

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Cairns Zoning Plan Review: Issues



Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

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ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority is seeking public comment to help review the Zoning Plans for the Cairns and Cormorant Pass Sections in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

All written comments (including comments made on the brochure mentioned below) will be considered during the review of the existing Zoning Plans and should be sent to the following address no later than 28 FEBRUARY 1989:

The Chairman
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
PO Box 1379
TOWNSVILLE QLD 4810

Based on the comments received, the Authority will prepare a new Zoning Plan for the Cairns Section (the Cormorant Pass Section will be incorporated into the Cairns Section).

The main purposes of this booklet are:

- . to briefly explain the existing Zoning Plan;
- . to summarise what we believe are the main issues in reviewing the Cairns Section;
- . to provide basic resource information as a common basis for representations; and
- . to outline the points you should consider when making a representation.

This booklet is intended to support the brochure 'Reviewing the Zoning Plan: Cairns'. The brochure has been designed to help users comment on the existing Zoning Plan by seeking answers to specific questions, and providing the existing Zoning Plan map for comments about specific locations.

You should read this booklet in conjunction with the existing Cairns Section and Cormorant Pass Section Zoning Plans (complete copies available at addresses listed below or refer to the Zoning Plan summary map on the brochure).

For further information on the Zoning Plan review, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, or Queensland Marine or National Parks, please contact one of the following offices:

- . Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
Great Barrier Reef Wonderland
1-37 Flinders Street East (PO Box 1379)
TOWNSVILLE QLD 4810 Telephone (077) 81 8811
- . Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

The Great Barrier Reef is the largest and richest system of coral reefs in the world. Recognised as one of the world's great natural heritage areas, it has been inscribed on the World Heritage List, and conserved for future generations through legislation. When the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act was passed in 1975, it was supported by all political parties in the Commonwealth Parliament.

The Act established the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and provided for the establishment of the Marine Park. The Authority is a planning and management agency with the goal of providing for the protection, wise use, appreciation and enjoyment of the Great Barrier Reef in perpetuity. The Authority aims to minimise interference in human activities and to achieve management of the Marine Park primarily through encouraging community understanding and co-operation with zoning, regulations and management practices.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is a multiple use park. That means that all reasonable uses are allowed to be undertaken within the Park, provided such uses are consistent with the conservation of the Great Barrier Reef. Taken individually, all present uses within the Great Barrier Reef Region may be reasonable at some levels. A level of use becomes unreasonable when it either exceeds the repair or replacement capacity of the Reef ecosystem or when it conflicts or interferes excessively with other uses.

In recent years, tourism and its associated industries, combined with a large and diverse fisheries industry, have increased the economic significance of the Great Barrier Reef to Queensland and Australia. The future of these industries, and of the Great Barrier Reef, depends significantly on the continuing careful management of the reef as a viable living system.

1.2 ZONING PLANS

The Zoning Plan is the main planning and management tool used by the Authority. Zoning plans provide for conservation of the resources of the Reef while allowing all reasonable uses to continue. Zoning plans describe the activities that may take place in each Section of the Marine Park and aim to separate conflicting uses. They also ensure that some areas of the Reef are set aside free from human use (except for limited scientific research).

1.3 DAY-TO-DAY MANAGEMENT

Day-to-day management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is conducted by Queensland agencies, subject to direction by the Authority. Management of the present Cairns and Cormorant Pass Sections is carried out principally by the

Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service (Q.NPWS). The Service is directly responsible for management of Queensland Marine Parks and island National Parks, including Green Island and Lizard Island.

Additional field management, particularly in fisheries matters, is undertaken by the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol (Q.BFP). The officers most people are likely to meet are field staff of Q.NPWS, although commercial fishermen and charter boat operators may meet officers of the Q.BFP.

1.4 DEVELOPMENT OF QUEENSLAND MARINE PARKS

The Commonwealth and Queensland Governments have agreed to complementarity in marine park declaration, zoning and management.

Associated with the Cairns Section of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is Queensland's Cairns Marine Park which covers tidal lands and tidal waters. This Marine Park, declared under the Queensland Marine Parks Act 1982, lies within or adjacent to the Cairns Section of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, and extends into several estuaries and tidal rivers.

When the new draft zoning plan for the Cairns Section of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is released for public comment, it is expected that the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service will also seek comment concerning Queensland's Cairns Marine Park.

The two planning processes will provide the basis for detailed complementary management of areas of the Great Barrier Reef, whether under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth or Queensland.

1.5 THE CAIRNS AND CORMORANT PASS SECTIONS

The Cairns Section was proclaimed to be part of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park on 19 November 1981. It completely encircles the small Cormorant Pass Section, which was proclaimed on 21 October 1981 principally to protect a colony of Potato Cod. The Authority proposes to recommend amalgamation of the two sections so that the Cairns Section incorporates the Cormorant Pass Section. Therefore, throughout the remainder of this booklet, reference to the Cairns Section, unless specifically mentioned, implies inclusion of the Cormorant Pass Section.

The resulting section is likely to be called the Cairns Section. Until the Zoning Plan for the new Cairns Section comes into effect (likely to be in 1990), the existing Cairns Section Zoning Plan and Cormorant Pass Section Zoning Plan will remain in force.

2 THE EXISTING CAIRNS SECTION ZONING PLAN

2.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE CAIRNS SECTION

The Cairns Section covers an area of some 35 000 square kilometres and extends for over 400 kilometres along the coast adjacent to the towns of Tully, Innisfail, Cairns, Mossman, Port Douglas and Cooktown (see Locality Map). Within the outer boundaries of the Section, there are approximately:

- . 212 reefs (including coastal and island fringing reefs);
- . 32 islands and rocks of continental origin;
- . 18 low wooded islands;
- . 19 sand and shingle cays of coral reef origin; and
- . 25 banks, patches and shoals.

Uses of the Section are many and varied; the area is best known for its rich fishing grounds and long-established and growing tourist industry. Prawn trawling is a significant commercial fishery while game fishing, especially for marlin, is a popular tourist activity.

The fauna of the Section is diverse and abundant. The corals in particular show tremendous diversity and the area around Lizard Island has been shown to be much richer compared to the southern end of the Great Barrier Reef. The fish fauna is also very rich, and there are a large number of different species of marine plants. Twenty-three species of seabird have been recorded within the section, with Michaelmas Cay recognised as one of the most significant seabird nesting sites in Queensland.

2.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE EXISTING ZONING PLAN

The development of the initial Zoning Plans for the Cairns Section and Cormorant Pass Section took place in 1982-83. When the Zoning Plans came into effect in November 1983, the Cairns Section was the second major section of the Marine Park to be proclaimed and managed.

During the development of the Zoning Plan, the public was asked to provide information on the uses and characteristics of the Section and to make recommendations for zoning and management. Many organisations and members of the public made representations, had formal talks and informal discussions with Authority staff. Following this public participation, a draft zoning plan was prepared. This draft plan was then released for further public comment before a final plan was prepared and accepted by Government.

Once a zoning plan for any section of the Marine Park comes into effect it remains operational until a new plan is prepared by a similar process of public participation and consultation. The Authority is, however, committed to review each zoning plan after it has been in operation for approximately five years.

2.3 PROVISIONS OF THE EXISTING ZONING PLAN

The existing Zoning Plan should be consulted for a full legal definition of each zone's objectives.

The Cormorant Pass Section is a single zone - a Marine National Park 'Buffer' zone - which provides protection for the natural resources of the area, primarily the tame potato cod.

Within the Cairns Section, zones and areas have been provided for a range of uses, as outlined below:

2.3.1 General Use 'A' Zone

Over 73% of the Cairns Section is zoned General Use 'A' in the existing plan. This is the least restrictive of the zones and provides for all reasonable use, including commercial trawling and shipping, consistent with conservation of the Great Barrier Reef;

2.3.2 General Use 'B' Zone

General Use 'B' zoning applies to nearly 22% of the Section, providing areas for reasonable use free from the effects of trawling and generally free from commercial shipping.

The provisions of the Marine National Park Zones are similar in concept to those of national parks on land. There are three 'grades' of Marine National Park Zones:

2.3.3 Marine National Park 'A' Zone

The natural resources within the zone are protected from the effects of a number of activities including some fishing and collecting. The objective is to regulate activities that remove natural resources so as to provide opportunities to appreciate and enjoy the Marine Park. Limited line fishing is allowed. There are 26 reef areas zoned as MNP 'A' in the Cairns Section;

2.3.4 Marine National Park 'Buffer' Zone

This zone is similar to a Marine National Park 'B' Zone, except that it allows trolling for pelagic species. There are 21 'no-fishing' reefs in the Cairns Section which are surrounded by a Marine National Park 'Buffer' Zone;

2.3.5 Marine National Park 'B' Zone

This may be thought of as a 'look but don't take' zone. All activities that remove natural resources, including fishing, are prohibited so that people may appreciate and enjoy these areas in a relatively undisturbed state. There are 19 reef areas zoned as Marine National Park 'B' in the Cairns Section.

The zones which are the most restrictive for the majority of park users are:

2.3.6 Scientific Research Zone

Research areas are zoned so that permitted scientific research may be conducted undisturbed. Areas are zoned Scientific Research when they are likely to be used for important research on a frequent and regular basis. There are 4 reef areas zoned as Scientific Research Zones in the Cairns Section;

2.3.7 Preservation Zone

The objective of the Preservation Zone is to preserve areas of the Great Barrier Reef in their natural state, undisturbed by man except for the purposes of scientific research. In selecting Preservation Zones, apart from including diverse community types, consideration has been given to existing and future use and to the ease of identifying the sites for surveillance, interpretive and management purposes. There are 4 Preservation Zones in the Cairns Section; where possible, they have been located within MNP 'B' Zones to buffer the effects of external influences.

2.4 RESTRICTED USE AREAS

Within a Zoning Plan, further areas of restricted use may be periodically applied. Such areas include:

2.4.1 Replenishment Areas

These areas provide for the replenishment of living natural resources in heavily used areas of the Marine Park, by restricting, for a specified period of time, activities which remove those living resources. Despite the fact that many Replenishment Areas were proposed in the existing Cairns Section Zoning Plan, none have been declared to date;

2.4.2 Seasonal Closure Areas

The objective of a Seasonal Closure Area is to protect from human intrusion, for a specified period of time, areas of importance to the breeding of some animals in the Marine Park. A number of these areas have been included in the plan predominantly to protect seabirds during the critical period of their nesting;

2.4.3 Reef Appreciation Areas

These areas may be declared on up to 20% of heavily-used reefs to provide the public with an area where they may observe and appreciate relatively undisturbed marine life, and where fishing and collecting are not permitted;

2.4.4 Defence Areas

The needs of the Department of Defence have been met through the declaration of Defence Areas at sites currently used for defence training. The objective of a Defence Area is to make provision, in the interest of public safety, for the control of public entry and use of an area used for defence operations. Zoning within Defence Areas takes account of the types of defence activities occurring within each Area.

2.5 PERMITS

The existing Zoning Plan describes the activities which can occur in each of the zones, but some activities may be subject to further control by permit. (Appendix I shows this in table form). There are four reasons for having a permit system:

- . to encourage responsible behaviour by Park users;
- . to separate potentially conflicting uses;
- . to impose, where necessary, limits on certain activities or the time and area in which they may occur; and
- . to collect useful data on the scope and intensity of activities.

Applications for permits are available from the offices of the Authority or Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service.

The permit system has proven to be demanding in terms of staff resources, and where practicable, the Authority has adopted the policy that, consistent with the Goals and Aims of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, the requirements for permits should be minimised. The following activities currently require a permit under the Cairns Section Zoning Plan but are not subject to a permit in all zones in more recent Zoning Plans prepared for other Sections of the Marine Park:

- . limited collecting
- . oyster gathering
- . commercial photography and filming
- . crabbing
- . bait netting

The Authority recognises that some operators are faced with the requirements to obtain a variety of permits and licences. The Authority is actively working to reduce the bureaucracy associated with the permit system while maintaining the management benefits the system provides.

3 DEVELOPING A NEW ZONING PLAN

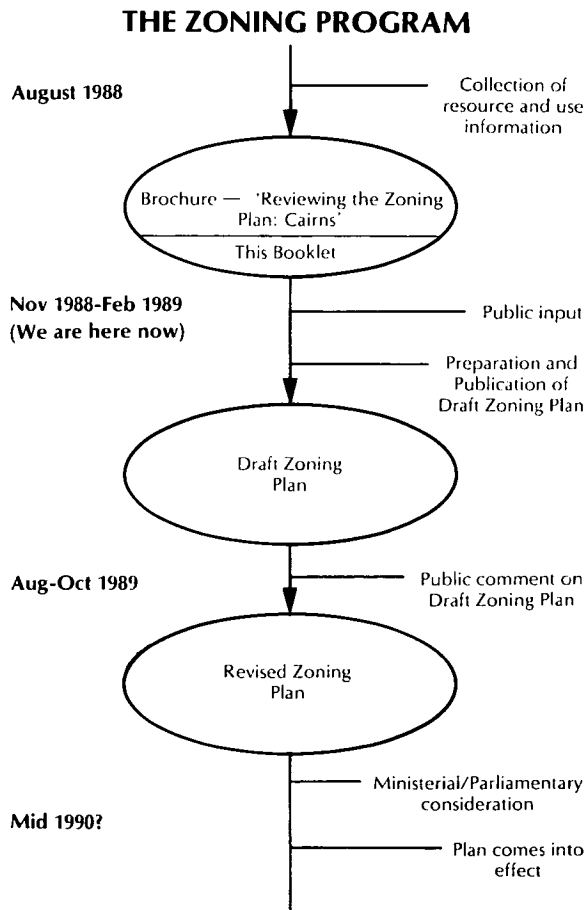
3.1 INTRODUCTION

Since the development of the Cairns Section Zoning Plan in 1982-83, major changes have occurred in use of the Marine Park, particularly relating to tourism in the Cairns and Port Douglas areas (this rapid change, and a proposed strategy to cope with such change, is discussed further in Part 4 PROPOSED TOURISM STRATEGY).

Similarly changes in the numbers of commercial and recreational fishermen and improvements in fishing technology have also had their effects.

3.2 THE PLANNING PROGRAM

In its simplest form, the review of the Cairns Section Zoning Plan comprises:



The various stages in the development of a zoning plan are intended to ensure that all interested individuals and organisations can readily obtain and study the relevant information, and so make informed and constructive representations to the Authority.

3.3 INFORMATION GATHERING

Planning for each of the Sections is based on the most up-to-date information available on the character, resources and use of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Much of this information is supplied by users of the Marine Park.

The maps in Appendix II depict significant features and uses of the Cairns Section; for example, the main prawn trawling areas, popular recreational fishing and diving areas, shipping channels, seagrass and mangrove areas and uses of the adjacent mainland. These resource maps are drawn mainly from information received in the previous zoning program and may require updating. If you are aware of any deficiencies or inaccuracies with these maps, please advise Authority staff.

3.4 RESOLVING CONFLICTS WHEN PREPARING A ZONING PLAN

Whenever the public is asked to make formal comment, the Authority receives a diverse variety of views which are often conflicting. The preparation of a zoning plan requires many complex decisions and the Authority has adopted a number of guidelines or criteria arising from legislative, management and issue-specific requirements. As far as practicable, these guidelines are applied whenever staff prepare a zoning plan. They are designed to ensure that relevant and conflicting objectives are carefully considered, and help make the balance of decisions more objective and uniform. The guidelines are:

- . the Zoning Plan should be as simple as practicable;
- . as far as practicable (AFAP) the plan should minimise the regulation of, and interference in, human activities, consistent with meeting the goal of providing for protection, wise use, appreciation and enjoyment of the Great Barrier Reef in perpetuity;
- . AFAP the plan should maintain consistency with existing zoning plans in terms of zone types and provisions;
- . AFAP the plan should maintain consistency with zoning plans drawn up under Queensland Marine Parks legislation;
- . AFAP the pattern of zones within a Section should avoid any sudden transition from highly protected areas to areas of relatively little protection. The concept of buffering should be applied such that highly protected areas are generally adjacent to, or surrounded by, zones which provide for moderate protection;
- . AFAP, unless levels of localised activity suggest otherwise, single zonings should surround discrete geographic areas e.g. an island or reef. Similarly, zone boundaries intersecting the coastline should AFAP use easily recognizable features e.g. headlands.

- . Zone boundary widths should be consistent around reefs and islands and where possible should be described by geographical features (based on line of sight to aid identification in the field).

3.5 ISSUES AND SPECIFIC ZONING REQUIREMENTS

Outlined below, for each of the main activities in the Marine Park, are:

- . the major changes that have occurred, along with some consequent issues; and
- . where they exist, specific zoning requirements that the Authority has adopted for reviewing the Zoning Plan.

3.5.1 TOURIST ACTIVITIES

Changes and issues

A major increase has occurred in the number of tourist operations in the Marine Park, particularly out of Cairns and Port Douglas.

There has been an increase in the number and size of tourist fixtures permanently located on the reef.

Improvements have occurred in the technology of vessels, providing greater and quicker access to more areas of the Marine Park.

There have been several proposals for major offshore structures.

There has been a major increase in the use of aircraft (helicopters and seaplanes) and hovercraft to a greater number of sites.

Research has highlighted concerns about:

- . waste discharge from island resorts and some commercial vessels;
- . anchor damage at popular reef sites.

Fishing occurs at popular sites where fish-feeding is also undertaken by tourist operators.

Conflicts between types of tourism and competition for limited sites has emerged.

Specific zoning requirements

Areas of significance for activities that do not remove natural resources should AFAP be given Marine National Park zoning.

When a reef or area is zoned in a way which excludes a particular activity, provision should be made in as many cases as possible for access to alternative areas where that activity may be pursued.

Split zoning is one means of providing spatial separation at heavily used reefs.

3.5.2 COMMERCIAL FISHING

Changes and issues

The use of Marine National Park 'Buffer' Zones in the existing Zoning Plan needs careful consideration, as more recent plans for other Sections of the Marine Park have not used this type of zone.

Commercial bait netting in Marine National Park 'A' Zones (as allowed in the Central and Mackay-Capricorn Sections) may need consideration.

Improvements have occurred in gear technology (e.g. 360 degree sonar).

Commercial fishing is under pressure from other users and competition within the industry has increased.

The development and evaluation of different management regimes has occurred in the industry (e.g. wide-scale seasonal closures).

Inshore nursery (seagrass) areas need protection.

Specific zoning requirements

Areas of significance for reasonable harvesting activities should AFAP be given General Use zoning.

3.5.3 RECREATIONAL FISHING

Changes and issues

Most line fishing on accessible reefs is conducted by recreational fishermen.

Estimates indicate a doubling of the number of fishermen in the last ten years.

Many fishermen believe that fishing at popular sites near major population centres 'ain't what it used to be'.

Improvements have occurred in gear technology.

The effectiveness of short-term fishing closures (e.g. Replenishment Areas) is still being investigated.

There are no fishing controls specifically applied to recreational fishermen.

Specific zoning requirements

When a reef or area is zoned in a way which excludes a particular activity, provision should be made in as many cases as practicable for access to alternative areas where that activity may be pursued.

3.5.4 ANCHORAGES

Changes and issues

There is increased evidence of anchor damage at popular reef sites.

Specific zoning requirements

AFAP major anchorage sites should be in General Use Zones so as to allow most of the activities associated with overnight or longer anchoring of vessels to continue. Where an anchorage is zoned in a manner that restricts those activities AFAP opportunity to carry out those activities should be provided for at an adjacent anchorage.

AFAP the zoning for anchorages should not result in the multiple zoning of a single island/reefal unit simply because an anchorage is present.

AFAP the Zoning Plan should retain access for small boats to important all-weather anchorages. Access to all zones must be allowed during emergencies.

3.5.5 MARICULTURE OPERATIONS

Changes and issues

There has been an increase in the number of mariculture operations, and proposals for such operations, in recent years.

By virtue of the nature of mariculture operations, they may become exclusive-use and long-term users of sites.

3.5.6 CONSERVATION OF SIGNIFICANT HABITAT

Changes and issues

Recent estimates of dugong populations in the area are much higher than previously anticipated; however it will take years to confirm whether these populations are stable, increasing or decreasing.

Significant seagrass areas have now been mapped.

Recent research indicates there are likely to be key 'sink' and 'source' reefs for the dispersal of larvae (e.g. coral, fish, Crown of Thorns).

Continuing research indicates that the northern part of the Cairns Section is an important 'nursery area' which supplies larvae further south. These patterns of 'connectivity' between reefs appear different compared to the southern part of the Section.

Specific zoning requirements

AFAP areas of world, regional or local significance for wildlife conservation (involving for example, dugong, whales, turtles, crocodiles) should be given appropriate protective zoning.

AFAP where significant breeding or nursery sites can be identified, particularly for species subjected to harvesting, these should be provided with appropriate Seasonal Closure or Marine National Park or Preservation zoning.

AFAP representative samples of characteristic habitat types should be included in either MNP 'B' or Preservation Zones.

AFAP in reefal areas, protective zoning should be applied to reef/shoal complexes (i.e. to incorporate a wide range of habitat types within one unit).

3.5.7 NATIONAL PARKS, RESERVES AND HISTORIC SHIPWRECKS

Specific zoning requirements

AFAP zoning of reefs and waters adjacent to existing National Parks, Fisheries Reserves and Historic Shipwrecks should complement the objectives of those reserves.

3.5.8 DIVING

Changes and issues

Estimates indicate the industry has increased four-fold in the last eight years, with over 30 charter vessels regularly engaged by the dive industry in the Cairns Section.

Over half the total 'diver-days' undertaken in Queensland occur in the Cairns region, with the greatest proportion being overseas visitors.

Trends indicate a continuing or increasing growth in demand for Great Barrier Reef diving, particularly from overseas visitors.

For safety reasons spatial separation between divers and other conflicting activities is recommended.

3.5.9 SPEARFISHING

Specific zoning requirements

AFAP zoning should be compatible with current spearfishing restrictions as set out in the Queensland Fisheries Regulations.

3.5.10 SHIPPING

Specific zoning requirements

The plan should provide for the movement of shipping along recognised or proposed routes.

The plan must not impede the access of international, interstate nor intrastate shipping to shipping routes nor to existing ports on the coast of Queensland. Nor should it impede access to potential ports.

3.5.11 DEFENCE AREAS

Specific zoning requirements

The plan must recognise the requirements of the Department of Defence, particularly with regard to gazetted defence areas.

3.5.12 SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Changes and issues

While research is often concentrated around research facilities, it can be widespread and may not be site-specific. Consequently the usefulness of the existing Scientific Research Areas needs careful evaluation.

Specific zoning requirements

Provision should be made for the conduct of scientific research throughout the Section. However, areas should only be zoned exclusively for scientific research where existing and probable future use indicates that those areas are likely to be used only for scientific research on a frequent and regular basis. In other cases declaration of areas for special management for scientific purposes should meet the needs of the scientific community.

3.6 CONSIDERATIONS FOR REZONING

The zoning currently applied to a number of reefs or areas in the Cairns Section will need careful consideration in the review of the Zoning Plan. Particular consideration must be given to:

- . areas where patterns of use have changed markedly; or
- . areas which may benefit from more protective zoning in order to complement National Parks or significant sites for conservation.

In the Cairns Section, areas which should be considered for rezoning include:

REEF OR AREA	CURRENT ZONING	NOTES (not all information is listed)
East and West Hope Is. reefs	GU'B'	Queensland National Park Breeding seabirds & landbirds Large nesting site for Torresian Imperial Pigeons Good anchorage Vegetated cay (East) & low wooded island (West)
Snapper Is. reef	GU'B'	Queensland National Park Good diving north side Popular day visitor site Camping by permit Shell collecting
Norman Reef	GU'A'	Good anchorage Popular dive site Heavily-used tourist destination Recreational fishing
Saxon Reef	GU'A'	Shell collecting Popular dive site Recreational fishing Aquarium fish collecting
Hastings Reef	GU'B'	Good anchorage Shell collecting Popular dive site Aquarium fish & coral collecting
Flynn Reef	GU'B'	Good diving Moderate recreational fishing
Milln Reef	GU'B'	Good diving Moderate recreational fishing Fair anchorage
Thetford Reef	GU'B'	Good diving Good anchorage Heavy recreational fishing Important for shell collecting Aquarium fish collecting
Frankland Island Group reefs	GU'B'	High, Round, Normanby & Mabel Islands are Nat. Parks Important bait netting area Good diving Light-moderate shell collecting Camping permitted on High & Russell Islands

Feather Reef	GU'B'	Good diving Important for shell collecting Heavily fished; spearfishing
Gilbey Reef	GU'B'	Good diving Heavily fished Poor anchorage
North Barnard Group reefs	GU'B'	Several islands are National Parks Breeding seabirds Good diving Some good anchorages Camping by permit on Hutchinson Island
South Barnard Group reefs	MNP'A'	Two islands are National Parks Important seabird rookeries Moderate anchorage Camping by permit on Stephens Is.

3.7 OTHER PLANNING TECHNIQUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED

3.7.1 Split Zoning

Lizard Island Reef was the first location in the Marine Park where split zoning was used (i.e. two or more zones applied to parts of a single reef). As far as practicable the Authority has tried to avoid split zoning in order to avoid confusing levels of detailed restrictions at the one location. However, experience has indicated that, on heavily used reefs, a system of split zoning may be the best way to accommodate user activities, while ensuring conservation of the reefs' resources.

Under the existing Zoning Plan for the Cairns Section, three Reef Appreciation Areas have been recommended for declaration to provide a 'look but don't take' experience on parts of heavily used reefs. Their formalisation as MNP'B' split-zoned areas will be considered in this review.

3.7.2 Special Management Areas

Other zoning plans prepared by the Authority in recent years have included Special Management Areas.

These areas make provision for specific management for the purposes of either scientific research, nature conservation or appreciation by the public (similar to Reef Appreciation Areas) and to provide for public safety. These areas are not shown in the Zoning Plan and may be declared at some time during the life of the plan. However, they will only be declared after the public has made representations on any proposals.

4 CAIRNS SECTION TOURISM STRATEGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

When the initial Zoning Plan for the Cairns Section was developed in 1982, the only fixed structure in the Section was the Green Island Underwater Observatory. There were no large catamarans, helicopters or hovercraft operating regularly in the Section. No operations involved permanently moored pontoons or floating hotels. All these types of facilities are now operating in the Marine Park.

Organized tourism on reefs close to Cairns has increased at around 30% per annum over the last three years. In the Cairns Section in 1985/86, there were 52 tourist program permits issued of which 23 were site-specific; in 1987/88 this had increased to 185 permits of which 86 were site-specific. There is increasing competition for sites on reefs, particularly close to Cairns and Port Douglas, and the number of reefs remaining without any tourist operations is decreasing rapidly.

Large catamarans account for the greatest increase in visitor numbers to reefs, but there has also been a considerable increase in the number of smaller vessels taking sightseeing, diving and fishing trips. All these tourist operations require a site or a number of sites in the Cairns Section.

This pattern of growth has several consequences:

- . there is potential for tourist sites to become overcrowded in terms of the capacity of the site(s) to withstand coral trampling, to provide enough anchorages, etc.;
- . operators and tourists consider that their park experience (or amenity) is compromised by other tourist operations, particularly the intrusive visual impact or noise of large numbers of people or tourist facilities of higher capacity operations;
- . there are fewer opportunities for tour group operators to provide a remote or "wilderness" type of experience; and
- . there are now fewer reefs where private recreational users can go if they prefer to stay away from tourist facilities or large numbers of tourists.

From observation, correspondence and discussion with a range of users there appears to be concern that every accessible reef may in time be used by large tourist operations, involving permanent facilities which encroach upon the "wilderness" experience valued by private and small charter boat recreational operators.

The experiences provided by the Marine Park to most recreational users are essentially nature-orientated. The Authority is concerned with maintaining those experiences, realising that some people wish to "really get away from it all", while others appreciate larger modern facilities which enable them to enjoy the Reef in comfort.

It has become clear that a tourism strategy is needed to provide for the continued growth in tourism, to manage conflicts and to ensure that a range of tourism experiences continues to be available in the Marine Park. Such a strategy will provide a framework within which desirable levels, types and locations of tourist operations can be provided in the Cairns Section.

4.2 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN DEVELOPING A TOURISM STRATEGY

The tourism strategy for the Cairns Section is being developed as part of the review of the Zoning Plan and will be incorporated into the revised plan.

As the Authority is keen to receive comments on provisions for tourism within the Zoning Plan during this first phase of public participation, a proposed strategy is outlined for discussion in this document. All comments received on this proposal will be considered in developing a draft zoning plan which will be released in mid 1989. At that time the Authority will seek further representations from the public.

4.3 INCORPORATING A TOURISM STRATEGY INTO THE ZONING PLAN

When the current Zoning Plan was prepared for the Cairns Section, the different levels of conservation and reasonable use in the various zones were largely provided for by increasing restrictions on the equipment that could be used for fishing or collecting, or by prohibiting those activities:

Zone	Fishing/collecting restrictions
General Use 'A'	Very few restrictions on fishing or collecting
General Use 'B'	As for GU'A', plus trawling is prohibited
Marine National Park 'A'	Fishing allowed only with a restricted range of equipment used normally for recreational fishing
Marine National Park Buffer	Fishing is limited to trolling for pelagic species
Marine National Park 'B') No fishing or collecting allowed
Scientific Research	
Preservation	

Under the current Zoning Plan, tourist operations are allowed by permit in all zones except Scientific Research and Preservation Zones.

There is no doubt that tourism in the Cairns Section will continue to grow at a rapid rate, particularly in the Cairns and Port Douglas areas. The Authority believes, therefore, that it must develop a strategy which allows for a range of recreation and tourist experiences. This range (or opportunity spectrum) extends from the "wilderness" experience sought by small groups of users in private or chartered vessels whether fishing or diving, through to the major day trip and overnight tourist operations catering for very large numbers of tourists and involving permanent on-site facilities and large capacity vessels. In between is a growing category of medium capacity day and overnight cruises including those calling at different locations.

The proposed amendments to the zone provisions which should provide improved management for tourism are:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| General Use 'A') | Tourism allowed under permit, no |
| General Use 'B') | specific limits |
| Marine Park
Tourism | Tourism including larger parties and permanently moored facilities allowed with numbers limited by reef size etc., permit required for tourist operations and facilities, no fishing or collecting (as for current MNP 'B' zone). |
| Marine National
Park Recreation | Tourism restricted to small groups of up to 20 per vessel with vessel numbers limited by reef size etc., no permanently moored facilities allowed, permit required for tourist operations and facilities, limited fishing (as for current MNP 'A' - one rod or handline used with one hook, fly or lure per person). |
| Marine National
Park Wilderness | Tourism restricted to small groups of up to 20 per vessel with vessel numbers limited by reef size etc., no permanently moored facilities allowed, permit required for tourist operations and facilities, no fishing or collecting (as for current MNP 'B' zone). |
| Strict Nature
Reserve | No tourism permitted (as for current Scientific Research and Preservation Zone). |

Where necessary, the Marine National Park Buffer Zone may be applied around Marine Park Tourism or Marine National Park Wilderness Zones to allow trolling for pelagic fish. Tourism provisions for the Buffer zone would be similar to those for the Marine National Park Wilderness Zone.

This proposed strategy effectively means that tourism, fishing or collecting will all be increasingly restricted moving from General Use 'A' through the Marine National Park zones, and will be prohibited in the Strict Nature Reserve Zone (as they are in the current Scientific Research and Preservation Zones). As in the current Zoning Plan, all tourist operations and facilities will require a permit.

Examples of the application of the proposed zones to some reefs in the Cairns Section are shown in the Table below. It is stressed that these examples are provided to show the possible application of the scheme for public comment only - the scheme will be further developed, taking into account your comments, for inclusion in the draft zoning plan for the Cairns Section, to be published for further review in mid-1989.

POSSIBLE ALLOCATION OF NEW ZONE TYPES TO REEFS NEAR CAIRNS

Reef	Existing Zoning	New Zoning Type			
		GUB	MP TOURISM	MNP RECREATION	MNP WILDERNESS
<u>Batt Reef - Agincourt Reefs Sector</u>					
Agincourt 4	MNPA			o	
* Agincourt 1-3	GUB/MNPB/Buffer		o	x	
Morning Rf	GUB				x
* Undine Rf	GUB	o		x	
St Crispin Rf	MNPA			o	
Rudder Rf	GUB	o			
Chinamans Rf	GUB				x
Opal Rf	GUB	o			
Snapper Is Rf	GUB				x
Low Isles Rf	MNPB/Buffer		o		
* Tongue Rf	GUB	o	x	x	
* Batt Rf	GUB	o		x	
<u>Green Island - Norman Reef Sector</u>					
Norman Rf	GUA		x		
Saxon Rf	GUA				x
Hastings Rf	GUB		x		
Michaelmas Rf	MNPB				x
Oyster Rf	GUB	o			
Upolu Rf	MNPA			o	
Middle Rf	GUB	o			
* Arlington Rf	GUB	o	x	x	
Green Is Rf	MNPB/Buffer		o		

Scott Reef - Flynn Reef Sector

Flynn Rf	GUB			x
Milln Rf	GUB		x	
Thetford Rf	GUB		x	
Moore Rf	MNPA	x		
Elford Rf	GUB		x	
* Sudbury Rf	GUB	o		x
Scott Rf	GUB	o		

- o = no change to existing zone proposed
- x = proposed new zone
- * = indicates more than one zone type recommended on a large reef

Some further aspects of the proposed strategy are:

- . There is no proposal to limit access by private boats to any zones except the Strict Nature Reserve Zone (as it is for the current Scientific Research and Preservation Zones).
- . Management plans will be developed as required to set overall use limits for specific reefs, depending on the characteristics of a particular reef.
- . All permit applications for tourist operations and/or facilities will be assessed for possible environmental impacts and large proposals may involve consideration under the Environment Protection (Impact of Proposals) Act.
- . Moorings may be installed with permission, or commercial operators may be required to install moorings in any of the public access zones.

4.4 ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED DURING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

During this first phase of public participation, representations should address the proposed changes to the zoning provisions and their proposed allocation to specific reefs in the Cairns Section. As well, the Authority is particularly interested in comments on the following issues:

- . Is the proposed division of tourism in the Marine National Park zones (that is, < 20 persons per vessel in Marine National Park Recreation and Marine National Park Wilderness Zones, with limits on visitor numbers depending on reef size in the Marine Park Tourism Zone) sufficient to guarantee the range of opportunities required?
- . Should there be limits placed on tourism in General Use zones?

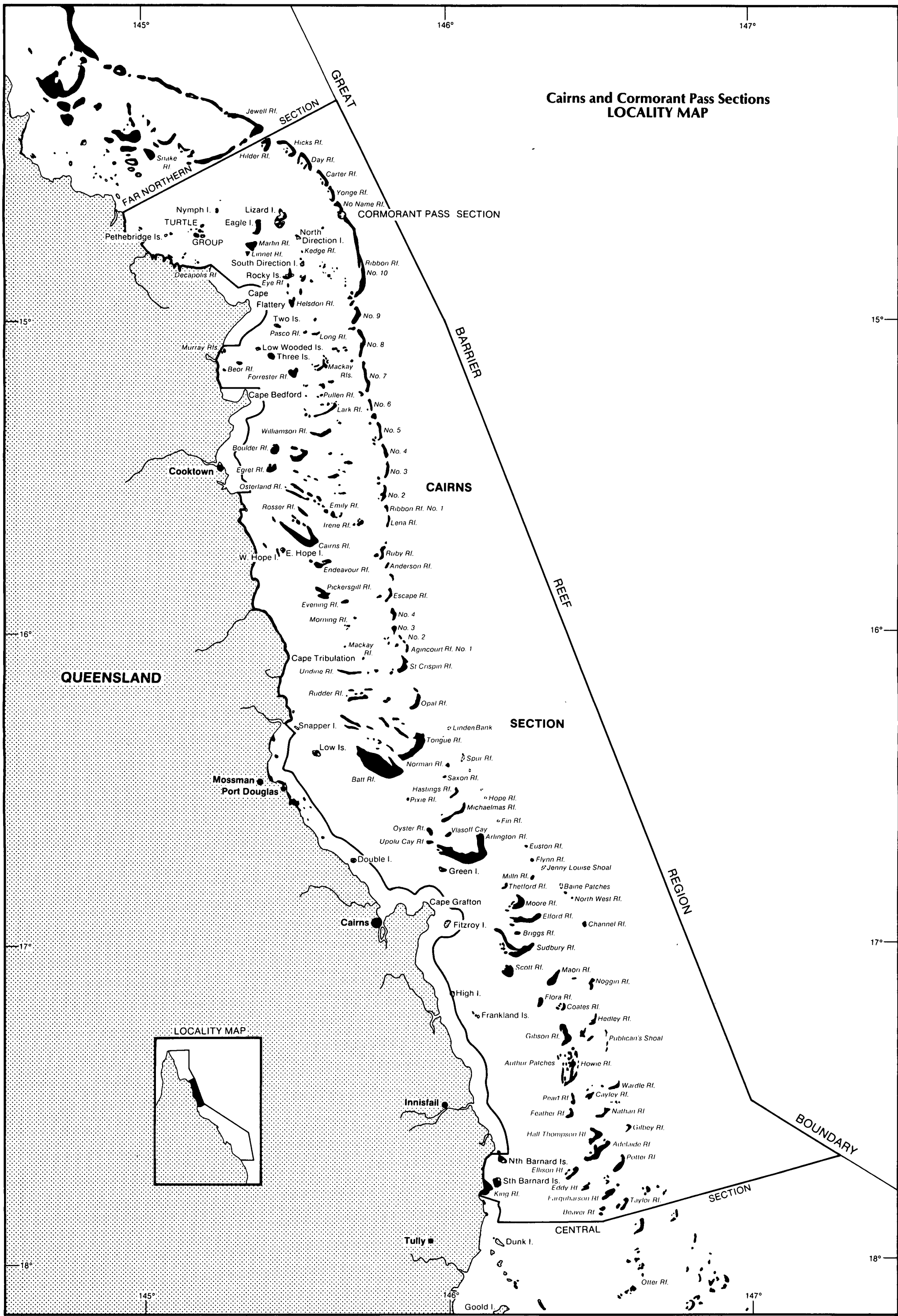
- . What should be the relative proportion of reefs allocated to each zone?
- . What particular zoning would you propose for reefs you use or know?

Any suggestions which you think may assist the Authority in addressing strategic planning for tourism and other uses of the Cairns Section will be considered.

APPENDIX II : Resource Maps

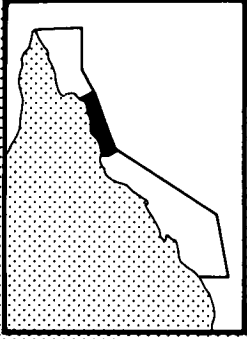
	Locality Map
Map 1	Significant Conservation Sites
Map 2	Reefal Communities
Map 3	Trawling
Map 4	Pelagic Fishery
Map 5	Recreational Fishing
Map 6	Collecting (non-food resources)
Map 7	Research and Education
Map 8	Major Tourist Sites
Map 9	Navigation, Shipping and Defence Areas
Map 10	Adjacent Protected Areas/Reserves

Cairns and Cormorant Pass Sections LOCALITY MAP



QUEENSLAND

LOCALITY MAP



FAR NORTHERN SECTION

CORMORANT PASS SECTION

CAIRNS

SECTION

CENTRAL

BARRIER REEF

REGION

BOUNDARY

145° 146° 147°

15°








16°

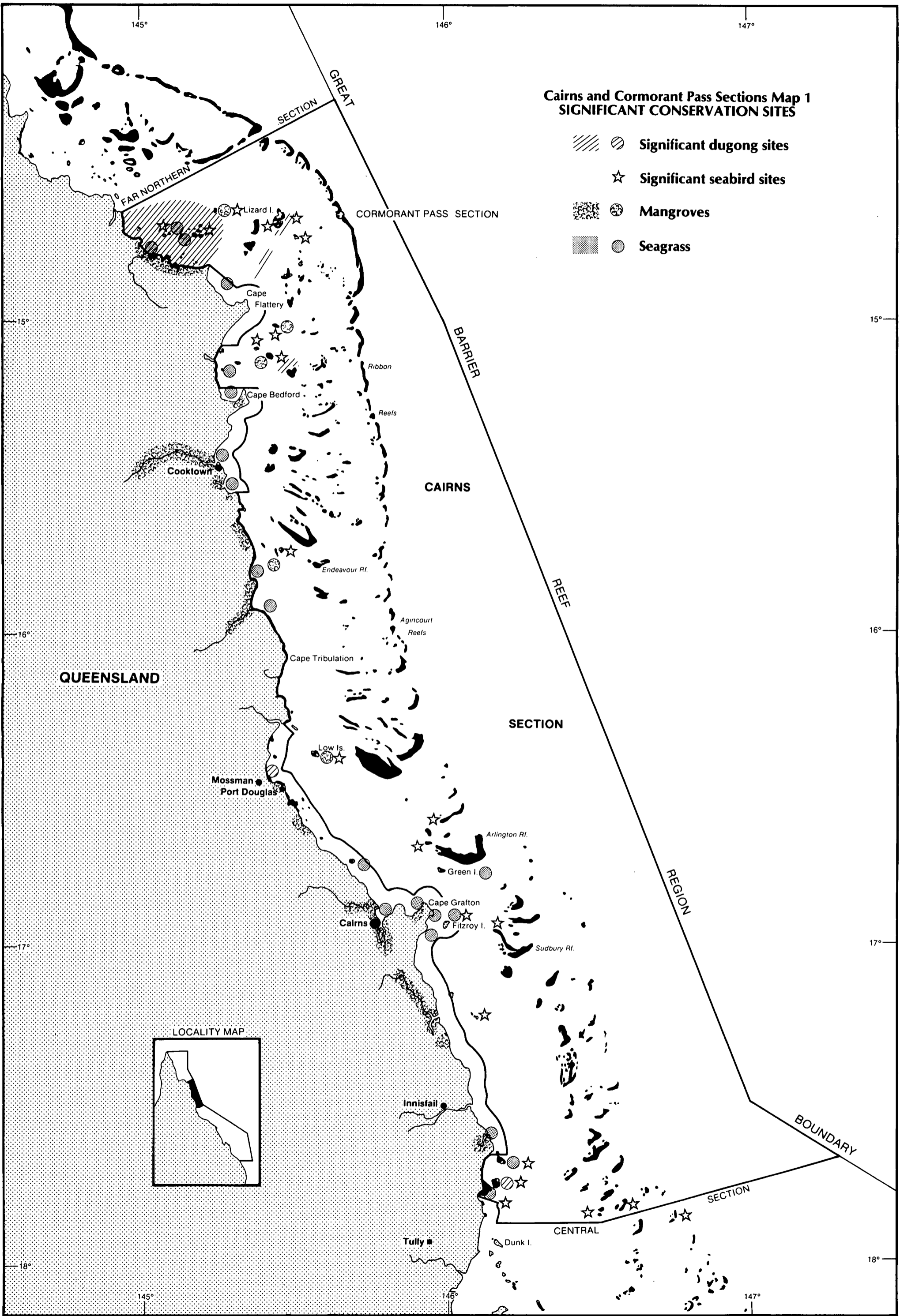
17°

18°

145° 146° 147°

**Cairns and Cormorant Pass Sections Map 1
SIGNIFICANT CONSERVATION SITES**

-   Significant dugong sites
-  Significant seabird sites
-   Mangroves
-   Seagrass

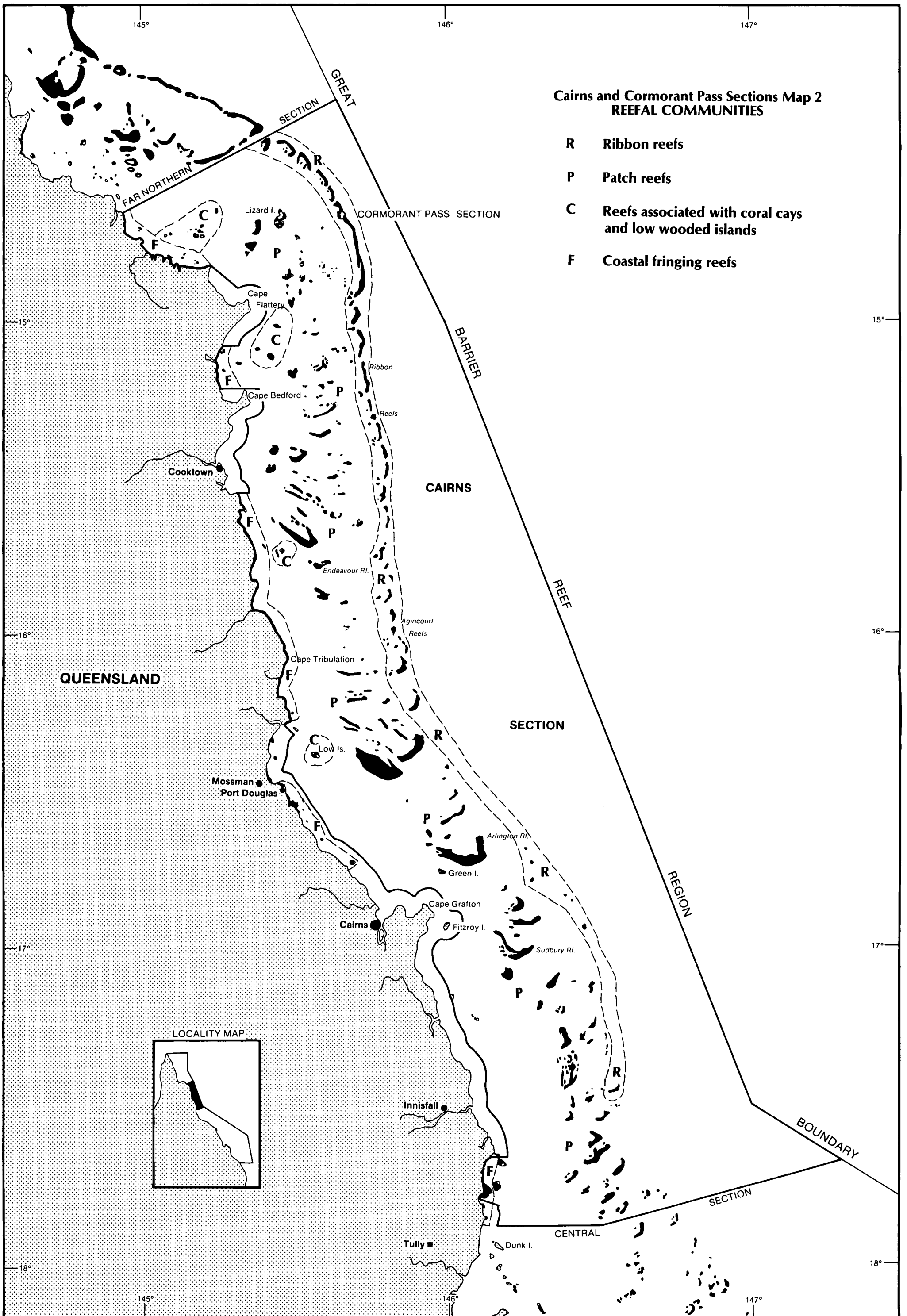


LOCALITY MAP



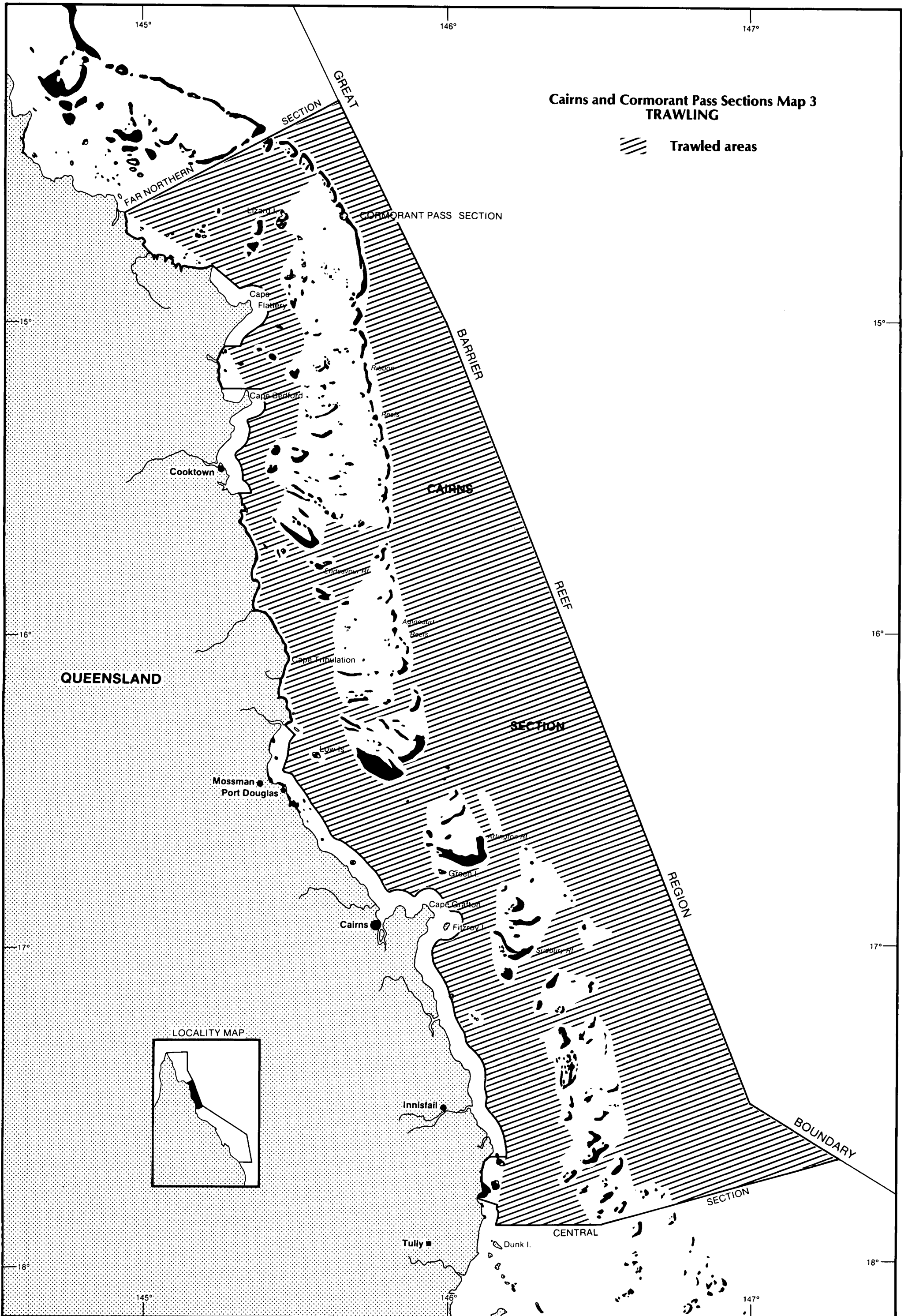
**Cairns and Cormorant Pass Sections Map 2
REEFAL COMMUNITIES**

- R** Ribbon reefs
- P** Patch reefs
- C** Reefs associated with coral cays and low wooded islands
- F** Coastal fringing reefs



Cairns and Cormorant Pass Sections Map 3
TRAWLING

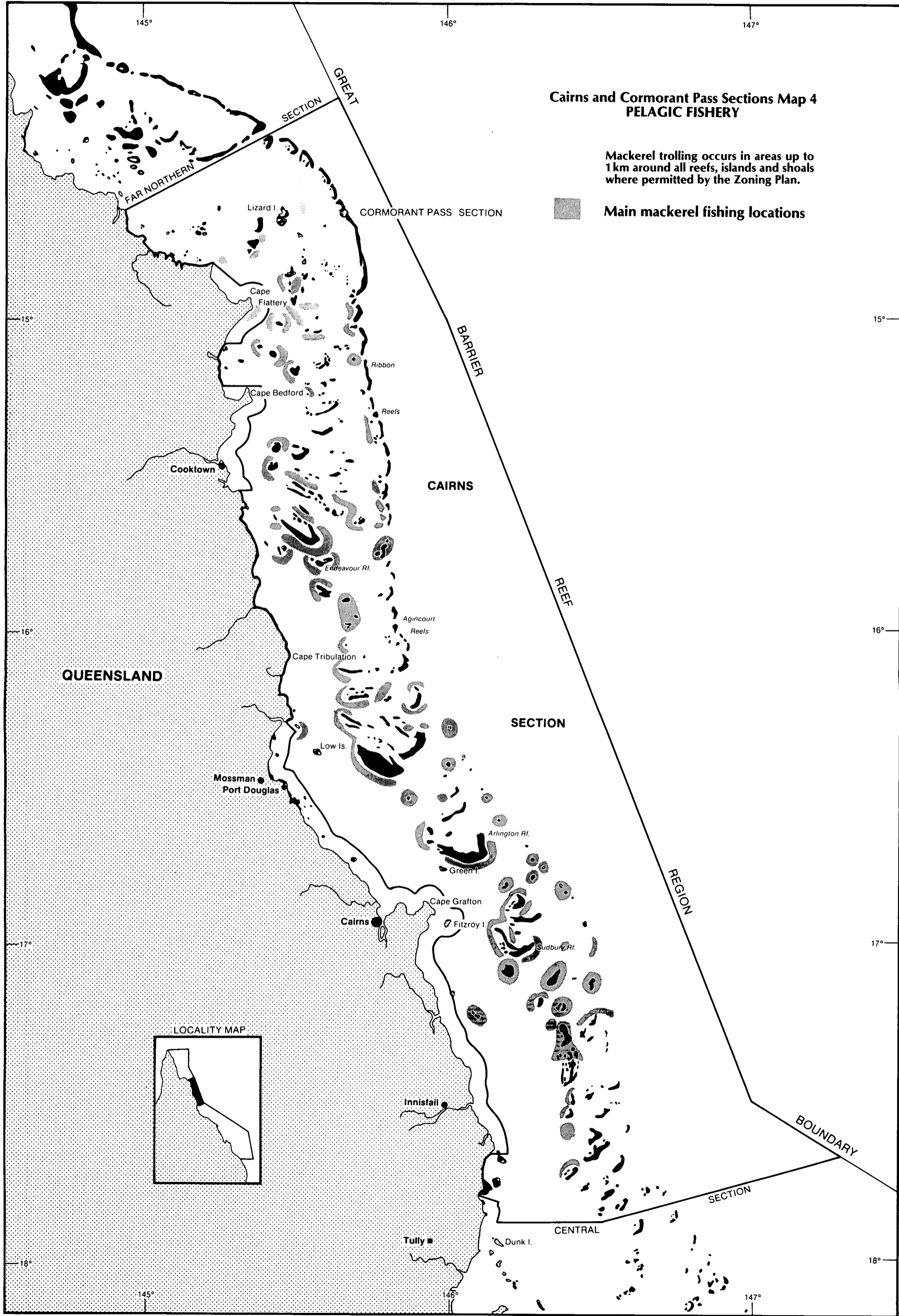
 Trawled areas

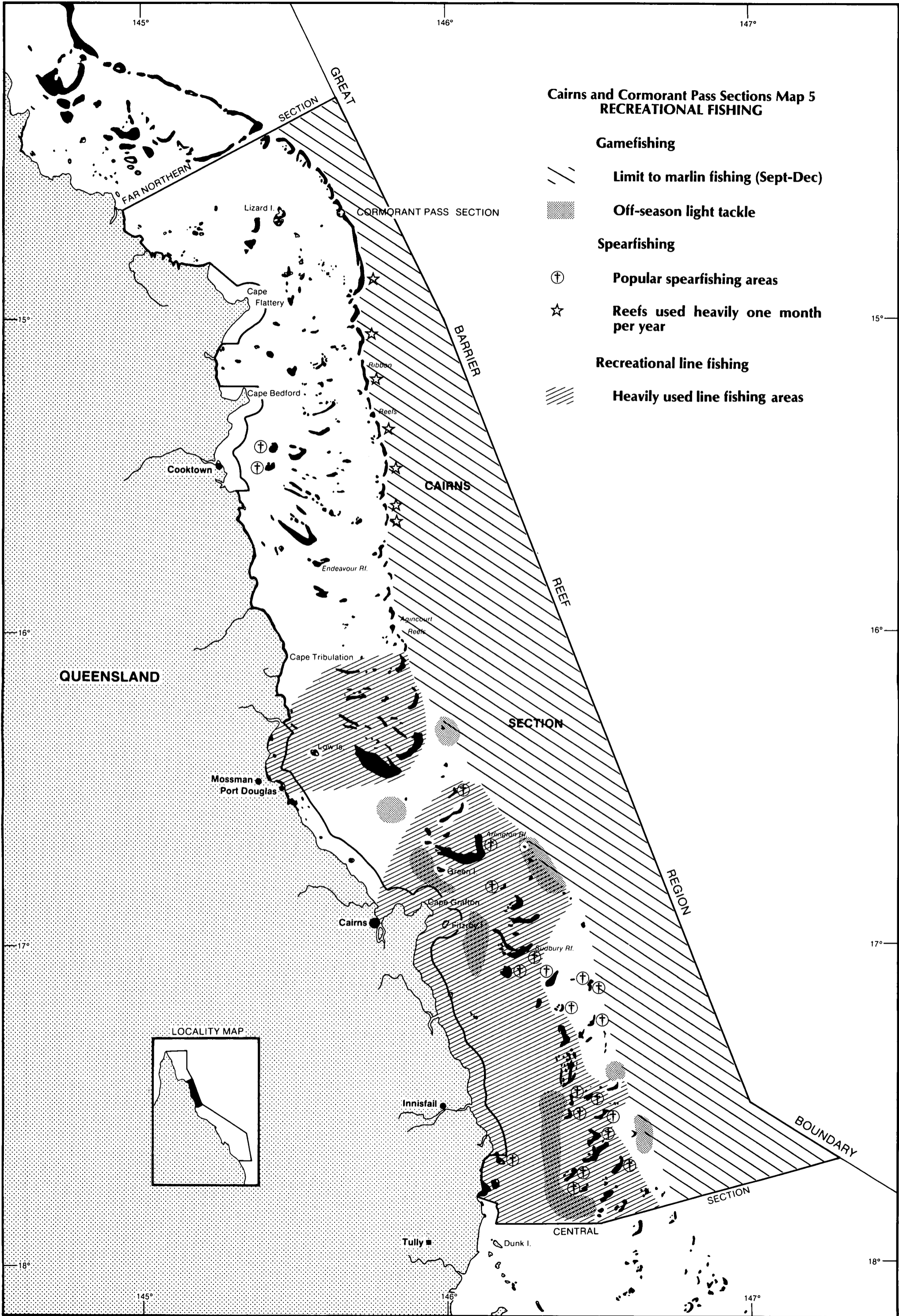


**Cairns and Cormorant Pass Sections Map 4
PELAGIC FISHERY**

Mackerel trolling occurs in areas up to 1 km around all reefs, islands and shoals where permitted by the Zoning Plan.

 **Main mackerel fishing locations**





**Cairns and Cormorant Pass Sections Map 5
RECREATIONAL FISHING**

Gamefishing

Limit to marlin fishing (Sept-Dec)

Off-season light tackle

Spearfishing

Popular spearfishing areas

Reefs used heavily one month per year

Recreational line fishing

Heavily used line fishing areas

QUEENSLAND

LOCALITY MAP



FAR NORTHERN

GREAT BARRIER REEF

CORMORANT PASS SECTION

CAIRNS

SECTION

REGION

BOUNDARY

CENTRAL

Lizard I.

Cape Flattery

Cape Bedford

Cooktown

Endeavour Rl.

Agincourt Reefs

Cape Tribulation

Mossman
Port Douglas

Cairns

Arwinton Rl.

Green I.

Cape Graton

Fraser I.

Sudbury Rl.

Innisfail

Tully

Dunk I.

145°

146°

147°

15°

15°

16°

16°

17°

17°

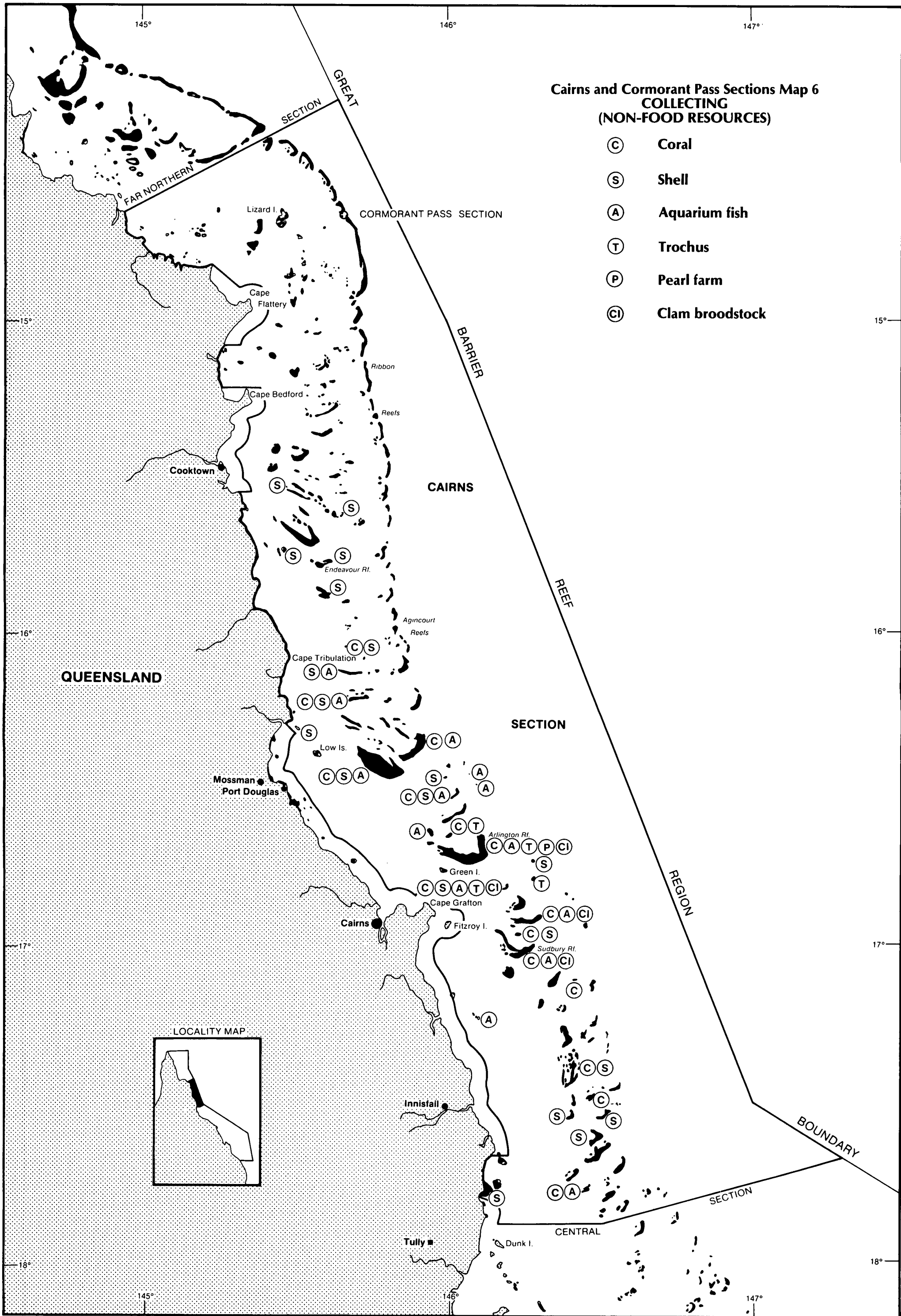
18°

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145°

146°

147°



**Cairns and Cormorant Pass Sections Map 6
COLLECTING
(NON-FOOD RESOURCES)**

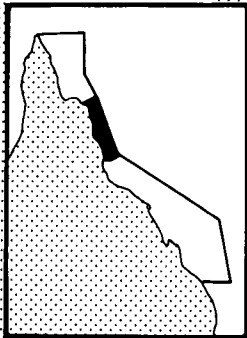
- Ⓢ Shell
- Ⓒ Coral
- Ⓐ Aquarium fish
- Ⓣ Trochus
- Ⓟ Pearl farm
- ⒸⓁ Clam broodstock

QUEENSLAND

CAIRNS

SECTION

LOCALITY MAP



BOUNDARY

CENTRAL

SECTION

REGION

BARRIER

REEF

CORMORANT PASS SECTION

GREAT SECTION

FAR NORTHERN SECTION

Lizard I.

Cape Flattery

Cape Bedford

Cooktown

Ribbon

Reels

Endeavour Rf.

Agincourt Reefs

Cape Tribulation

Low Is.

Mossman
Port Douglas

Cape Grafton

Fitzroy I.

Cairns

Arlington Rf.

Green I.

Sudbury Rf.

Innisfail

Tully

Dunk I.

145°

146°

147°

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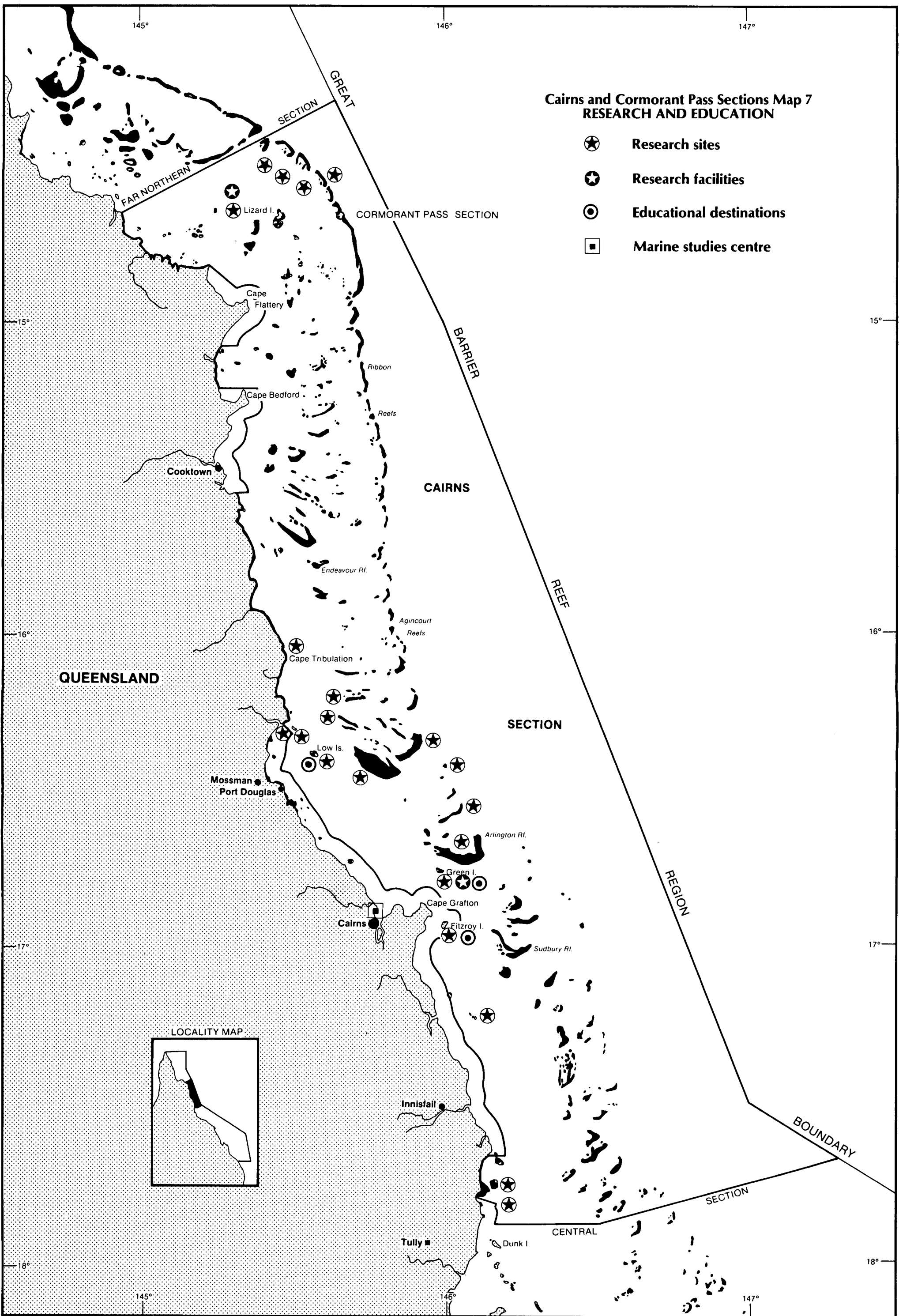
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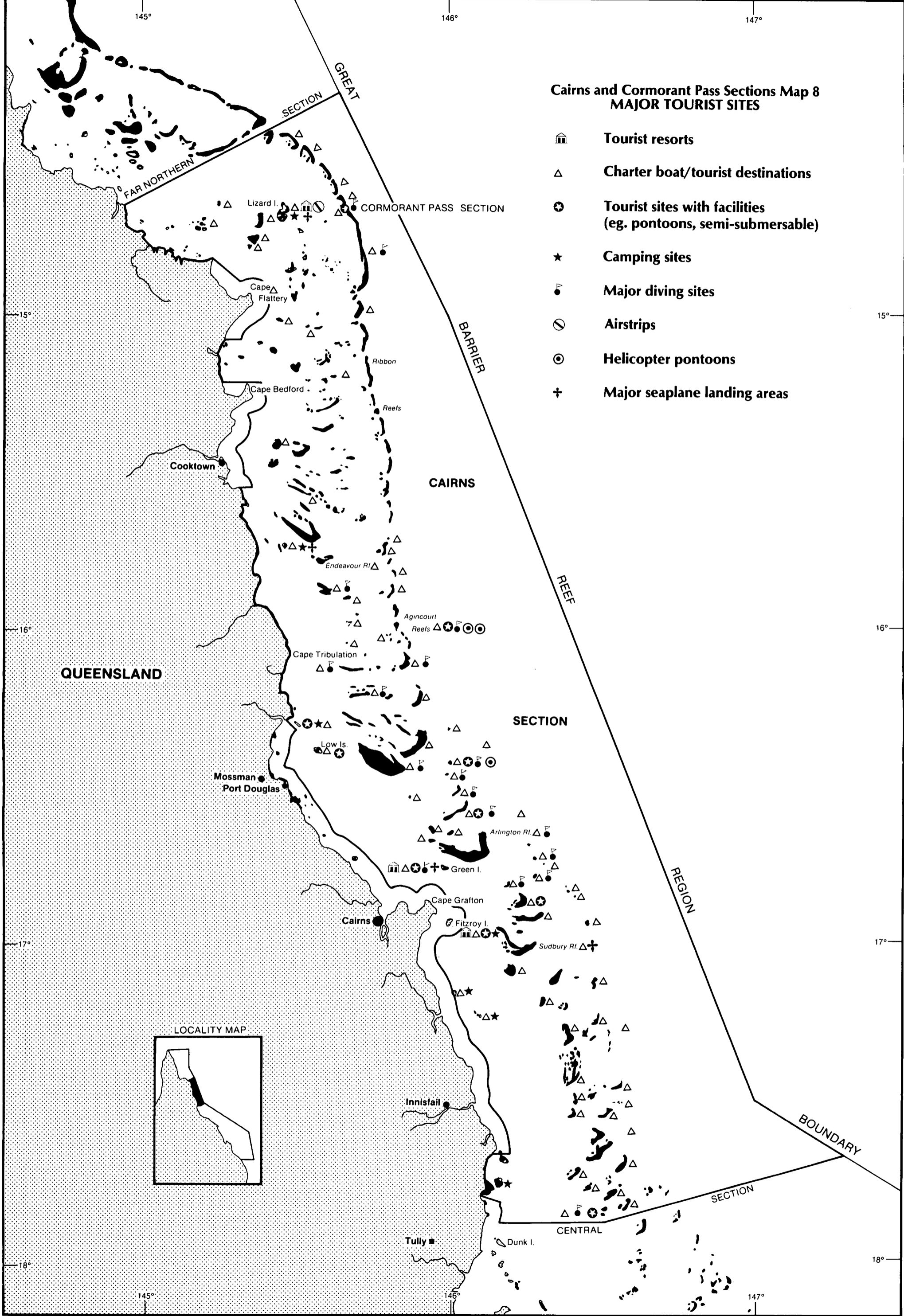
**Cairns and Cormorant Pass Sections Map 7
RESEARCH AND EDUCATION**

- ★ Research sites
- ⊙ Research facilities
- ⊙ Educational destinations
- Marine studies centre



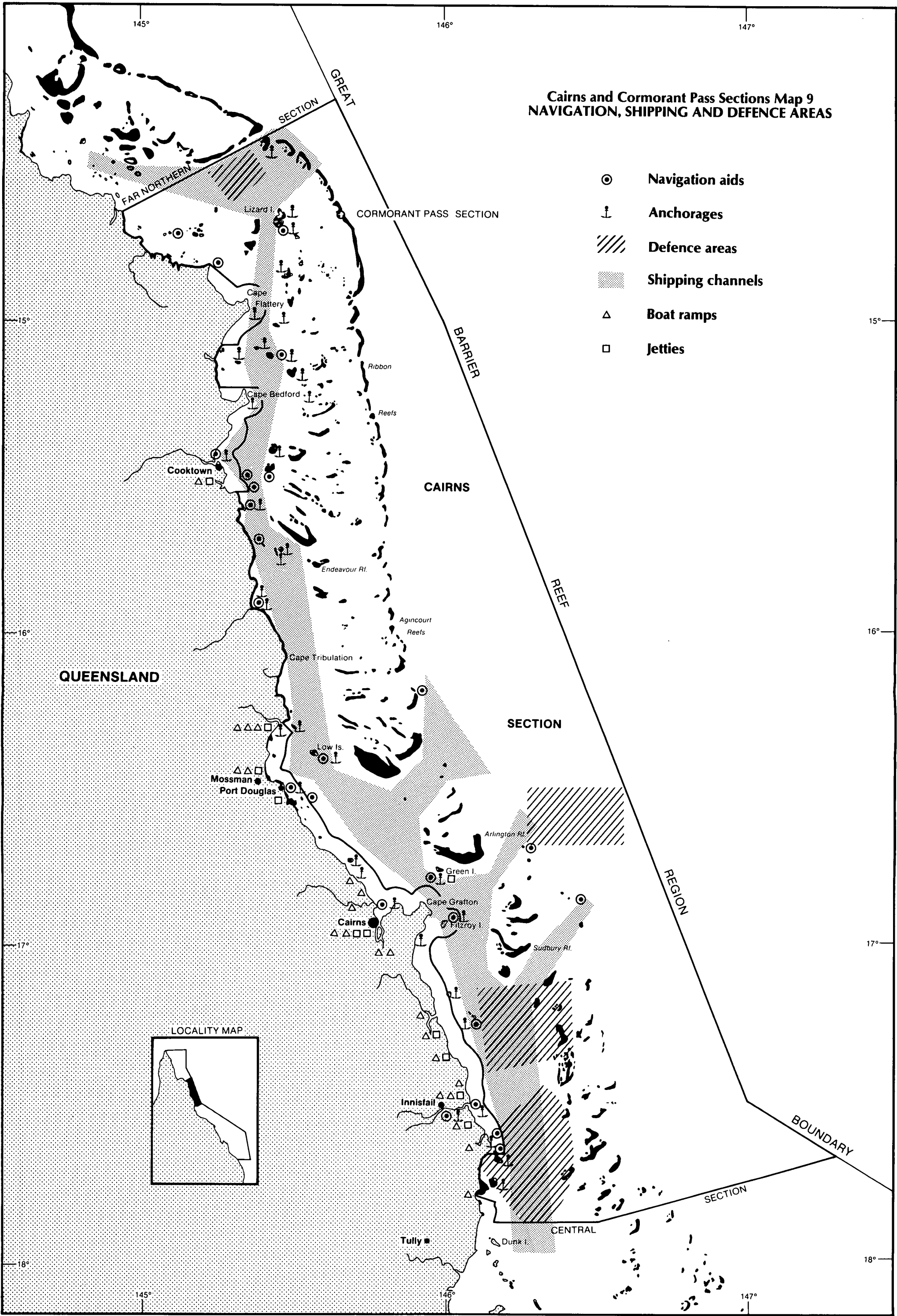
**Cairns and Cormorant Pass Sections Map 8
MAJOR TOURIST SITES**

-  Tourist resorts
-  Charter boat/tourist destinations
-  Tourist sites with facilities (eg. pontoons, semi-submersable)
-  Camping sites
-  Major diving sites
-  Airstrips
-  Helicopter pontoons
-  Major seaplane landing areas



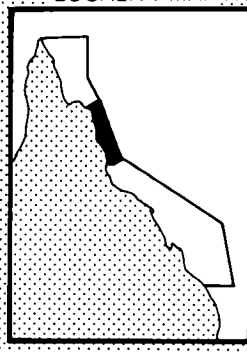
**Cairns and Cormorant Pass Sections Map 9
NAVIGATION, SHIPPING AND DEFENCE AREAS**

- ⊙ **Navigation aids**
- ⚓ **Anchorage**
- ▨ **Defence areas**
- ▤ **Shipping channels**
- △ **Boat ramps**
- **Jetties**



QUEENSLAND

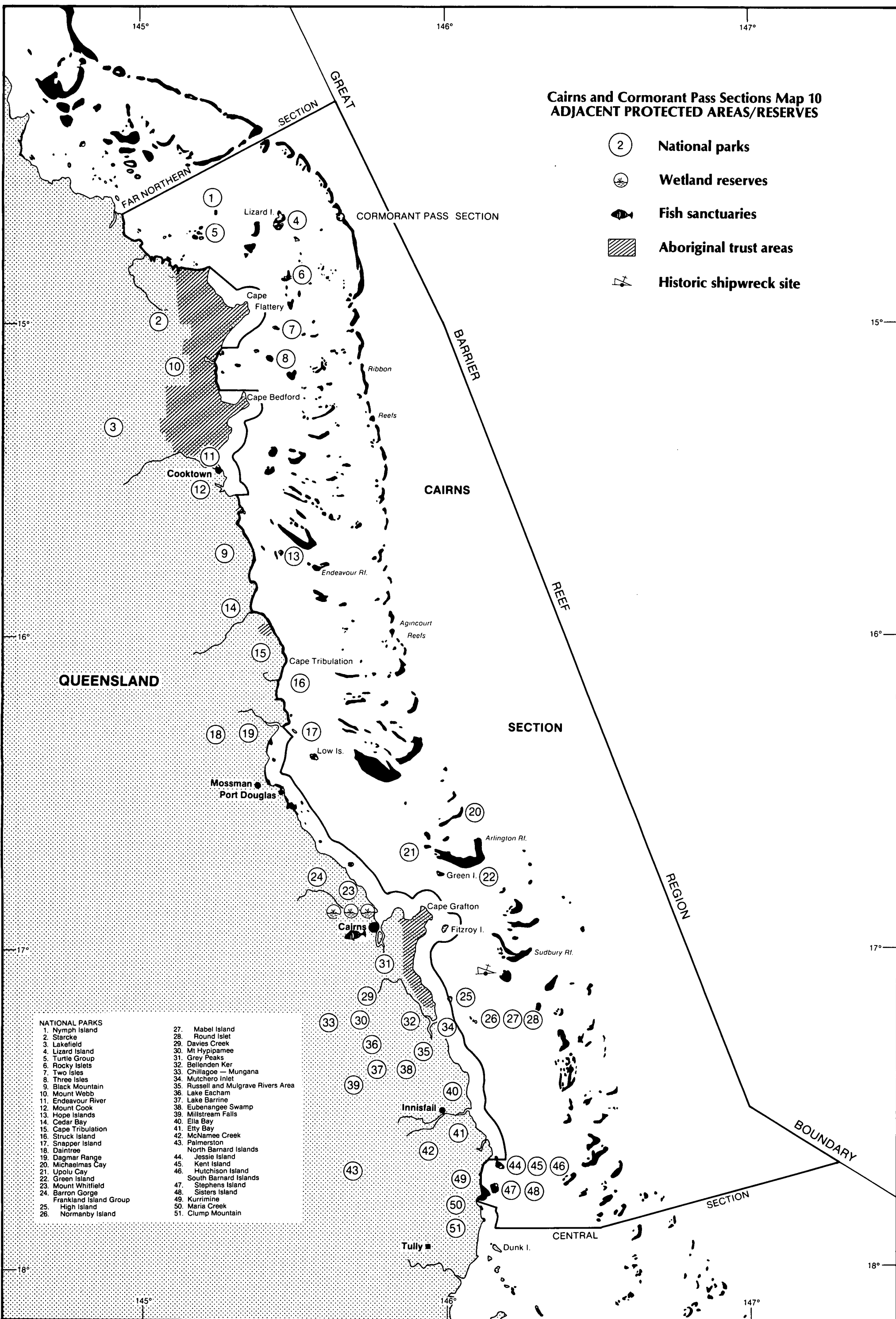
LOCALITY MAP



BOUNDARY

**Cairns and Cormorant Pass Sections Map 10
ADJACENT PROTECTED AREAS/RESERVES**

-  National parks
-  Wetland reserves
-  Fish sanctuaries
-  Aboriginal trust areas
-  Historic shipwreck site



NATIONAL PARKS

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Nymph Island | 27. Mabel Island |
| 2. Starcke | 28. Round Islet |
| 3. Lakefield | 29. Davies Creek |
| 4. Lizard Island | 30. Mt Hypipamee |
| 5. Turtle Group | 31. Grey Peaks |
| 6. Rocky Islets | 32. Bellenden Ker |
| 7. Two Isles | 33. Chillagoe - Mungana |
| 8. Three Isles | 34. Mutchero Inlet |
| 9. Black Mountain | 35. Russell and Mulgrave Rivers Area |
| 10. Mount Webb | 36. Lake Eacham |
| 11. Endeavour River | 37. Lake Barrine |
| 12. Mount Cook | 38. Eubenangee Swamp |
| 13. Hope Islands | 39. Millstream Falls |
| 14. Cedar Bay | 40. Ella Bay |
| 15. Cape Tribulation | 41. ETTY Bay |
| 16. Struck Island | 42. McNamee Creek |
| 17. Snapper Island | 43. Palmerston |
| 18. Daintree | 44. North Barnard Islands |
| 19. Dagmar Range | 45. Jessie Island |
| 20. Michaelmas Cay | 46. Kent Island |
| 21. Upolu Cay | 47. Hutchison Island |
| 22. Green Island | 48. South Barnard Islands |
| 23. Mount Whitfield | 49. Stephens Island |
| 24. Barron Gorge | 50. Sisters Island |
| 25. Frankland Island Group | 51. Kurrimine |
| 26. Normanby Island | 52. Maria Creek |
| | 53. Clump Mountain |