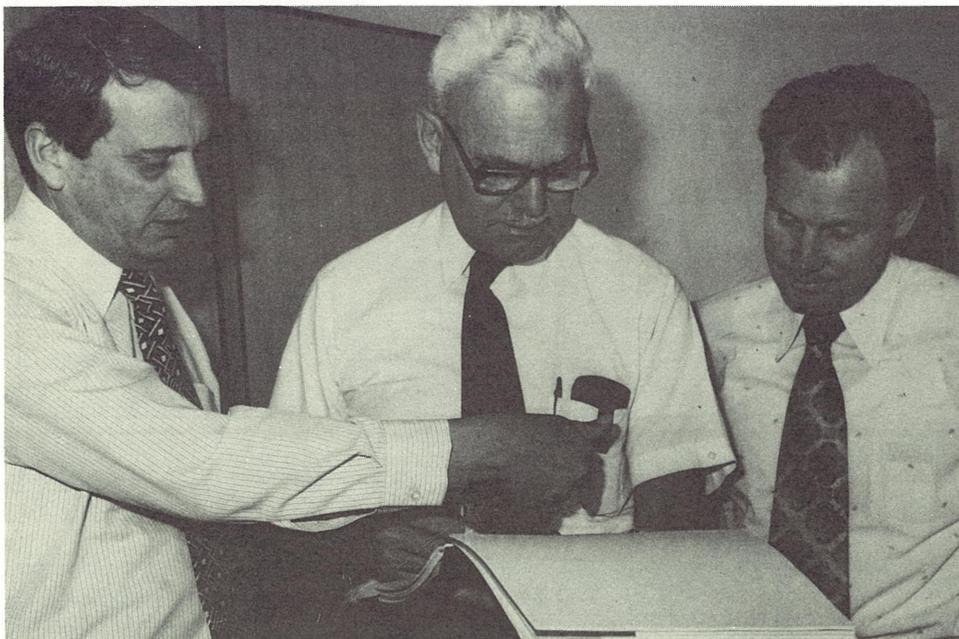
In addition to the Region's size and ecological diversity, it is also subject to a wide variety of human uses. These range from passive recreation ('reef-watching'), scientific and educational uses, through popular tourist activities, such as fishing and shell collecting, to providing a livelihood for commercial fishermen and charter boat operators. There are a number of major tourist resorts established on or adjacent to the Reef.

The traditional 'national park' concept is not sufficiently flexible to accommodate many of these activities. A broader approach has been developed for the Great Barrier Reef Region which recognises the diversity of use. The Act provides a planning process and management priorities designed to regulate activities within the Marine Park so as to ensure the conservation of the Reef while allowing reasonable use of the Region. Activities which exploit the natural resources of the Region may be regulated, as necessary, to minimise any destructive impacts on the Reef. Some areas will be reserved for public enjoyment, some for scientific study and some retained in their natural state as 'wilderness' areas.

The Authority is committed to the protection of the Reef as part of the world's heritage for present and future generations.

Membership of the Authority

Dr D. F. McMichael, Commonwealth Director of Environment, was appointed as Acting Chairman of the Authority for one year from 1 July 1976. There are two part-time members: Sir Charles Barton, OBE, ED, then Co-ordinator-General of Public Works for



(L. to R.) The Acting Chairman of the Authority,
Dr D. F. McMichael, and part-time members,
Sir Charles Barton and Dr J. T. Baker.

Photo: Mackay Mercury

Queensland and now Chairman of the Port of Brisbane Authority, nominated by the Queensland Government, was appointed for a period of two years from 1 July 1976 to 30 June 1978; and Dr J. T. Baker, Director, Roche Research Institute of Marine Pharmacology, nominated by the Commonwealth Government, was appointed for three years, from 1 July 1976 to 30 June 1979.

The Authority met six times during 1976-77 and held most of its meetings at centres on the Queensland coast. Details are given in Appendix A, page 20.

Staff At its inception the Authority had no permanent staff and was serviced by officers of the Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development. The first permanent staff member, the Executive Officer, was appointed in September 1976.

By the end of 1976-77 eight positions had been provided by the Public Service Board. This represents the nucleus of an organisation which is expected to grow to between thirty and fifty professional and administrative staff in the next few years.

Headquarters in Townsville Townsville has been chosen as the location for the Authority's permanent headquarters. It is a significant regional centre, accessible to all parts of the Reef and already an established centre for marine research. The Authority's planning and research activities are co-ordinated from Townsville. Secretariat and liaison staff are located in Canberra and will transfer progressively to Townsville during 1977-78.

THE GREAT BARRIER REEF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Joint Commonwealth-Queensland Advisory Body The Consultative Committee is established under the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act* 1975. At present it comprises eighteen members, nominated equally by the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments, and a representative of the Authority. Its functions are to advise the Commonwealth Minister for Environment, Housing and Community Development on matters related to the operation of the Act and to advise the Authority on matters related to the declaration and zoning of the Marine Park.

It provides a forum for contact and discussion between Commonwealth and State government agencies, and between the public and private sectors, various user groups and conservationists.

Wide-ranging membership The Act provides for a minimum of thirteen members. In the event, nineteen members were appointed. This increase enables the Committee to reflect more completely the wide range of conservation, community and government interests which led to the establishment of the Authority and which require continuing consideration during the planning process. The Committee draws upon the expertise of its members and their organisations and can invite expert advisers, as appropriate, to assist discussion of particular topics.

The members of the Committee, listed in Appendix B, page 21, were appointed on 22 September 1976 for a period of three years, and met five times during 1976-77. The Act requires that the Committee meet at least once per annum.

DIRECT PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Legislative requirements Widespread public interest in the Reef, coupled with the varied uses made of the Region, led to inclusion in the legislation of a statutory two-stage public participation process.

Following declaration of a part of the Marine Park, by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Authority, public notices must be placed in the national

press advertising the Authority's intention to prepare zoning plans and calling for public submissions. All comments are considered and appropriate information and suggestions included in the draft zoning plan. Public notice is given again and the draft zoning plan is made available for further discussion and comment. On each occasion a minimum period of one month is required for public consideration.

Only after this process of consultation has been carried out can the Authority recommend zoning plans to the Minister for his review, approval and subsequent tabling in the Federal Parliament.

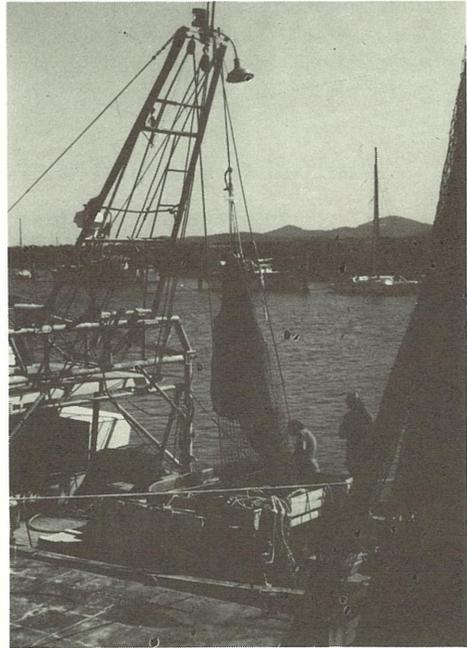
Authority's commitment to participation The Authority is committed to ensuring that people who will be directly affected by the plan and interested members of the general public throughout Australia can contribute to the development of zoning and management plans. Accordingly, the Authority has endorsed a program of public involvement far in excess of the statutory minimum.

The following sections deal in more detail with the actual planning and participation process that has been adopted for the declaration and zoning of the first part of the Marine Park.



Towed on a 'manta board', a snorkelling diver conducts an underwater survey.

Photo: GBRMPA



Mending the nets — prawn trawler at Gladstone Wharf.

Photo: GBRMPA

From concept to reality – the planning process

DECLARATION

A long-term process Declaration precedes the development of detailed zoning and management plans and the long-term administration of park areas. Regulations will provide for the protection and preservation of the Marine Park and will give effect to zoning plans.

Areas will be declared by the Governor-General, on the basis of a report and recommendations prepared by the Authority. In view of the need to ensure adequate public involvement in the planning process and sufficiently thorough investigation of biological aspects and human uses of the Region, the Authority has decided to declare parts of the Marine Park progressively.

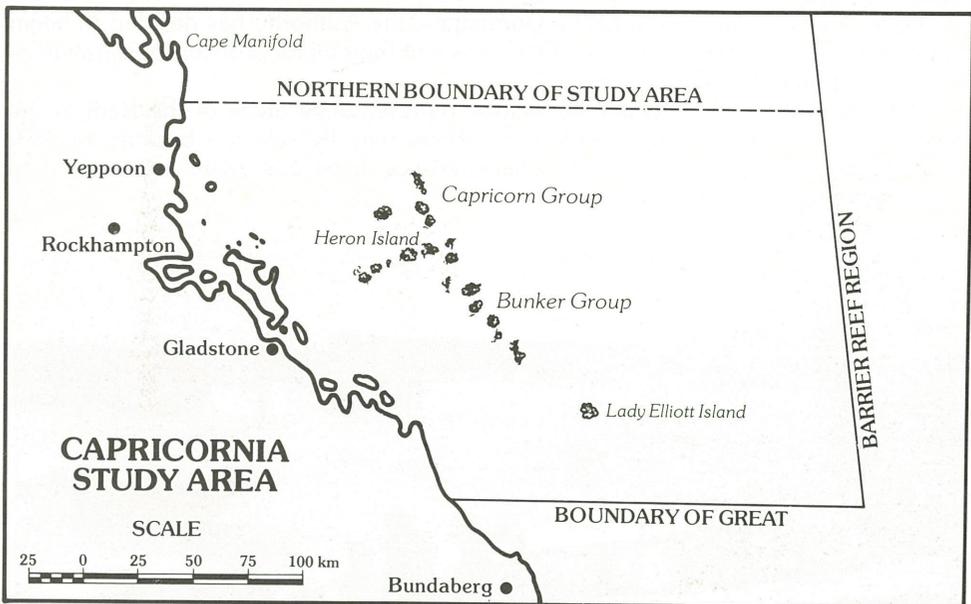


Figure 2

The Capricornia Section of the Marine Park One of the Authority's first tasks was to conduct an overview study of many of the current uses of the Region. Subsequently, the Authority decided to make an intensive investigation of an area, see Figure 2, which includes the Capricorn and Bunker groups of reefs and Lady Elliott Island, hereafter referred to as 'the Capricornia area', with a view to declaring all or part of this area towards the end of 1977 as the first part of the Marine Park. The Authority's jurisdiction commences at low water mark on the Queensland mainland and islands within the Region. Within the Capricornia area, Lady Elliott and North Reef Islands are Commonwealth owned.

Distinctive characteristics of the Capricornia area The reefs and shoals of this area form a distinct geographical unit. There are several habitable coral cays – islands composed of coral sand and rubble, often densely vegetated –

which provide a base for intensive recreational, tourist and scientific research use. Parts of this coral reef ecosystem are important breeding areas which are vital to the maintenance of world populations of several species of turtles and birds.

The Capricornia area is the most accessible part of the Reef for visitors from southern capitals and overseas. Local use by inhabitants of Bundaberg, Gladstone and Rockhampton is becoming increasingly heavy. These coastal centres benefit economically from the recreational and commercial uses of the reefs and surrounding waters.

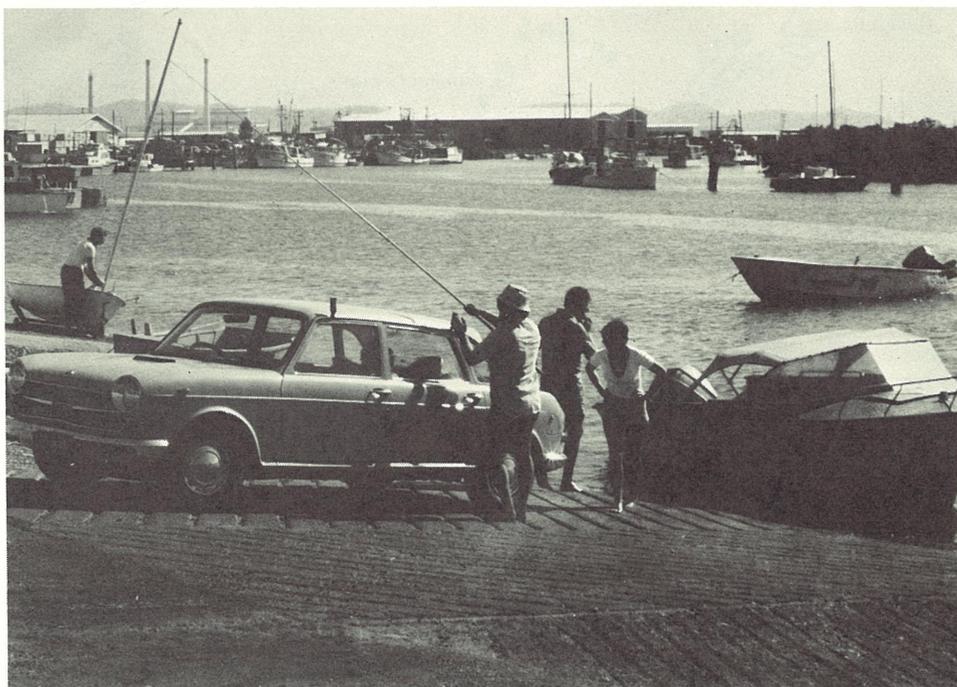
Damage to some of the distinctive characteristics of the area, resulting from over-use or inappropriate uses, has been detectable for some time. Research conducted by the Heron and One Tree Island Research Stations is enabling some of these deleterious impacts to be monitored.

Other priorities for declaration

Cairns is a focal point for visitors to northern parts of the Reef. Approximately 180 000 people enjoy reef walking, snorkelling, diving and coral viewing each year at Green Island, a coral cay within easy reach of Cairns by motor launch. Lizard Island, off Cooktown, apart from having a research station now has a tourist resort, and use of this area will undoubtedly increase. This island and areas further north are relatively inaccessible, retaining many wilderness characteristics.

On the advice of the Consultative Committee, the Authority has decided to begin preliminary investigation of the area off Cairns and Innisfail for probable declaration as the second part of the Marine Park.

It is the Authority's intention to include representative areas of the Reef in the Marine Park at the earliest possible date. Areas may be selected because of their aesthetic value, popularity, scientific characteristics or because they are in need of immediate protection from deleterious uses.



Recreational fishing is one of the uses of the Reef which the Authority is taking into account in planning the Marine Park.

Photo: GBRMPA

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public involvement in declaring the Capricornia Section of the Marine Park

When the Authority decided to look closely at the Capricornia area it also endorsed a broad approach to public participation in the planning process. With the assistance, understanding and commitment of local reef-users and an educated appreciation of the Reef by interstate visitors it will be easier to achieve workable zoning and management plans.

In June 1977 the Authority engaged Ms Susan Young, of the Sydney-based planning firm MSJ Keys Young, to advise it on the development of public participation procedures.

Although there is no statutory requirement for public involvement prior to declaration of an area, the Authority believes that there should be an opportunity for public participation at this stage. It was felt that this would generate useful information, raise community awareness of the Authority's functions and objectives, and enable the public to be genuinely involved at the earliest and perhaps most critical stage.

On 4 June 1977 the Authority placed an advertisement in newspapers circulating in Rockhampton, Gladstone and Bundaberg as well as those circulating throughout all Australian States. The Authority called for information about the study area which would assist the selection of the area to be declared. Submissions contributed much valuable information and there was general support for some planning measures to ensure the continued viability of recreational and commercial uses of the area. Responses were received from local users and from nationally based conservation and commercial organisations with interests in the Region as a whole. A list of all respondents will be found in Appendix C, page 22.

An intensive program of personal discussions is planned to take place in Bundaberg, Gladstone and Rockhampton during 1977-78. There will also be meetings in Brisbane and southern capitals.

Discussion groups

In February, following a routine business meeting in Rockhampton, Authority members and staff met with representatives of local amateur and commercial reef-user groups for informal discussions.



Visitors exploring the reef-flat
at low tide — Heron Island.

Photo: Queensland Government Tourist Bureau

In March, the Authority and Consultative Committee experienced a 'tourist's eye view' of the Reef when they visited Heron Island and adjacent reefs and cays. They had discussions with management and staff of both the Heron Island resort and the Heron Island Research Station which enabled them to appreciate the fundamental role that both these bodies can play in educating visitors to the islands and reefs.

Detailed investigations of the Capricornia area

In preparing its report to the Minister, recommending declaration of a precise area, the Authority will be taking account of public submissions, opinions expressed at discussions, the results of co-operative surveys and research, and information and advice from members of the Consultative Committee.

Information about selected uses of the Capricornia area was gathered by Ms Alison Domm, a consultant marine biologist who had lived and researched on the Reef for several years. She surveyed most recreational and some commercial uses of the area between November 1976 and March 1977, combining questionnaire and individual interview techniques.

The Great Barrier Reef Committee, drawing together expert comment from its diverse scientific membership, submitted detailed information and proposals for the area. Representatives of the Committee together with representatives of the University of Queensland constitute the Heron Island Research Station Board which is responsible for the management of the Research Station.

The Authority has received generous assistance from several Queensland State departments and organisations.

A large part of Heron Island, together with Fairfax, Lady Musgrave and Hoskyn Islands, are declared as terrestrial National Parks under Queensland legislation. The Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service has been conducting research on turtles and sea-birds for several years. The assistance of its officers is gratefully acknowledged.

The Fisheries Division, Commonwealth Department of Primary Industry, and the Queensland Fisheries Service have agreed to conduct a joint survey of commercial fisheries in the area, on behalf of the Authority.

The Authority sought the Consultative Committee's advice on the declaration of the Capricornia area. In addition to the submissions and information mentioned specifically above, all members discussed the extent of the area to be recommended for declaration. Information about areas of oil prospectivity, statistics of coastal shipping and boat ownership were provided to the Authority.

The foregoing section indicates the Authority's comprehensive approach to what is, in fact, just the first stage in the planning process.

ZONING THE MARINE PARK

A flexible process

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975 does not specify how many different types of zones there may be or what particular activities are regarded as compatible or incompatible. The absence of a preconceived zoning system allows the Authority, in consultation with the users themselves, to formulate options, explore the consequences of feasible alternatives and generate balanced patterns of use. It will be a learning experience for all concerned.

It seems probable that zoning and management strategies applied to the Capricornia Section of the Marine Park will be flexible. Discussions with user groups indicate that there is widespread support for setting aside some areas for 'non-extractive' (passive) recreation and some for research, whilst managing the majority of Reef areas by rotational zoning or 'spelling' (periodic resting of areas). Some amateur and commercial users are already operating their own spelling programs, indicating their awareness of the need to conserve a limited resource.

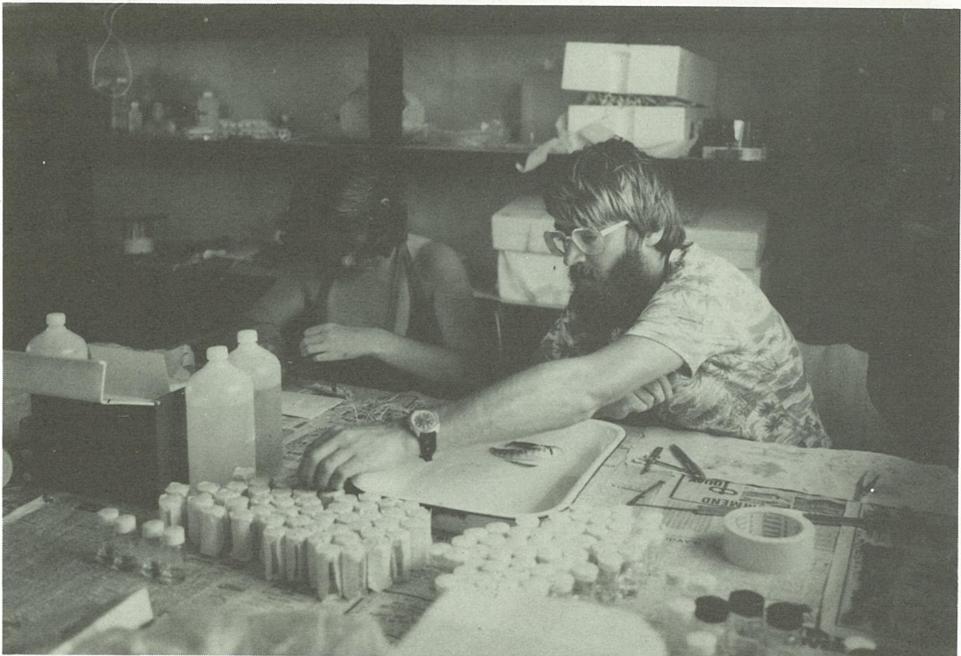
When the complexity and interrelatedness of the ecosystems are better understood, and the long-term impacts of human intervention have been identified and monitored, more precise management plans will be feasible.

Special zones The term 'special zone' is used in the Act to indicate that the Authority has decided that the area in question has the special characteristics of a national park or nature reserve. For such zones management passes to the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, in co-operation where necessary with Queensland Government authorities. Some areas of exceptional aesthetic or wilderness value, or the habitats of rare and endangered species, could become special zones.

RESEARCH AND INVESTIGATIONS

Research priorities The Authority is concerned with three broad areas of research:

- studies of marine organisms and ecosystems, reef geomorphology, hydrology and other aspects of the biological and physical environment; a sound, basic understanding of what constitutes the Reef and how it has evolved is a prerequisite to the development and monitoring of the Authority's zoning and management plans;
- knowledge of the impact of human uses on the biological and physical environment, leading to identification of the levels of use at which critical damage begins to occur;
- demographic, sociological and economic studies which will enable the Authority to anticipate changing patterns and intensities of use and adjust its planning accordingly.



Scientists working in the laboratory of the Australian Museum's Lizard Island Research Station. The Authority has provided funds to assist research at the station.

Photo: Lizard Island Research Station

Support for Research Stations

During 1976-77

the Authority provided financial support, totalling \$5000, for some specific research projects being undertaken at the Lizard Island, One Tree Island and Heron Island Research Stations. At Lizard Island research is being funded on algae, bacteria and plankton associated with coral reefs. In addition, some studies on fish reproduction and the early larval stages of corals are being assisted. At Heron Island the funds will help in studies of other reef organisms such as shrimps and molluscs, also some geological survey work. At One Tree Island assistance has been provided for a survey of species composition of reef fish populations.

The Authority has approved continuation of support for research at these stations during 1977-78.

Co-operative research with the Queensland Fisheries Service

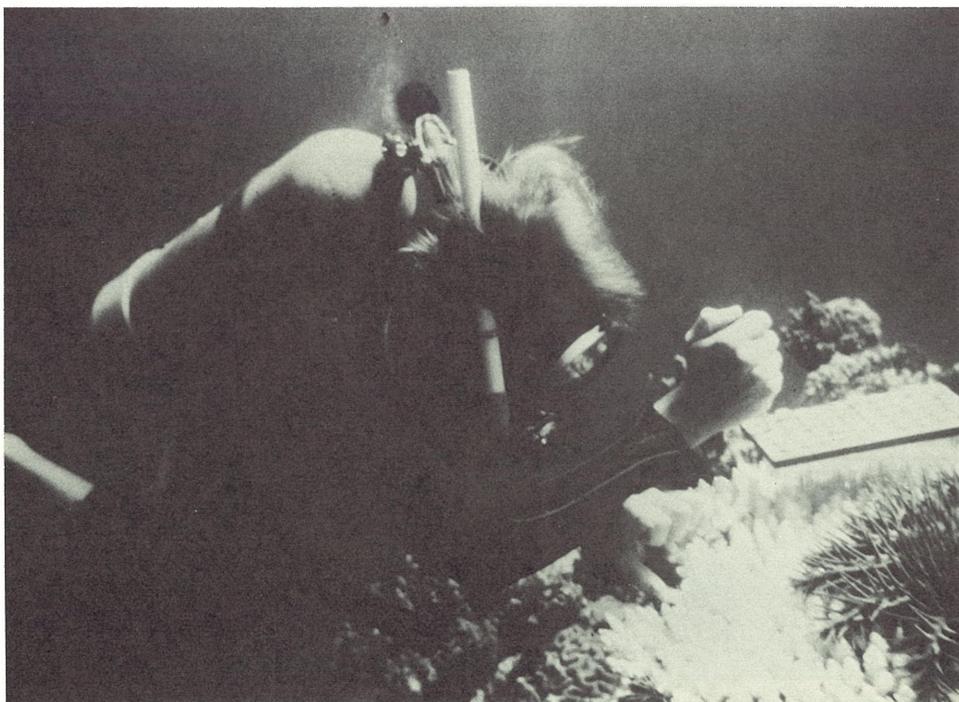
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Crown of thorns Starfish has spread progressively further southwards on the Great Barrier Reef since the first reports of its presence at Green Island in 1962. It was reported from the Swain Reefs at the south of the Great Barrier Reef in 1974 and 1975. Officers of the Queensland Fisheries Service have been involved in monitoring populations of the Crown of thorns Starfish since 1966.

The Authority has approved support totalling \$8000 for two studies to be undertaken in co-operation with officers of the Queensland Fisheries Service.

The first study will monitor Starfish population levels in the Swain Reefs and gather other biological and morphological information which will establish a record of the characteristics of the reefs of the area.

The second study will investigate Wheeler Reef, a small but rich and diverse reef close to Townsville which does not seem to have carried large populations of Crown of thorns Starfish during the past decade. The study will check for the presence of the Starfish and will make a comparative evaluation of reef survey methods.



A scientist prepares to take a tissue sample from a Crown of thorns Starfish.

Photo: GBRMPA

Growth and decay of coral reefs Research carried out by the Bureau of Mineral Resources has led to the view that coral reefs undergo a cycle of youth, maturity and senility. It has been suggested that they are more vulnerable to natural or human interference during youth and senility. The Authority has approved financial assistance of \$4000 to the Bureau of Mineral Resources to enable further research on this hypothesis. This project is of international interest and could have fundamental relevance for management strategies. A joint Bureau of Mineral Resources-Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority study team will carry out surveys in the Capricorn and Bunker groups of reefs early in 1977-78.

PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM

Sharing information As the Authority accumulates data, conducts research and investigations, receives submissions and builds up its contacts within local groups it acquires a responsibility to share this information with people who know, use or care about the Reef.

There is widespread support for the concept of a Marine Park in the Great Barrier Reef Region. However, it is evident from views expressed at public meetings and in individual discussions that many potentially damaging activities are occurring through ignorance of the fragility of coral reef ecosystems or, for instance, of the life cycles of certain species of fish. While some resort operators and commercial aquaria make an effort to explain the intricacies of the Reef to visitors the Authority feels that many tourists do not appreciate the corals and other marine life fully. The Authority will promote the circulation of existing information that is not being widely disseminated to reef-users.

With the assistance of interpretive material and locally based officers, the Authority believes that education can reduce the necessary level of surveillance in the Marine Park to manageable proportions.

Information dissemination The Authority has published a leaflet which gives details of the Act, the planning process and an outline of the ways in which the public can become involved. This has been widely circulated through information and environment centres, tourist offices, conservation organisations, fishermen's organisations, charter boat operators and tourists resorts. A second leaflet, dealing in more detail with the Marine Park concept and derived from the questions most commonly asked of the Authority, is being circulated through the same channels.

Articles about the Authority's objectives and planning approach have been placed in publications distributed to fishermen, divers and tourist promotion officers. The Consultative Committee is kept closely informed of the Authority's progress and its members are responsible for disseminating this information within the organisations and government bodies which they represent. Local press and radio stations have taken a keen interest in the Authority's local discussions and planning proposals and many valuable contacts have been established.

Reflections The Authority has decided to publish a quarterly newsletter, entitled *Reflections*. This will afford a forum for discussion of reef issues of general interest. It will enable the Authority to canvass public reaction to planning approaches and will encourage alternative views to be aired on contentious issues. It will help to keep the community aware of current aspects of marine research. The first issue is expected to be published early in 1977-78.

Bibliography of the Great Barrier Reef Dr E. Frankel, of the University of Sydney, is preparing a bibliography containing over 5000 references on the Great Barrier Reef, as a consultant to the Authority. The bibliography will be

published early in 1977-78 and is sure to become a vital resource document for anyone interested in the Reef. In addition to scientific material it includes references to popular works, novels and films.

Report on recreational uses of the Reef

Ms Alison

Domm's survey of recreational uses of the Reef, referred to earlier on page 10, will provide useful basic information on the attitudes of various user groups to the Reef and its management. As appropriate, data from the survey will be made available to the public to assist them in understanding the views of the groups who participated in the survey. Confidentiality will, of course, be respected.

Local information centres

During the year, staff

and Authority members have spent as much time as possible in local centres, for informal meetings, talking to organisations and developing public participation procedures.

The Authority expects to be able to staff local 'shopfront' offices during the period when detailed zoning plans are being worked out. These will provide an informal setting, encouraging a free exchange of views between the public and the planners.

LIAISON WITH COMMONWEALTH AND QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Australian Heritage Commission

The Authority

met with Mr D. Yencken, Chairman, Australian Heritage Commission, on 8 December 1976. The Commission is responsible for 'listing' man-made or natural sites that warrant protection as part of Australia's national heritage. After sites have been listed, further investigations and public comment determine which of them should be placed on the Register of the National Estate. 'Listing' provides the full interim protection of the *Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975*, prior to registration. The Act constrains Commonwealth Government Ministers and departments from taking any actions that



Charonia tritonis, the triton or trumpet shell. The mollusc which inhabits this shell is one of the known predators of the Crown of thorns Starfish. Regulations under the Queensland Fisheries Act and the Continental Shelf (Living Natural Resources) Act prohibit the collection of the triton in Australian waters as a precautionary measure.

Photo: Australian National Travel Association

would significantly affect those places registered, or listed, as part of the National Estate without consulting the Commission.

The Authority has nominated all coral reefs within the Great Barrier Reef Region for interim listing by the Heritage Commission. This proposal, if accepted by the Commission, will afford some degree of protection to the reefs in the Region prior to their inclusion in the Marine Park.

Historic shipwrecks

Since the days of Captain Cook the Reef has claimed many vessels. Some of these, considered to be of historic significance, can now be given the protection of the *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1977*. The Authority maintains close liaison with the Department of Administrative Services which is responsible for the declaration of historic shipwreck sites.

Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service

Professor J. D. Ovington, Director, Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, attended the Authority's meeting on 8 December 1976 for discussion of the close relationship required between the two organisations regarding declaration of the Park. The Act specifies that 'special zones' shall, after zoning, become the responsibility of the Service, which prepares management plans for them and assumes full management responsibility.

Statutory responsibility for zoning rests with the Authority but close liaison with the Service during the development of zoning plans will ensure compatible management of adjacent zones. Professor Ovington is a member of the Great Barrier Reef Consultative Committee.

Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service

Dr G. Saunders, Director, Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service, met with the Authority on 11 November 1976. The Queensland Service is responsible for National Parks on many islands within the Region. Recognising the interdependence of islands and reefs and the need for compatible zoning, management and interpretive arrangements, a close working relationship has been established. Dr Saunders is a member of the Consultative Committee.

Since the Authority has not declared any parts of the Marine Park yet and consequently does not have its own regulations or inspectors, it has actively supported existing measures to protect the Reef.

The Minister expressed his concern to the Queensland Minister for Fisheries over a proposal to spear-fish commercially for coral trout and crayfish. Prohibitions of commercial spear-fishing of these species were quickly brought into force by both the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments.

The Authority shares widespread concern for the depredations of Taiwanese clam-fishermen, whose technique of stripping reefs of two species of slow-maturing giant clams is almost certainly causing serious disruption of reef-flat ecosystems. It has encouraged the fullest possible policing of existing prohibitions on the taking of giant clams.

CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

Third International Coral Reef Symposium

Dr Baker represented the Authority at this Symposium, held in Miami, Florida, between 22 and 26 May 1977, and presented a paper on the Authority's functions and approach to Reef conservation.

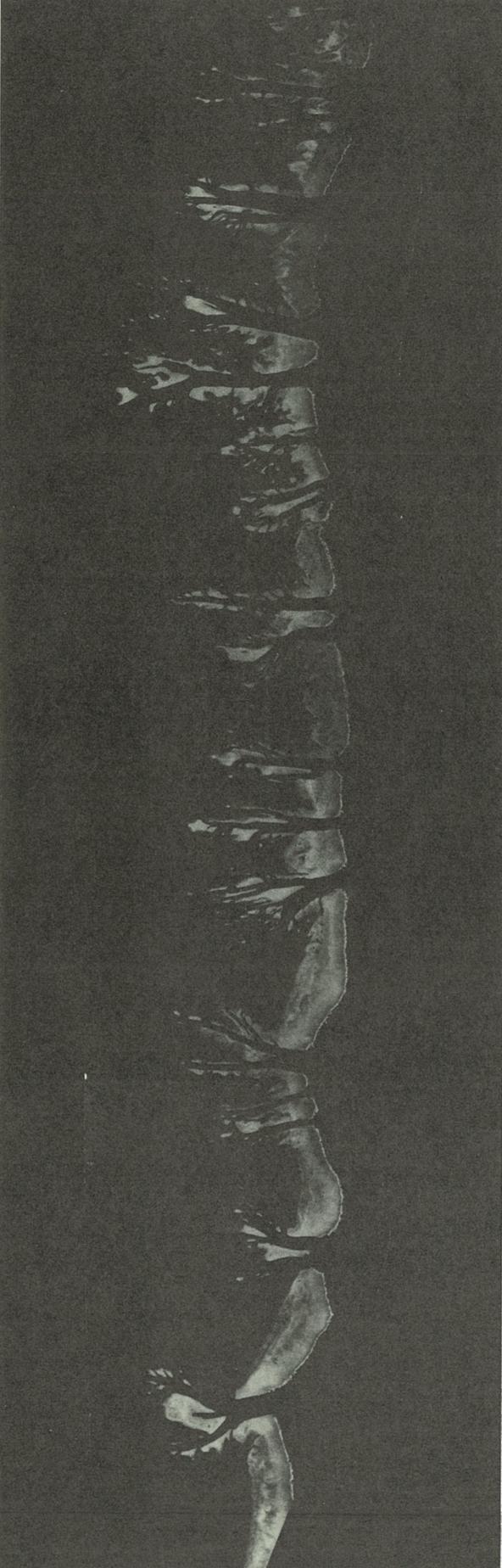
The Symposium attracted over five hundred coral reef scientists from all over the world. Dr Patricia Mather, member of the Consultative Committee, and a dozen other Australian scientists attended.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park concept evoked considerable enthusiasm and its realisation will be watched with world-wide interest. Contacts established at the Symposium will form the basis of continuing relationships between the Authority and similar organisations overseas.

Workshop on Coastal Marine Protection in Australia

During June 1977, the Acting Chairman and Executive Officer attended a workshop conducted by the Macquarie University Environmental Studies Program on approaches to the development of an integrated system of marine parks and reserves in Australian waters. The workshop was part of a consultancy being undertaken by the Environmental Studies Program for the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Financial Statement



Taken from a high altitude, this photograph shows a 60 kilometre stretch of reefs in a remote northern part of the Great Barrier Reef, east of Cape York.

Photo: J. E. N. Veron

GREAT BARRIER REEF MARINE PARK AUTHORITY

Statement of Receipts and Payments for the period 22 July 1976 to 30 June 1977

| | 1976-77 \$ |
|--|---------------|
| Cash at bank and on hand 22.7.76 | Nil |
| RECEIPTS | |
| Appropriation from the Commonwealth Government | 150 000 |
| PAYMENTS | |
| Salaries and payments in the nature of salaries | 57 464 |
| Chairman and part-time members — remuneration and allowances* | 11 794 |
| Travel and subsistence | 9 136 |
| Consultative Committee fees and expenses | 9 522 |
| Superannuation — employer's contribution‡ | 14 366 |
| Office requisites and stationery | 1 948 |
| Postage, telephone and telegrams | 500 |
| Office rental and cleaning | 4 423 |
| Publicity and advertising | 3 122 |
| Research and investigations | 14 500 |
| Capital expenditure | |
| — Furniture and fittings | 1 111 |
| — Plant, vehicles and equipment | 7 005 |
| Other expenses | |
| — Incidentals | 1 091 |
| — Reimbursement to Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development for administrative costs | 5 746 |
| | 141 728 |
| Cash at bank and on hand 30.6.77 | 8 272 |
| | \$150 000 |

* The Director of Environment, Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development, is acting as Chairman of the Authority until a full-time Chairman is appointed. Thus no remuneration has been paid.

‡ This payment was made (at the suggestion of the Department of Finance) to ensure full disclosure of all costs, direct and indirect, related to the operations of the Authority.

D. F. McMichael
Acting Chairman

R. T. Williams
Executive Officer

GREAT BARRIER REEF MARINE PARK AUTHORITY

Statement of Capital Assets (at cost) as at 30 June 1977

| | 1976-77 |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| | \$ |
| ASSETS | |
| Plant, motor vehicles and equipment | 7005 |
| Furniture and fittings | 1111 |
| | <hr/> |
| | \$8116 |
| | <hr/> |

D. F. McMichael
Acting Chairman

R. T. Williams
Executive Officer

Appendixes

APPENDIX A

GREAT BARRIER REEF MARINE PARK AUTHORITY

Meetings during 1976-77

1. 10 August 1976 Brisbane. Inaugural Meeting, opened by the Minister.
2. 24 September 1976 Townsville. Public reception.
3. 11 November 1976 Brisbane. Discussions with Dr G. Saunders, Director, Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service.
4. 8 December 1976 Canberra. Discussions with Mr D. Yencken, Chairman, Australian Heritage Commission, and Professor J. D. Ovington, Director, Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service.
5. 2-3 February 1977 Rockhampton. Public discussion group.
6. 28 March 1977 Heron Island, Capricornia area. Discussions with Resort and Research Station managements. Joint meeting with Great Barrier Reef Consultative Committee.

Staff of the Authority

During 1976-77 the following officers worked either full or part time for the Authority:

Rod Williams (Executive Officer)
Jane Carter
Pat Craig
Grant Hawley
Richard Kenchington

Colin Roberts
Anne Tarran
Anne Wallace
Jan Woodham
Simon Woodley

APPENDIX B

GREAT BARRIER REEF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Membership

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Mr L. F. Backen | Commonwealth Department of National Resources |
| Mr J. D. Ballingall | Queensland Commercial Fishermen's State Council |
| Mr A. G. Bollen | Commonwealth Department of Primary Industry |
| Mr J. F. Brown (Elected Chairman) | Queensland Confederation of Industry |
| Dr D. Connell | Australian Conservation Foundation |
| Mr P. B. Eccles | Commonwealth Department of Transport |
| Mr P. Ellis | Queensland Co-ordinator-General's Department |
| Dr M. Gilmartin | Australian Institute of Marine Science |
| Mr E. Hegerl | Queensland Conservation Council |
| Mr J. H. Izatt | Queensland Game Fishing Association |
| Mr J. P. Killoran | Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement and Fisheries |
| Dr P. Mather | Great Barrier Reef Committee |
| Prof. J. D. Ovington | Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service |
| Mr A. J. Peel | Queensland Department of Harbours and Marine |
| Dr G. W. Saunders | Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service |
| Prof. K. Stark | James Cook University of North Queensland |
| Mr J. Wilson | Queensland Department of Tourist Services |
| Mr J. T. Woods | Queensland Department of Mines |

Dr D. F. McMichael, the Acting Chairman, is the Authority's nominee on the Consultative Committee.

Meetings during 1976-77

| | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| 1. 23 September 1976 | Brisbane |
| 2. 24 November 1976 | Brisbane |
| 3. 10 March 1977 | Brisbane |
| 4. 29 March 1977 | Heron Island |
| 5. 15 June 1977 | Brisbane |

APPENDIX C

Submissions regarding declaration of the Capricornia Section of the Marine Park were received from the following individuals and organisations:

- Mr P. Anderson, Brisbane
- Australian Conservation Foundation
- Australian Oil and Gas Corporation Ltd
- Australian Petroleum Exploration Association Ltd
- Australian Underwater Federation (Queensland Branch)
- Bundaberg Regional Tourist Authority
- Bundaberg Skindivers Club
- Calliope Shire Council
- Mr D. Eban, Redcliffe, Queensland
- Mr C. Fernandes, Manly West, Queensland
- Mr S. Floris, Booval, Queensland
- Fraser Island Defenders Organisation
- Gladstone Civic Beautification Council
- Gladstone Skindiving Club
- Great Barrier Reef Committee
- Mr W. Hamilton, Brisbane
- Mr B. Hose, Rockhampton
- Mr J. Lambert, Ashgrove, Queensland
- Marine Life Aquariums Pty Ltd, Liverpool, N.S.W.
- Mount Larcom Chamber of Commerce
- Mr J. Park, Brisbane
- Queensland Amateur Fishing Council
- Queensland Commercial Fishermen's Organisation (Bundaberg Branch)
- Queensland Fish Board
- Mr A. Simpson, Moura, Queensland
- Mr N. Springell, Brisbane
- Dr J. Springhall, Brisbane
- Underwater Adventurers Club, Brisbane
- Wide Bay-Burnett Conservation Council

In addition, a joint submission entitled 'The Commercial Fishing Industry of the Capricorn-Bunker Area — Resources; Legislation and Management; Associated Infrastructure' was prepared by:

- Fisheries Division, Department of Primary Industry, Canberra
- Queensland Fisheries Service, Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement and Fisheries, Brisbane, in co-operation with
- Queensland Commercial Fishermen's Organisation, Brisbane



Shrimp Reef — a 'false colour' satellite image
The different colours relate to water depth and
the nature of the sea bed, such as coral,
sand or algae.
Photo: R. Kenchington

RECOMMENDED RETAIL PRICE \$1.55