

## Co-management Principles

(Revision 0) Dec/ 2022

The Reef 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 have and are protecting the Reef for future generations.

**Objective:** To facilitate the ongoing implementation of the Reef Authority's [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy \(2019\)](#).

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### 1. Policy outcomes

1. To define the vision and principles for co-management to be applied in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.
2. To create a foundation for co-management to be embedded in the Reef Authority's actions (that is, decision-making, policy and plan development, and management actions). Also, to enable ongoing improvement and progress towards implementing co-management in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.
3. This Marine Park management policy document ('policy') is made under section 7(4) of the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* (Cth).

### 2. Co-management — Vision

4. The Great Barrier Reef is naturally and culturally significant, and we are committed to co-managing in partnership with Reef Traditional Owners to protect all values, delivering benefits, and the enduring and sustainable connections of Traditional Owners to the Reef are widely recognised by managing agencies, other users, and the general public.

### 3. Co-management — Principles

5. **Principle 1**  
Traditional Owners have inherent rights and interests under lore and custom, common law and the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth). The *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* (Cth) and our plans and policies expressly acknowledges these rights and interests that extend beyond those of stakeholders, and we respect these rights in the actions we take and the decisions we make.
6. **Principle 2**  
We will implement co-management that recognises the Traditional Owner aspiration of co-governance, and that is delivered through meaningful relationships, partnerships, and empowerment in decision making.
7. **Principle 3**  
In implementing co-management, the Reef Authority will include members of the public, including commercial and non-commercial marine park users in our collective co-management journey.
8. **Principle 4**  
Integrating Traditional Owner expertise into management of the Reef increases protection and conservation of all values of the Reef and is necessary to enhance Reef resilience under a changing climate.
9. **Principle 5**  
We recognise that co-management requires a place-based approach to Traditional Owner estate boundaries and will work collaboratively with other managing agencies to provide a holistic, joined up approach to co-management of Country.

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10. **Principle 6**  
We recognise and respect the cultural authority, aspirations and diversity of Reef Traditional Owners and commit to working together in a culturally safe and appropriate way, ensuring we adhere to cultural protocols, best practice, and fit for purpose engagement.
11. **Principle 7**  
Partnerships with Traditional Owners are co-designed, equitable, and transparent. Formal partnership success is predicated by shared risk, decision making and the management and maintenance of effective, robust, and mutually beneficial relationships.
12. **Principle 8**  
We recognise people and Country are connected, and strong peoples are necessary for strong Country, and we aim for effective, long-term partnerships that deliver benefits for the Reef and communities.

## 4. Definitions

**Co-management** encompasses a broad range of partnership activities and formal agreements with Traditional Owners to manage the Marine Parks.

**Cultural authority** means a system of rights and responsibilities used by Traditional Owners to care for, protect and use resources sustainably.

**Estate** means areas of Country belonging to a particular group. Many Sea Country Estates, and all adjacent coastal Estates, have been mapped to particular Traditional Owner groups who can be contacted for information about their heritage in particular areas.

**Managing agencies** means the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (Great Barrier Reef Marine Park); and the Department of Environment and Science (Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park).

**Traditional Owners** means the same as in the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* (Cth).

## 5. Supporting information

13. The development of the co-management vision and principles was guided by the Reef Authority's Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy, the Reef 2050 Plan's Strong People, Strong Country Framework, the Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan and the Queensland Government's Gurra Gurra Framework.
14. The definitions in section 4 of this policy are consistent with the Reef Authority's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy and the Tourism Management Action Strategy.
15. *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park*, 2019, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Townsville.
16. Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan, 2022.
17. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 2007, *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*, United Nations, Geneva.
18. Jarvis, D., Hill, R., Buissereth, R., Moran, C., Talbot, L., Bullio, R., Grant, C., Dale, A. P., Deshong, S., Fraser, D., Gooch, M., Hale, L., Mann, M., Singleton, G., Wren, L., 2019, *Strong peoples - Strong country Indigenous heritage monitoring framework: Summary report*, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Townsville.
19. Queensland Government, 2020, *The Gurra Gurra Framework 2020–2026*, Department of Environment and Science, Brisbane.

## Further information

### Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

2 – 68 Flinders Street  
 PO Box 1379  
 Townsville Qld 4810  
 Australia

Phone: + 61 7 4750 0700  
 Fax: + 61 7 4722 6093  
 Email: [info@gbmpa.gov.au](mailto:info@gbmpa.gov.au)

[www.gbmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbmpa.gov.au)

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