

## Reef Trust Phase II Investments

The Great Barrier Reef is home to a range of extraordinary plant and animal life. The Reef is a national treasure with an amazing and ecologically diverse environment recognised globally for its Outstanding Universal Value.

Australians are passionate about the reef. Our vision is to ensure that this great natural asset continues to be a world wonder for each successive generation, and the Reef Trust is a critical tool in achieving this.

The Reef Trust is designed to fund projects that improve Reef health and resilience. Informed by the best available science, the Reef Trust pools and strategically allocates resources to address the highest priority threats to the Reef.

Through targeted strategic investments, the Reef Trust will assist delivery against key outcomes and targets of the *Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan*, the 35-year blueprint for the sustainable management of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

The Reef Trust is an Australian Government initiative working with the Queensland Government and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, and collaborating with natural resource management organisations, industry and the community. This partnership will ensure the long-term protection and conservation of the Great Barrier Reef ecosystem, preserving its World Heritage values.

### Reef Trust investments

The Australian Government has committed an additional \$100 million to the Reef Trust, bringing the total to \$140 million, to increase management and protection measures and reduce the key pressures facing the Reef.

Phase two Reef Trust investments will focus on reducing nitrogen and sediment runoff into the Reef and continued control of coral-eating crown of thorns starfish. Importantly, these investments will complement and build on existing actions being delivered across the Reef regions by all levels of government, industry, landholders and the community.

Collectively the Australian and Queensland governments are investing more than \$200 million this financial year to support Reef health across a range of areas, including marine park management, water quality improvement, research and monitoring, education and coastal ecosystem repair.

The Australian Government original contribution to the Reef Trust of \$40 million remains focused on improvements to water quality, restoration of coastal habitats and protection of threatened and migratory species, including dugong and turtles. The Reef Trust incorporates the latest science and research into investment decisions ensuring each phase of investment targets the highest priority threats to the Reef. The Australian Government has recently announced that an independent panel, chaired by the Commonwealth Chief Scientist Professor Ian Chubb, will advise on future investment priorities for the Reef Trust.

## New Phase II investments

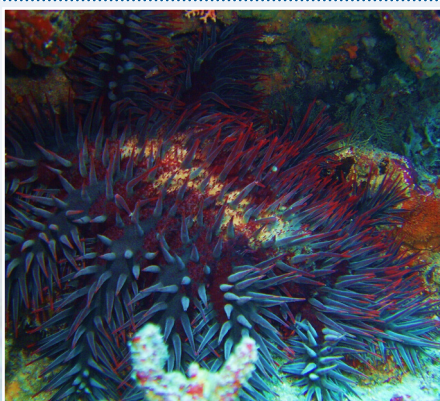
The next phase of investment focuses on a continued effort to combat outbreaks of crown-of-thorns starfish, and improve the quality of water entering the Reef through changes to management practices in both the cane and grazing industries.



### Gully erosion control in priority grazing landscapes—\$5.4 million

Gully erosion in the Reef catchments is the dominant source of fine sediment and associated nutrients entering the reef lagoon. This can reduce the amount of light which is central to the health and productivity of seagrasses and other plants, smother corals and may influence crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks.

This investment will be used to implement low cost, effective gully remediation techniques to reduce erosion from active gullies in priority grazing landscapes.



### Crown-of-thorns starfish control—\$7 million

Over the past three decades, 42 per cent of coral loss has been attributed to crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks. While the starfish are native to the Reef, outbreaks have led to coral being consumed at a rate faster than it can recover.

This investment will continue the tactical control of crown-of-thorns starfish to reduce predation on coral reefs into the future. This programme has already culled well over 300,000 starfish and this further investment will build on this important work.



### Reef Trust tender—Burdekin \$3 million

Nitrogen run-off from fertiliser use is one of the greatest water quality risks. It can impact on a range of species, including coral and seagrass, and has been linked to crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks.

This investment will engage cane farmers to improve their fertiliser nutrient and water management practices to reduce pollutant run off into the Reef lagoon.

Photo: (from top) Arthur Mostead, Cathy Zwick, Andy Heaney

## Building on Phase I investments underway



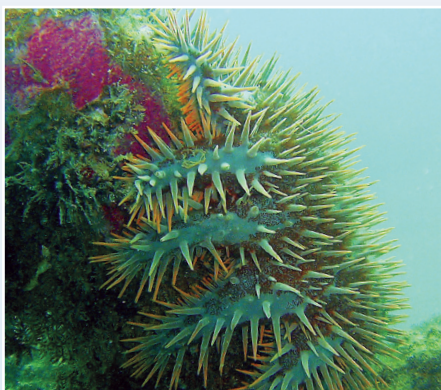
### Reef Trust Tender—Wet Tropics

Under the first phase of investment, the Reef Trust Tender—Wet Tropics, used a competitive tender process to provide financial incentives for sugar cane farmers in the Wet Tropics region, to undertake actions that improve nitrogen use efficiency, therefore providing water quality outcomes for the Reef in terms of reduced fertiliser runoff.



### Grazing in the Fitzroy and Burdekin regions

This project builds on existing work to improve water quality in the Great Barrier Reef through engaging graziers in the Fitzroy and Burdekin regions to enhance their productivity and profitability while reducing their impact on the environment. The Fitzroy and Burdekin regions are identified in the *2013 Scientific Consensus Statement on Water Quality in the Great Barrier Reef* as having the highest relative risk of degraded water quality from sediment run-off.



### Tackling crown-of-thorns starfish

Crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks are among the most significant threats facing the Reef, with a current outbreak off the Wet Tropics region. The Reef Trust crown-of-thorns starfish control project is supporting marine park tourism operators to protect high value tourism reef sites through the targeted culling of the starfish.



### Protecting dugong and turtles

The Dugong and Turtle Protection Plan will deliver four Reef Trust investments that contribute to the enhanced protection and conservation of dugong and marine turtles. Collectively the investments address some of the greatest threats faced by these species, such as hunting and poaching, marine debris, and illness and injury.

Photo: (from top) Andy Heaney, Dragi Markovic, Cathy Zwick and Fusion Films



Photo: Nigel Marsh

## Scientific underpinning for Reef Trust investments

Just as science has helped the world understand and appreciate the incredible richness and diversity of the Great Barrier Reef, it is also at the heart of our efforts to manage and protect the Reef. The more we learn about the Reef, the better equipped we are to ensure it remains healthy. All Reef policy and programmes, including the Reef Trust and the Reef 2050 Plan, are supported by science.

This information comes from a wide range of sources—research institutions, government agencies, universities, businesses and consultants, traditional owners and the community.

The significant work undertaken by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and scientists to produce the *Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2014* is key to outlining the Reef's current health and pressures, and likely future state. This work has been integral in designing the second phase of Reef Trust investment. Information from the authority's strategic assessment of the Great Barrier Reef region, and the Queensland Government's strategic assessment of the adjacent coastal zone, provide an understanding of the connectivity of the terrestrial and marine environment, examining how natural and heritage values can be protected into the future.

The Australian and Queensland Government Reef Plan Paddock to Reef Integrated Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting Programme has also helped improve the knowledge base across a range of Reef issues over the past five years.

Reef Trust investments are guided and informed by world class biodiversity and climate science funded through a number of programmes. These include the National Environmental Research Programme, continued under the recently announced National Environmental Science Programme hubs, and the Queensland Government Reef Water Quality Science Programme.

Prioritising regions and industries where investment should be targeted is another important component. Existing information in reports such as the Scientific Consensus Statement 2013 and the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan 2013 Prioritisation project report have been drawn on to ensure the actions identified for the second phase of Reef Trust investment are targeted to where they will have the greatest impact and deliver the greatest outcome for the Reef for every dollar spent.

All of these approaches and investments are contributing to the outcomes under the Reef 2050 Plan.

For more information visit  
[environment.gov.au/marine/gbr/reef-trust](http://environment.gov.au/marine/gbr/reef-trust)

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