



Australian Government

**Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority**

Summary: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority acknowledges the continuing sea country management and custodianship of the Great Barrier Reef by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners whose rich cultures, heritage values, enduring connections and shared efforts protect the Reef for future generations.

The Authority and the Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee are proud to present the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy* for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

This multi-faceted plan outlines how the Authority can work with Traditional Owners to help keep the Indigenous heritage values of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park strong, safe and healthy.

Developed with the guidance and expertise of the Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee and the involvement of many Traditional Owner groups; this strategy seeks to increase understanding, protection and promotion of Reef Indigenous heritage values. It also aims to contribute towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aspirations for sea country and heritage management into the future.

In developing and implementing this strategy, the Authority:

1. Recognises a broad definition of Indigenous heritage, which includes everything on sea country
2. Engages respectfully with Traditional Owners on Indigenous heritage matters
3. Recognises that all sea country activities contribute to Indigenous heritage management
4. Respects that Traditional Owners own and control Indigenous heritage information
5. Holds the minimum Indigenous knowledge necessary for management purposes
6. Supports increasing co-management.

This brochure contains a summary of the strategy's framework and actions. Please find the full version at www.gbrmpa.gov.au.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy Overview

VALUES

Indigenous heritage includes everything in sea country.

It includes tangible and intangible expressions of Traditional Owners' relationships with country, people, beliefs, knowledge, law, language, symbols, ways of living, sea, land and objects. These all arise from Indigenous spirituality, including heritage places (sites) and/or values including natural values, Indigenous values and historic values.

Indigenous heritage also connects with the social and economic values of the Reef.

COMPONENTS

Environment

Natural heritage (ecosystem and biodiversity) components

Places

Sacred sites, sites of particular significance and places important for cultural tradition

Technologies

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander structures, technology, tools and archaeology

Culture

Stories, songlines, totems and languages

Cultural practices, observances, customs and lore

Traditional management and use

History

Historic heritage components.

THREATS

Conditions and trends

Climate change
Coral bleaching
Poor water quality
Coastal development
Fishing impacts
Crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks.

Direct use impacts

Fishing (legal and illegal)
Tourism
Recreation
Research
Environmental works
Anchoring.

Loss of Indigenous knowledge

Passing of Elders
Difficulty exercising cultural rights and responsibilities
Difficulty transferring knowledge to younger generations.

Lack of on-ground management capacity

Limited access to marine areas
Limited resources for protection and rehabilitation activities
Funding, programs and continuity difficult to maintain.

Limited consideration of Indigenous heritage in management of the Reef

Management agencies lack information on heritage
Lack of use of Indigenous knowledge in decisions

Poor community awareness and appreciation.

No peak body

Difficult to collaboratively negotiate or conduct business.

VISION

Indigenous heritage values of the Great Barrier Reef are kept strong, safe and healthy for past, present and future generations

OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

1. Keep heritage strong

Respect, recognise and promote the connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with the Reef

- Empower Traditional Owners through our governance and advisory structures
- Respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in all our business
- Promote understanding of Indigenous heritage values.

2. Keep heritage safe

Protect Indigenous heritage values through Authority processes

- Incorporate Indigenous heritage information into our processes
- Identify and protect Indigenous heritage in policy and planning
- Protect Indigenous heritage through compliance
- Integrate Traditional Owner knowledge and input into our environmental assessment and permitting process.

3. Keep heritage healthy

Partner with Traditional Owners and others in Reef management

- Support Traditional Owners to identify, assess, map and store knowledge of their heritage values
- Partner with Traditional Owners to manage the Reef through shared decision-making, agreements and capacity building
- Facilitate partnerships between Traditional Owners and other Reef managers
- Support social and economic outcomes through programs and partnerships
- Monitor, evaluate and report on the health of Indigenous heritage in the Reef.

HOW THE STRATEGY DEVELOPED:

Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2014 identifies Indigenous heritage is under pressure

Authority commits to developing an Indigenous Heritage Strategy under the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan

Review of legislation and policy commitments

Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee provides advice on development and engagement

Initial engagement of over 80 Traditional Owners across 20 Traditional Owner groups to identify common needs and aspirations

Development of vision, outcomes, objectives and actions

Marine Park Authority Board releases draft for public consultation February 2018 on recommendation from the Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee

Public consultation invites 70 Reef Traditional Owner groups, management agencies and general public to input on the draft strategy; receiving 37 submissions – the majority from Traditional Owners

Outcome 1: Keep heritage strong

Respect, recognise and promote the connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with the Reef

Objectives and actions	
O1.1	Empower Traditional Owners through our governance and advisory structures
A1.1.1	Maintain and strengthen effective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on governance and advisory forums, including the Marine Park Authority.
O1.2	Respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in all our business
A1.2.1	Implement the Authority's <i>Reconciliation Action Plan</i> to increase cultural competency and actively contribute to reconciliation within the Authority and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
A1.2.2	Acknowledge Traditional Owners and consider their interests in plans, policies and forums.
A1.2.3	Identify culturally appropriate contacts and develop engagement protocols for each Traditional Owner estate within the Marine Park.
O1.3	Promote understanding of Indigenous heritage values
A1.3.1	Develop a communications package and plan to increase promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional use, connection to sea country and heritage values to the broader public and other users of the Reef.
A1.3.2	Integrate Indigenous heritage knowledge into Reef HQ Aquarium displays, activities and tours.
A1.3.3	Develop and implement educational modules for schools to promote understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sea country connection and culture.
A1.3.4	Finalise and implement modules for the Reef Discovery Course and incorporate into the Master Reef Guide certification to increase the cultural awareness of tourism operators.
A1.3.5	Encourage and support Traditional Owner-led sea country naming, signage and language initiatives through Authority programs.

Outcome 2: Keep heritage safe

Protect Indigenous heritage values through Authority processes

Objectives and actions	
O2.1	Incorporate Indigenous heritage information into our processes
A2.1.1	Develop and implement information sharing agreements and cultural protocols with Traditional Owner organisations to allow culturally appropriate access to traditional knowledge for planning and management.
A2.1.2	Develop geospatial data layer of Indigenous heritage value components for internal, external and Traditional Owner use.
A2.1.3	Develop and implement a cultural knowledge management system for managing information shared with the Authority.
O2.2	Identify and protect Indigenous heritage in policy and planning
A2.2.1	Investigate and trial use of planning tools to increase protection and management of culturally significant places (for example, TUMRAs, s39ZA arrangements and sea country plans).



Draft strategy is revised to incorporate input from public consultation



Marine Park Authority Board accepts the final strategy on recommendation from the Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee

We are here

Implementation of strategy in partnership with Traditional Owners



Review and improve the strategy into the future

Objectives and actions	
O2.3	Protect Indigenous heritage through compliance
A2.3.1	Continue to strengthen the compliance capability of the Authority and Traditional Owner partners.
A2.3.2	Incorporate surveillance of sites having Indigenous heritage value into compliance plans and patrols.
O2.4	Integrate Traditional Owner knowledge and input into our environmental assessment and permitting process
A2.4.1	Develop and implement place-specific assessment guidelines which outline and map Indigenous heritage and engagement protocols for specific Traditional Owner estates.
A2.4.2	Work with native title bodies to better explain the Authority's processes and increase the effectiveness of the native title notification system.
A2.4.3	Develop guidance and templates for applicants on expectations for Traditional Owner consultation, provision of information and the identification of avoidance and mitigation measures.

Outcome 3: Keep heritage healthy

Partner with Traditional Owners and others in Reef management

Objectives and actions	
O3.1	Support Traditional Owners to identify, assess, map and store knowledge on their heritage values
A3.1.1	Conduct an assessment of Indigenous heritage values through supporting Traditional Owner led identification, mapping, recording and storage of information.
O3.2	Partner with Traditional Owners to manage the Reef through shared decision-making, agreements and capacity building
A3.2.1	Expand and strengthen partnerships with Traditional Owners to increase co-management and heritage planning, including through the use of TUMRAs.
A3.2.2	Explore opportunities to support Traditional Owners in sea country planning to assist integrated planning and management of estates.
A3.2.3	Implement a small grants program to develop capacity of Traditional Owner groups and individuals in sea country management.
A3.2.4	Investigate two-way capacity building initiatives between the Authority and Indigenous organisations, such as through secondments and exchanges.
O3.3	Facilitate partnerships between Traditional Owners and other Reef managers
A3.3.1	Facilitate partnerships between Traditional Owners and other government agencies and the private sector to benefit marine park management.
A3.3.2	Increase awareness and support Traditional Owners to adopt technology to assist in sea country management and knowledge exchange.
A3.3.3	Encourage partnerships between local councils and Traditional Owners.
A3.3.4	Investigate options to increase researcher and commercial operator understanding, acknowledgement and respect for heritage, and engagement with Traditional Owners.
O3.4	Support social and economic outcomes through programs and partnerships
A3.4.1	Expand the use of Traditional Owner and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land and sea management organisations (for example, through service level agreements) to deliver environmental or heritage protection on the Reef.
A3.4.2	Review current programs and processes to improve benefits to Traditional Owners engaged in sea country management.
O3.5	Monitor, evaluate and report on the health of Indigenous heritage in the Reef
A3.5.1	Support the development of Indigenous heritage indicators and monitoring to assess condition over time through the Reef Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program.



Australian Government

**Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority**

Artwork © Zane Saunders photographed by Rob Richardson.
From public mural artwork installed at the Kuranda Village titled '*Bulmba Maminga*' *Love the country. Care for it.*

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
Email: info@gbrmpa.gov.au
Phone: (07) 4750 0700