Australian Government
Climate Change, the Environment, Energy and Water
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

COST RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION STATEMENT

Cost recovery for managing the permission system under the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*

2025-26

Charging for regulatory activity involves government entities charging individuals or organisations in the non-government sector some or all of the minimum efficient costs of a specific government activity. The Cost Recovery Policy along with the Australian Government Charging Framework (the Charging Framework) sets out the policy under which government entities design, implement and review charging for regulatory activities. The CRIS is the public document to ensure the transparency and accountability for the level of the charging and to demonstrate that the purpose for charging, as decided by Government, is being achieved.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* (Cth) (the Act) is the Australian Government's central piece of environmental legislation for the long-term protection and conservation of the environment, biodiversity and heritage vales of the Great Barrier Reef Region. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (the Reef Authority) is responsible for administering the regulatory functions of the Act.

To achieve its objects, the Act provides for, *inter alia*, regulating, including by a system of permissions, use of the Marine Park in ways consistent with ecosystem-based management and the principles of ecologically sustainable use, including the consideration of applications for permissions through the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003 (*Zoning Plan).

1.1. Purpose

This Cost Recovery Implementation Statement (CRIS) provides information on how the Reef Authority implements cost recovery for the permission system. It reports actual financial and non-financial performance information for the permission system and contains financial and demand forecasts for 2025-26 and three forward years. The Reef Authority will maintain the CRIS until the activity or cost recovery for the activity has been discontinued.

1.2. Description of the regulatory charging activity

The Zoning Plan establishes the particular purposes for which use or entry into a zone of the Marine Park can be undertaken as of right and those that require the written permission of the Reef Authority. Applications for permission are subject to a thorough assessment of mandatory considerations as outlined in the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 2019* (the Regulations). Further detail is available at Permits | Reef Authority.

The main purpose of the Reef Authority's consideration of permission applications is to provide for the protection and conservation of the environment, biodiversity and heritage values of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and, consistent with these main purposes, allow for ecologically sustainable use of the Region.

Applying for 'fee-bearing application' or other applications and requests, defined in the Regulations, including a permission, incurs a fee unless:

a) The application is for the traditional use of marine resources;
b) The application is for the taking, in accordance with a program approved by the Reef Authority, of animals or plants that pose a threat to human life or safety, to marine or island ecosystems, or to the use and amenity of an area of the Marine Park;
c) The purpose of the activity is not 'of a commercial nature';
d) The Reef Authority decides that the assessment is minimal.

The Reef Authority considers whether the purpose of the activity is 'of a commercial nature,' not whether the applicant is 'of a commercial nature.' In determining if an activity is 'of a commercial nature,' the Reef Authority considers if the activity constitutes, or has sufficient connection with, the provision of goods or services for reward (either monetary or non-monetary). This includes activities that are carried out with a view to profit or an intention to make a profit, but may also cover goods or services for non-monetary reward such as free publicity or free trips on a boat.

Applicants subject to cost recovery include private entities, individuals, and government agencies[1]. It is possible for non-profit community groups, government agencies, research agencies and educational institutions to conduct an activity with a purpose that is of a commercial nature. The specific activity needs to be evaluated as to its primary purpose in order to determine whether it is of a commercial nature.

[1] Cost recovery arrangements outlined in this CRIS generally apply equally to government agencies and the private sector. Where government agencies are applicants, they derive the same benefits from services provided under the Act as private sector individuals and organisations. Therefore, it is appropriate to charge applicant government agencies in the same manner as the private sector.

2. POLICY AND STATUTORY AUTHORITY TO CHARGE (COST RECOVER)

2.1.Government policy approval to charge for this regulatory activity

Permission application assessment fees were introduced in 1990 for tourism access to the reef and for major projects. Fees were initially established in the *Great Barrier Reef Regulations 1983* as partial cost recovery, designed to assist the cost recovery of assessing an application of a commercial nature. At the time, Government considered it to be in the public interest not to charge for the assessment of applications for education or research activities, and other non-commercial use.

The permission fees were revised in July 2002 in line with cost recovery principles and included a formula for annual increases in fees linked to movements of the Consumer Price Index (CPI). However, this was prior to the adoption of the Australian Government Cost Recovery Guidelines and the Australian Government Charging Framework (Charging Framework).

These are existing charges that are in legislation and are implemented by the Reef Authority through the Permission System.

2.2. Statutory authority to charge

The statutory authority for the imposition of fees in this context is contained in the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*. Specifically, section 66(u) of the Act provides that the regulations may be made providing for the charging of fees by the Reef Authority in respect of licences, permissions, permits and authorities. Additionally, section 66(k) of the Act provides that regulations made be made providing for fees and charges to be imposed by the Authority upon persons using services or facilities provided by the Authority.

The regulations in relation to fees and charges related to the permission system have been in effect since the 1990s, with a update in 2002. The current *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 2019* include the following regarding 'fee-bearing applications':

- the fees for fee-bearing applications (section 202);
- requirements to the notices of fees payable and timing of fee payments (section 203);
- provisions relating to the consequences of non-payment of fees (sections 203 and 204); and
- specific arrangements as part of the Coronavirus economic response (sections 204A and B).

The Regulations also include the following for other applications and requests:

- the fees for other applications and requests (sections 205, 206, and 207));
- provisions relating to the consequences of non-payment of fees (section 205); and
- specific arrangements as part of the Coronavirus economic response (sections 205A and 207A).

Section 208 of the Regulations provides a formula for the indexation of the above fees based on the Consumer Price Index. Section 209 provides the ability for the Reef Authority to waive a fee payable under the above provisions or refund such a fee in certain circumstances.

Environmental Site Supervision

Section 117 (f) of the Regulations provides for the Reef Authority to impose conditions on a permission requiring the permission holder to pay the Reef Authority reasonable costs associated with inspections and supervision in relation to any conduct that is permitted by the permission. The inclusion of these conditions is generally associated with the construction, maintenance or decommissioning of a facility (including a mooring), a dredge operation or any other works or activities that may pose a risk to the environmental values of the Marine Park.

3. CHARGING (COST RECOVERY) MODEL

3.1. Outputs and business processes of the activity

Outputs

The outputs from the regulatory charging activity include the assessment and decision of permission applications received by the Reef Authority. A related outcome is the ongoing management and compliance of permission conditions and oblgiations for the term of the permit. The ultimate output is a permit.

Outputs also include the processing of administrative requests associated with operationalising a permission (refer section 3.3 for a description of the regulatory charges).

Business processes Applications are assessed against Section 103 of the Regulations and associated Reef Authority's Assessment and Decision Guidelines. Our work is guided by various policies that generally describe how we assess, decide and manage these activities.

Other related guidelines/policies:

- Permission system service charter
- Environmental Impact Management – Permission System
- Applications for joint permissions guidelines
- Heritage assessment guidelines
    - Historic heritage assessment: other places of historic and social significance
    - Historic heritage assessment: maritime cultural heritage protection special management area
    - Historic heritage assessment: lightstations and aids to navigation
- Traditional Owner heritage assessment guidelines

The permission system comprises of various systems to manage permit applications, assessment, and decision processes:

- The Reef Management System (internal)
- Query tool (internal)
- Permits Online (external facing)
- Bookings Online (external facing)
- Permit application and decision search (external facing)

3.2. Costs of the regulatory activity

The fee charged is based on the type of activity being applied for and will vary depending on its size and potential for environmental impacts. Generally, the bigger the activity, the more likely there will be impacts on the Marine Park, therefore the cost of the assessment will be greater.

Direct and indirect costs for the activity

The costs to the Reef Authority associated with the implementation of the permission system include the following: (due to the scale of the activity, expenses are provided in aggregate):

1. Employee costs and overheads: salaries, superannuation, leave entitlements and allowances.
2. Compliance, education and assisted self-regulation.
3. Travel: Cost of staff travel where required for assessment purposes
4. Environmental site supervision
5. Administration of regulation technology to provide for online services to applicants and permit holders.
6. Advertising and public notice costs including Gazettal, for certain applications.
7. Costs of obtaining necessary technical advice and assessments from consultants if certain specific expertise is not available in house.
8. Cost of Future Act Notifications under the *Native Title Act 1993.*

The cost for implementation in the permission system generally relates to staff costs. Staff costs include the base salary, superannuation and other on-costs for staff, who are directly involved in the assessment process.

The total cost also includes a component of corporate overheads (accommodation and property expenses, information technology costs and human resources support) that can be attributed to staff who are directly involved in the assessment process.

COSTS

Cost drivers

Cost recovery more equitably shares the costs of managing protecting the Marine Park environment between the community and those who derive a private benefit from the ability to apply for permission to undertake an action otherwise limited by the Act. Cost recovery, by providing a source of funding related to the amount of assessment activity undertaken by the Reef Authority, improves the agency's ability to respond to changes in demand for its services.

Assumptions about cost drivers

To provide an estimate of the demand for the current financial year, the Reef Authority assumed that the expected number of applications and administrative requests where fees would apply under the Act would be broadly similar to the previous financial years.

Not all permit applications assessments are concluded within one financial year; very complex applications can take several years to progress to a decision.

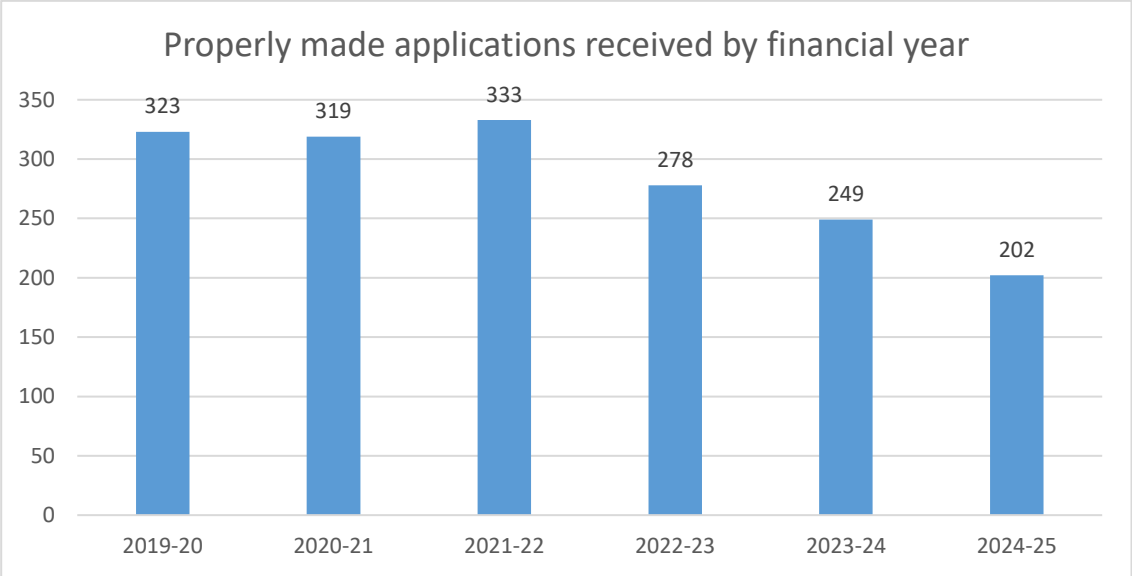

FIGURE 1. PROPERLY MADE PERMIT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY FINANCIAL YEAR

Sensitivity of cost estimates

Below are some sensitivities that may affect cost estimates.

- The number of applications received has a strong dependency on economic conditions such as visitation (national and international), tourism, and cost of living, including fuel costs. Changes to economic conditions are likely to impact the number of applications received.
- In 2017 the standard permit terms for a tourism permission was extended from 6 to 8 years and from 15 to 20 year for High Standard Tourism Operators who are eligible to apply for a 20 year permit for certified tourism products. This process involves independent eco certification. As a result, there is expected to be a lower number of applications under assessment over the 2024-25 and 2025-26 financial years.

- Over the past few years, there has been an increasing number of complex applications that do not attract fees (predominately for research and intervention activities). This means greater resources are being spent assessing applications that have no basis for cost recovery.

Allocation of resources

The delivery of the permission system is a key function under the Act and is identified in the Reef Authority's Corporate Plan. Together with the Portfolio Budget Statement and Annual Report, the Corporate Plan forms the planning and performance framework for the Reef Authority.

Categories of capital costs

Nil

Shared resources and delivery by another party

The costs also do not include the time of other Reef Authority staff to provide technical or expert advice in relation to tourism policy, species conservation and legal interpretation. Nor does it include staff costs from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service[2], who we operate a joint permission system with.

Cost management strategies

The Reef Authority is relying on its budget appropriation to cover the shortfall in expenditure until such time that the permission system fees are reviewed in line with Australian Government's cost recovery guidelines and cost recovery framework.

The Reef Authority is making capital investments to its information technology infrastructure, including migration to the to the cloud and modernisation works in order to maintain modern and effective systems for service delivery.

Cost breakdown estimates for current budget year

The costs outlined in Table 1 reflect the budgeted amounts associated with the relevant section of the Reef Authority. This section is the primary point for processing applications and post-permit decisions including compliance.

TABLE 1: ANNUAL BUDGETED EXPENSES FOR 2025-26

Activity / Task	Total ($)
Employee costs & overheads (n=23FTE)	**2,651,000**
Travel	45,000
Operations including gazettals/public notices, equipment and consultants	800,000
Total	3,496,000

Figures have been rounded.

The costs outlined in Table 1 do not include capital investments to develop systems to manage and track permission system processes such as applications, referrals, information requests and compliance actions.

3.3. Design of the regulatory charge

The Cost Recovery Policy outlines two types of cost recovery charges:

- cost recovery fees—fees charged when a good, service or regulation (in certain circumstances) is provided directly to a specific individual or organisation

- cost recovery levies—charges imposed when a good, service or regulation is provided to a group of individuals or organisations (e.g. an industry sector) rather than to a specific individual or organisation. A

[2] Most applications associated with the permission system are decided jointly with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service after the Reef Authority staff have led the assessment process. These costs associated with implementing the joint permission system with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service occur through the Joint Field Management Program.

cost recovery levy is a tax and is imposed via a separate taxation Act. It differs from general taxation as it is 'earmarked' to fund activities provided to the group that pays the levy.

The Cost Recovery Guidelines stipulate that, where appropriate, charges should be based on fees. The Reef Authority determined that a fee for service is an appropriate cost recovery charge for permission system activities under the Act; therefore this CRIS describes one type of fee as prescribed in Regulations.

Fixed charges for each category (indexed annually in line with CPI) of relevant permissions are considered the most appropriate mechanism, given that the activities are similar, and the beneficiaries are identifiable. Where required, a scale of fees reflects the significance of an assessment of a regulated activity.

Fees were originally based on the practicality and administrative cost required to assess a permission application. The most appropriate mechanism to determine administrative effort required to assess a permission was considered to be the potential impact on the Marine Park, as indicated by the size and passenger carrying capacity of a vessel (i.e. greater potential impact requires greater assessment).

Fee types: There are two categories of set fees associated with the permission system: (i) application for a permission to carry on an activity of a commercial nature in the Marine Park (including entering or using the Marine Park); and (ii) other applications and requests (including transfers, condition variations, and a variety of administrative charges).

A permission application assessment fee is charged prior to assessing the application. There are two types of permission application assessment fees:

- **Initial fees** apply if applying for a new permission or significantly changing an existing one; and
- **Continuation fees** apply to operators who already hold a permission, but who wish to continue to carry on the same activities. Continuation fees will only apply if applications are lodged before the existing permission expires, subject to Regulation 116.

In all cases, only a single fee is charged for each application. Where multiple permissions or activities are being applied for, the higher or highest single fee applies. Where permission is being sought for multiple vessels which can operate independently, the fee is calculated based on the total passenger capacity of all vessels. Where there is a primary vessel and ancillary vessels (such as tenders) associated with it, the fee is calculated based on the passenger capacity of the primary vessel.

Attachment A provides a complete list of the current permission fees for the 2025 calendar year, this is published on the Reef Authority's website at https://hdl.handle.net/11017/3249.

The fee for application for exemption from compulsory pilotage is $750. This fee in not indexed to CPI.

Fee waiver

A permission application assessment fee may be waived where the decision maker is satisfied that the assessment time required is minimal (Regulation 209).

On 23 March 2020, legislation was passed by Parliament to provide economic relief to the Great Barrier Reef tourism industry by waiving the permission related fees from 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020. Through subsequent budget processes and legislation amendments the permission related fees were waived until 30 June 2023. This is reflected in Section 204(A-B), 205(A) and 207(A). All permission fees were reinstated on 1 July 2023.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

Impacts on the community are limited to entities and individuals who undertake actions which require permission in the Marine Park. Any changes, expansion or adjustment of charges will have an impact on those entities, the scale of which will vary depending on the stakeholder and assessed during development of the charging proposal.

The most likely risks associated with the current permission system fees are:

1. Fees charged are not equitably applied across industry and user groups. Fees are currently only charged for permission applications of a commercial nature, which largely falls to the tourism industry. The tourism industry has long standing partnership with the Reef Authority and operators are stewards for conserving the sites they visit.
2. The fee structure has not been reviewed since 2002 and does not accurately reflect the effort applied to the assessment of applications.
3. The Reef Authority does not cost recover for applications that are not of a commercial nature, this includes research and reef interventions though extensive resources and effort are required to assess these applications due to their potential risk and complexity.
4. Assessment timeframes are long, with the simplest routine permit applications taking up to 25 days to be assessed and decided.
5. There is a statutory obligation to notify future acts (all permission applications) under the future act notification provisions within the *Native Title Act 1993*. Prescribed Body Corporates (PBCs) or Registered Native Title Body Corporates (RNTBCs) may charge fees under section 60AB of the *Native Title Act 1993* and section 20 of the *Native Title (Prescribed Bodies Corporate) Regulation 1999* for activities related to providing comments on proposed future acts. The number of determined groups in the Marine Park is expected to increase, as is the likelihood of invoicing. With up to 300 permit applications per year, this will be a significant cost to the Reef Authority if not cost recovered.

Mitigation strategies to address these risks include:

1. Contemporary and risk-based approach to Marine Park policy, planning and regulation that will protect key values and enable ecologically sustainable use.
2. Streamlining the permission system for a range of low-risk activities by standardising templates and conditions for use and entry allowing for more efficient assessment timeframes.
3. Consider the need for a review of the fee structure relative to the policy outcomes.
4. Continue to engage in federal government discussions, to understand future options for cost recovery of expenses due to *Native Title Act 1993* obligations.

A Charging Risk Assessment is provided at **Attachment B** and the overall rating is Medium**.**

5. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The cost recovery processes and frameworks have not changed since 2002 therefore public consultation has not been required. Feedback from permit holders is received on an ad hoc basis and will be considered if future changes are proposed.

In 2017, the Reef Authority delivered the most significant reform to its permission system in over a decade, including changes to the permission system Regulatory framework, clarification of fee structure and introduction of a service charter. This reform was required to increase transparency in decision making and the compliance program.The Reef Authority has strong partnership and stewardship arrangements with various stakeholders and has engaged with stakeholders at different points in time since the charging arrangements were implemented.

The Reef Authority regularly engages with many stakeholder groups including Local Marine Advisory Committee members, Tourism Reef Advisory Committee members, Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee members and permit holders on the permission system. The Reef Authority's advisory committees comprise a cross-sectional representation of various stakeholder interests with experience and expertise in various areas that realate to the management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

It is also noted that the regulatory charging arrangements are contained in legislation, the making of which required consultation in keeping with the requirements of the *Legislation Act 2003*.

In 2021, the Reef Authority commissioned KPMG to conduct an initial economic and regulatory analysis of the current Marine Park charging arrangement. This included a review of both the environmental management charge (EMC) and PAAF. A key area of KPMG's analysis was stakeholder consultation.

Consultations with tourism industry stakeholders provided insights on various aspects of the Marine Park's charging arrangement, including its strengths, limitations and suggestions for improvement. Consultation methods included 19 tele/video conferences with Marine Park tourism stakeholders and an online survey.

Overall stakeholders were reasonably content with the current state of the PAAF in terms of quantum of the fee, permit tenure and the application process. A key area identified for further improvement include further enhancement of technology in order to streamline the application process and alleviate the administrative burden that is currently placed on permit holders.

Following this analysis, the Reef Authority presented to the Tourism Reef Advisory Committee.

6. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

6.1. Financial Estimates

As reported in the agency's Portfolio Budget Statement for each financial year

TABLE 2. ESTIMATED FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF PERMISSION SYSTEM FEES FOR THE NEXT THREE FINANCIAL YEARS

Financial Item	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Total expenses	**3,495,586**	**3,600,454**	**3,708,468**	**3,934,314**
Total revenue	**260,000**	**260,000**	**260,000**	**260,000**
Balance = revenue - expenses	-3,235,586 7.44%	-3,340,454 7.22%	-3,448,468 7.01%	-3,674,314 6.61%

6.2. Financial Outcomes

TABLE 3. ACTUAL FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF PERMISSION SYSTEM FEES FOR PREVIOUS YEARS

Actual	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total expenses	**2,193,000**	**2,636,000**	**2,522,000**	**2,912,000**
Total revenue	**0**	**0**	**194,000**	**156,000**
Balance = revenue - expenses	-2,193,000 0.00%	-2,636,000 0.00%	-2,328,000 7.69%	-2,756,000 5.36%
Cumulative balance	**-2,193,000**	**-4,829,000**	**-7,157,000**	**-9,913,000**

These figures are based on the Reef Authority's annual financial statements audited by the Australian National Audit Office.

7. NON-FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The Permission System Service Charter sets out the services that are provided as part of the permission system, the agency standards expected of staff as applicants, as well as the targets for service delivery. The Reef Authority commits to making decisions on applications as efficiently as possible, within existing resources and places timeframe commitments on routine and tailored assessment approach decisions. Tracking progress on the principles in the Service Charter is through commitment to a range of service level standards

The Reef Authority intends to regularly review progress against the service level standards. The reporting process on these non-financial performance indicators, via the Reef Authority's annual report, provides assurance to applicants that the Reef Authority is providing an efficient and effective service.

The Authority will report relevant financial and non-financial information in its Annual Report and Portfolio Budget Statement and through updates to this CRIS on a regular basis.

8. KEY FORWARD DATES AND EVENTS

This CRIS is a living document, and will be updated annually to reflect Consumer Price Index increases in fees, volume and demand assumptions, financial performance (actual and estimated) and changes to the Regulations. The next CRIS update is scheduled for 2026-27.

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water has undertaken a whole of Portfolio Charging Review (PCR), as required by the Australian Government Charging Framework. The Reef Authority contributed to that review in 2023.

9. CRIS APPROVAL AND CHANGE REGISTER

Date of change	CRIS change	Approver	Basis for change
19/05/2017	Certification of the Statement	Chairman, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority	Implementation of new cost recovery implementation statement template
25/5/2017	Approval of the Statement	Minister for the Environment and Energy	Implementation of new cost recovery implementation statement template
15/2/2018	Annual update	Chairman, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority	Changes in forward estimates, assumptions, charges, and Regulations. Wording clarified. Formatting consistent with Department of Finance template.
15/03/2019	Annual update	Chief Executive Officer, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority	Changes in forward estimates, assumptions, charges, and Regulations. Formatting consistent with Department of Finance template.
01/05/2025	Annual update	Chief Executive Officer, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority	Changes in forward estimates, assumptions, charges, and Regulations. Formatting consistent with Department of Finance template.
19/12/2025	Annual update	Chief Executive Officer, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority	Changes in forward estimates, assumptions and charges.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: PAAF 2025 rates
Appendix B: Charging Risk Assessment (CRA)

Permit application assessment fee (PAAF)

2025

What is a permit application assessment fee?
A permit application assessment fee (PAAF) is collected to partially cover the cost of processing applications for Marine Parks permits by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (the Reef Authority) and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS). Moneys received from assessment fees remain with the Reef Authority and the QPWS.

Who needs to pay a permit application assessment fee?
Anybody applying for a permit to conduct a commercial activity within the Great Barrier Marine Park will be charged an assessment fee unless a delegate of the Reef Authority determines the assessment to be minimal. There are two types of PAAFs:

- Initial fees apply if you are applying for a new operation, or significantly changing an existing one.
- Continuation fees apply to operators who already hold a permit, but who wish to continue operations beyond the permit expiry date. Continuation fees will only apply if permit applications are lodged before the existing permit expires. If major changes are requested in a continuation application, an initial fee may be charged.

How do I know what fee I will be charged?
Please refer to the tables on the following pages. Fees are established in the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 2019* (the Regulations) as partial cost recovery for government. The fees have been set to reflect the amount of time spent administering and/or assessing the request for permission, and therefore vary according to the complexity of the request. Fees are indexed in accordance changes to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) each year.

Generally, if you are applying for more than one activity type listed in the assessment fees table below, the fee payable is the single higher or highest of the fees specified for relevant activities. **Your PAAF can only be decided definitively when your application has been submitted and accepted.**

When do the fees have to be paid?
A notice of the fee will be sent to you as soon as possible after your application has been accepted. You will then have 21 days from the date of that notice to pay the fee. For large operations requiring an environmental impact statement or a public environment report there is provision for payments to be made by instalments.

If the assessment fee is not paid within 21 days, your application will be taken to have been withdrawn and there is **NO** provision for an extension of time. If your application is taken to have been withdrawn and your current permit expires, you will have to pay the higher assessment fee charged for obtaining a new permit when you re-apply, and you will be required to cease operations until you receive the new permit, if granted. **No decision will be made on a permit application until the assessment fee has been paid.**

Are fees refundable if my application is refused?
No, assessment fees are not refundable if the application is refused. The fees are to cover our costs of assessing your application, regardless of whether a permit is granted.

How often do I have to pay a permit application assessment fee?
Each time you make an application for a commercial activity you will be charged an assessment fee. Permits are issued for different periods depending on the activity, however even if the operation does not change, you are required to pay an assessment fee each time you apply. This is because a new assessment and decision is made against the mandatory criteria for each application as required under the Regulations.

Is there a fee to change my operation?
Changing your operation may require a further assessment of the impacts of the new operation and you must let us know before you commence any changes. You may be charged an initial assessment fee if there are significant changes, such as:

- increase in passenger capacity
- changes in type of activities; and
- additions to permitted locations.

For further information on fees, please see our application guidelines.

Assessment fees

	2025 initial fee	2025 continuation fee
Activity that requires use of an aircraft or vessel having a maximum passenger capacity of:		
(a) Less than 25	$950	$950
(b) 25-50	$1,380	$1,100
(c) 51-100	$2,500	$1,530
(d) 101-150	$4,170	$2,210
(e) More than 150	$6,970	$2,780
Activity that requires the use of a facility or structure in the Marine Park	$3,060	$3,060
Activity whose impacts are to be assessed by public information package	$11,150	$4,170
Activity about which a public environment report (PER) is to be prepared	$55,860	$55,860
Continuation of an activity that required a public environment report, where another report is not required		$6,970
Activity about which an environmental impact statement (EIS) is to be prepared	$150,890	$150,890
Activity about which a PER or EIS was originally prepared, if no other such report is to be prepared about the continuation		$6,970
Activity not listed above	$950	$950

Fees for other applications and requests

Fee category	2025 fee
1. Transfer of a permit	$784
2. Variation of a condition	$535
3. Change to a SNA / ENA / MNA / FNA	$73
4. Replacement of a BIN / VIN / AIN schedule	$73
5. Re-issue of a permit	$73
6. Request to the Reef Authority for information about any of the following:	
(a) the conditions to which a permit is subject	$73
(b) whether the permission is in force	$73
(c) the activities for which the permission has been granted	$73
7. Request to vary an application, if as a result of the variation:	
(a) the Reef Authority must notify or renotify under the *Native Title Act 1993*	$73
(b) an assessment, or an additional assessment, must be made	$73
8. Request for a summary of documents, being a list of any or all of the following:	
(a) each permission granted to the person making the request	$73
(b) each application made by the person	$73
9. Lodgement fee for Permit Allocation (special permits)	$448
Plaque fees	**2025 fee**
AIN Plaque	$19.25
BIN Plaque	$11.30
VIN Plaque	$19.25
Postage and handling (per plaque package)	$9.00

For more information:
Reef Authority website:www.gbrmpa.gov.au/access/permits
Permit enquires can be addressed to: assessments@gbrmpa.gov.au

Australian Government
Department of Finance

Better Practice Template for a Charging Risk Assessment (CRA) for regulatory activities

Implementation risks	Low		Medium		High	
1. What is the proposed change in annual cost recovery revenue for the activity?	☒	<5%	☐	5 < 10 %	☐	>10% Or New
2. What is the total proposed annual cost recovery revenue for the activity?	☒	0 - $10m	☐	$10m < $20m	☐	$20m +
3. What does the policy proposal or change in the cost recovered activity involve?	☒	Change in the level of existing cost recovery charges Nil – no changes except in line with CPI	☐	Change in the structure of existing cost recovery charges and/or composition of payers	☐	Introduction of cost recovery for a new activity or for an existing activity (or its components) that has not been cost recovered previously
4. What type of cost recovery charges will be used?	☐	Levies only	☒	Fees only or fees and levies	☐	Fees, levies and other charges
5. What legislative requirements are necessary for imposition of cost recovery charges?	☒	Does not involve an Act of Parliament (e.g. Regulations, Determinations etc)	☐	Involves an Act of Parliament (e.g. enabling Act or levy imposition Act)	☐	Requires State/Territory legislative changes or referral of powers to the Commonwealth
6. Does the proposal involve working with other Commonwealth, State/Territory and/or local government entities?	☒	No	☐	Yes - with Commonwealth entities only	☐	Yes – with Commonwealth and State/Territory entities
7. What will be the expected impact of cost recovery on payers? *This may depend on, among other things:* • *the change in the level of charges* • *the number of people affected* • *the cumulative effect from other government charges/regulation* • *the economic conditions etc.*	☒	Low	☐	Medium	☐	High
8. What consultation has occurred with payers and other stakeholders about the proposed cost recovery?	☒	Consulted - no significant issues raised Existing regulation – stakeholders are advised of any changes and information is available on our website.	☐	Consulted – significant issues raised but can be addressed	☐	Not consulted or consulted and significant issues raised but ongoing sensitivities

This tool is part of the Australian Government Charging Framework which includes the Australian Government Cost Recovery Guidelines.

It should be read in conjunction with Resource Management Guide 302 and 304, available on the Finance web site (www.finance.gov.au).

Overall CRA rating:		☐	**LOW**	☒	**MEDIUM**	☐ **HIGH**
Supporting analysis: One item medium risk rating making overall risk rating medium as per below guidance. .						
Entity sign-off:	**Date** 26/08/2025	**Finance comment**				**Date**

The Charging Risk Assessment (CRA) ratings and implications

Entities must self-assess the risks associated with new or amended regulatory charging activities. (s47 & s50 Australian Government Charging Framework refers).

The CRA template guides the risk assessment process. A CRA is undertaken when preparing a new policy proposal (NPP) for a new regulatory charging activity or when changes are proposed to an existing regulatory charging activity.

The outcome of a CRA is a risk rating of 'low', 'medium' or 'high'.

The CRA rating determines whether the Cost Recovery Implementation Statement (CRIS) for a proposed regulatory charging activity will need to be agreed for release by the Finance Minister. This agreement must be sought, where the CRA rating for a proposed cost recovered activity is 'high'. Entities should note that the Cabinet, Prime Minister or Finance Minister may also request that any CRIS be brought forward for agreement.

The Finance Minister's consideration of CRISs due to a high-risk rating is in addition to the requirement for these CRISs to be approved by the responsible Minister and certified by the relevant accountable authority. The Finance Minister's agreement must be obtained prior to charging commencing.

Figure 1: CRA rating and CRIS approval processes

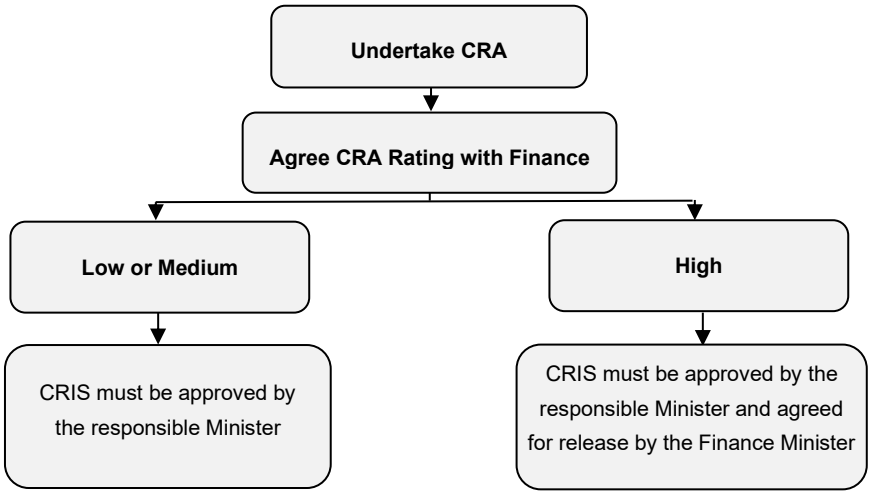

Table 1 outlines what the CRA rating would be, based on the number of responses, using the CRA template. Where an entity chooses not to use the template, an overall risk rating must still be given. This must be supported by a rationale which addresses issues relating to the complexity, materiality and sensitivity of the activity.

Table 1: Determination of the CRA rating

Number of responses to questions	Risk rating as a consequence
At least three 'high'	High
At least one 'medium' or 'high'	Medium
All 'low'	Low

Agreeing the CRA rating

The preliminary risk rating and supporting analysis, including the justification of the rating and mitigation strategies, must be provided to the relevant Agency Advice Unit (AAU), in the Department of Finance alongside any costing information. The final CRA, and supporting analysis, must reflect agreed costs.

The AAU will consult with the Charging Policy Team on the CRA risk rating for new regulatory charging activities and policy changes to existing regulatory activities, except where the AAU agreed risk rating is low. The Chief Finance Officer (or their delegate) in the entity responsible for the NPP and director of the relevant AAU will agree the CRA rating. The agreed CRA rating must be included in the NPP.

Agreeing a High Risk CRIS

Entities must consult with the relevant AAU on CRISs for high-risk regulatory charging activities before seeking agreement from the Finance Minister. As part of briefing for the Finance Minister, the AAU will consult with the Charging Policy Team and may seek input from other areas in Finance and/or other relevant entities, such as the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Changes to regulatory charging activities

Once implemented, entities may need to make changes to the regulatory charging activities, either as a result of stakeholder feedback or internal monitoring and evaluation. Entities may find the CRA useful to determine the likely approvals for changes (see Part III, Stage 3 of the RMG304 - the Australian Government Cost Recovery Guidelines). The CRA rating of any changes may differ from a previous CRA rating for the activity, i.e. undertaken as part of an NPP. If the change for an activity is rated as low risk but there had previously been a high risk rating in relation to the activity, which required the Finance Minister to agree the CRIS, the revised CRIS does not need this agreement.