



Australian Government



Queensland Government

What Australia is doing to manage the Great Barrier Reef

June 2015

The new Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan is the blueprint for Australia's continuing efforts to preserve the Great Barrier Reef, building on our long history of successful management. The first of its kind for a property of this scale, the 35-year plan will strengthen the resilience of the Reef and maintain its Outstanding Universal Value.

The Reef's Outstanding Universal Value remains intact

A maze of 3000 coral reefs and 1050 islands, the Great Barrier Reef covers an area the size of Italy and stretches 2300 km along Australia's north-east coast.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's independent and scientifically robust Outlook Report 2014 found **the Reef retains its Outstanding Universal Value** and the overall integrity of this vast property also remains in good condition.

Strong and decisive action to protect the Reef

Australia has permanently banned the disposal of port related capital dredge material in the entire World Heritage Area.

The federal ban was announced at the World Parks Congress on 12 November 2014 and came into law on 2 June 2015.

In the past 18 months the number of capital dredging proposals to place dredge material in the marine park has been reduced from five to zero.

Capital dredging for ports will be restricted to within the long established priority ports of Gladstone,

Hay Point/Mackay, Abbot Point and Townsville—and only within the legislated port limits. Legislation to this effect has been introduced into the Queensland Parliament.

We have doubled funding to control crown-of-thorns starfish, to further protect the Reef's corals.

Tough new penalties against poaching will provide extra protection for turtles and dugongs, as will increased funding to reduce marine debris.

The Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan

The new Reef 2050 Plan strengthens Australia's management of the Reef to protect and preserve the living reef and its Outstanding Universal Value. By working together, all levels of government, the community, traditional owners, industry and the scientific community will improve, enhance and maintain the Reef's health and deliver ecologically sustainable development.

The Reef 2050 Plan is based on the best available scientific research, as well as lessons learnt from 40 years of cooperative management, and analysis of the entire Reef region from the comprehensive strategic assessment.

The plan has concrete targets and actions, and everyone with a stake in the Reef has clear responsibilities. Both the Australian and Queensland governments are committed to delivering the best possible outcomes for the future protection and management of the Reef.

Implementation of the Reef 2050 Plan is already underway and with ongoing scientific and community input we are focussing on prioritising investments and improving monitoring.

Sustained investment into the future

Australian and Queensland government investment in Reef management and research activities is projected at more than \$2 billion over the coming decade. This includes:

- \$140 million in funding for the Reef Trust—including the additional \$100 million for improved water quality announced by Australia's Prime Minister
- \$100 million in addition to the current \$35 million per year from the Queensland Government for improving water quality and further reducing the impacts of fishing.



World Heritage Area
348 000 km² stretches 2300 km,
with 3000 coral reefs
and 1050 islands



No new port developments
have been, or will be, approved
outside existing long-established
port areas



Australia continues to invest
in monitoring and protection of the
reef, and is implementing its long-term
sustainability plan

We have finalised a baseline of all federal, state and local government investment in protecting the Reef, as well as private and philanthropic investment, as part of the Reef 2050 Plan's investment framework. With the help of an Independent Expert Panel chaired by Australia's Chief Scientist and a Reef Advisory Committee chaired by the former governor of Queensland, we will now determine investment priorities for the future and set out a strategy for boosting investment and diversifying resources over time.

We are starting to see results

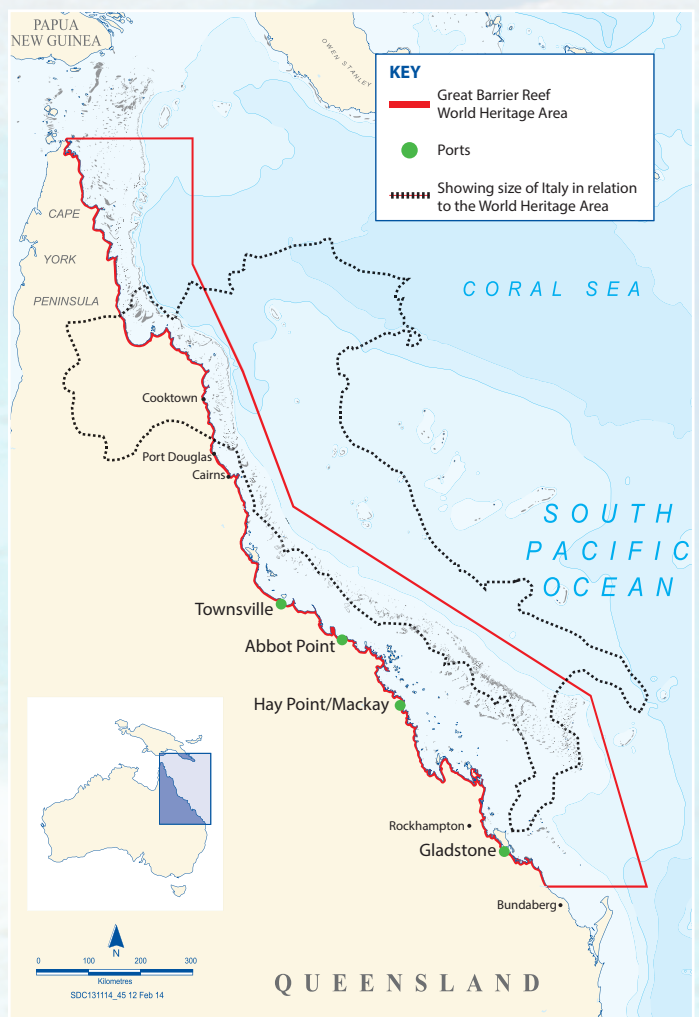
Over recent years we have halted and reversed the decline in water quality in the Reef's catchments. Based on state-of-the-art modelling and extensive monitoring, estimated annual average pesticide load has been reduced by 28 per cent, sediment load by 11 per cent, total nitrogen load by 10 per cent, and dissolved inorganic nitrogen by 16 per cent compared to a 2009 baseline.

Over \$29 million has been allocated from the Reef Trust so far to improve the quality of water flowing into the Reef, enhance species protection and control outbreaks of crown-of-thorns starfish.

Queensland has established the Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce to provide advice on the best approach to achieve up to 80 per cent reduction in nitrogen run-off and up to 50 per cent reduction in sediment run-off in key catchments by 2025.

We will continue working with landholders to reduce nutrient and sediment run-off into the Reef and improve the condition of native vegetation across the catchment.

We expect a lag time between interventions to reverse negative impacts and the emergence of evidence that they are having an effect. A reef-wide Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program is being developed to monitor the success of the Reef 2050 Plan and inform adaptive management. Annual reporting will highlight progress in delivery. A full review will occur every five years to ensure the plan remains consistent with the best scientific advice and relevant to addressing pressures on the Reef.



Our commitment into the future

Australia is determined the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area remains internationally recognised for its Outstanding Universal Value. We are confident that we have the environmental protection and investment in place to ensure the Reef continues to be among the best managed and protected marine ecosystems in the world.

For further information

www.environment.gov.au/gbr

www.Reefplan.qld.gov.au

www.gbrmpa.gov.au

Australia's response to the World Heritage Committee

Australia has responded comprehensively to all of the requests of the World Heritage Committee and has taken unprecedented action to address concerns about the health and management of the Great Barrier Reef.

The need for a long-term plan

The ground-breaking **Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan** is a 35-year plan for the management of the Reef based on the **strategic environmental assessment** of the Reef and the **Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2014**. The plan focuses on actions to address key threats and directly boost the health and resilience of the Reef so that it is best able to cope with pressures, including the effects of climate change.

The plan is a schedule of the updated *Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement*. This gives it the highest status available under Australia's federated system of government.

www.environment.gov.au/protection/assessments/strategic/great-barrier-reef

www.gbrmpa.gov.au/managing-the-reef/great-barrier-reef-outlook-report

www.environment.gov.au/reef2050



In place

Managing development in Gladstone Harbour and on Curtis Island

The recommendations from the **Independent Review of the Port of Gladstone** will improve port operation and inform the work of the new **Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership** and other efforts to protect the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

www.environment.gov.au/gladstonereview

rc.ghhp.org.au



In place

Water quality

The latest **report card** based on state-of-the-art modelling and informed by extensive monitoring shows water quality has improved. Estimated annual average sediment load has been reduced by 11 per cent, pesticide load by 28 per cent, and total nitrogen load by 10 per cent compared with 2009.

This is the result of investments by the Australian and Queensland governments of more than **\$375 million** over the past five years, complemented by substantial in-kind investment by industry. Water quality will also be a focus for the \$140 million **Reef Trust** as well as the Queensland Government's additional \$100 million over five years towards water quality initiatives, scientific research and better environmental practices in the primary production and fishing industries.

www.reefplan.qld.gov.au/measuring-success/report-cards/2012-2013-report-card.aspx



In place

No development to impact individually or cumulatively on the Reef's Outstanding Universal Value

Rigorous environmental assessment under the **Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999** using the new **EPBC Act referral guidelines for the Outstanding Universal Value of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area** ensures that Outstanding Universal Value is central to the protection of the property. Developments with an unacceptable impact on the Great Barrier Reef will not be approved.

In response to commitments made in the strategic environment assessment, Cumulative Impact Assessment Guidelines and a Net Benefit Policy are being prepared to guide decision making.

www.environment.gov.au/protection/environment-assessments



In place

Limiting the impact of ports and port development


The Australian Government has permanently banned the disposal of capital dredge material in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. In the past 18 months the number of capital dredging proposals to place dredge material in the marine park has been reduced from five to zero.

The Queensland Government has introduced the **Sustainable Ports Development Bill 2015** to the Queensland Parliament, which complements the Australian Government's ban. Under this legislation, sea-based disposal of any port-related capital dredged material in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area will be banned. Port-related capital dredging will be restricted to within the long established port limits of the regional priority ports of Gladstone, Hay Point/Mackay, Abbot Point and Townsville. The Bill mandates the beneficial reuse of dredged material. If beneficial reuse is not possible, the Bill mandates disposal on land where it is environmentally safe to do so.

Greenfield areas are protected from the impacts of port development. The Port of Rockhampton is not a priority port and is not included in the proposed boundary for the Gladstone port master planned area. This delivers on the Queensland Government's commitment to protect the Fitzroy Delta, including North Curtis and Keppel Bay.



In place

Best practice port planning	
<p>An action of the <i>Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan</i> is to adopt the best practice principles identified in the Gladstone Independent Review reports and integrate them into port planning and development. Queensland's <i>Sustainable Ports Development Bill 2015</i> will legislate for long term master planning at the four priority ports. Mandatory port master planning will deliver certainty to priority ports and their associated industry sectors while also ensuring the protection of the Reef's Outstanding Universal Value.</p>	 In place
Rigorous management of shipping	
<p>The Queensland Government has announced it will not support trans-shipping projects within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.</p> <p>The North-East Shipping Management Plan, released in late 2014 is being implemented to further reduce risks from shipping incidents. It builds on existing arrangements to provide an integrated approach to shipping management in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, Coral Sea and Torres Strait regions and gives explicit consideration to the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Area.</p> <p>At Australia's request, in May 2015 the International Maritime Organization more than doubled the size of the Great Barrier Reef Particularly Sensitive Sea Area to cover a further 565 000 km² of the South-West Coral Sea. This will help ensure that ships keep away from areas where they could cause significant damage.</p> <p>www.amsa.gov.au/forms-and-publications/Publications/AMSA439.pdf</p>	 In place
Address climate change and other forms of environmental degradation	
<p>An international solution on climate change is required. Australia is playing its part.</p> <p>Internationally we are working constructively towards a new global climate change agreement that involves all countries and by pledging \$200 million to the Green Climate Fund.</p> <p>Domestically we are meeting our 2020 emissions reduction targets and will mitigate climate change through the new \$2.55 billion Emissions Reduction Fund. The fund is already providing the impetus for businesses and the community to improve practices, invest in new technologies and reduce our emissions through activities such as revegetation, investing in soil carbon, cleaning up power stations, capturing gas from landfill and increasing energy efficiency. In the first Emissions Reduction Fund auction the Australian Government awarded contracts to the value of \$660 million to buy 47 million tonnes of carbon abatement. This is the largest emissions reduction commitment by business ever in Australia and will be built upon in subsequent auctions.</p> <p>We are implementing the <i>Great Barrier Reef Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan (2012–2017)</i> which outlines how the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, in collaboration with industry, science and community partners will work to improve the resilience of the Reef so it is better able to cope with stress and reduce the impacts of climate change.</p> <p>elibrary.gbrmpa.gov.au/jspui/handle/11017/1140</p>	 In place
Independent review of institutional and management arrangements for the Reef	
<p>This review was completed in September 2014. The review identified that legislation for the protection and management of the Reef is generally comprehensive.</p> <p>www.environment.gov.au/marine/gbr/publications/independent-review</p>	 In place
Ensure legislation remains strong and adequate to maintain and enhance Outstanding Universal Value	
<p>Australia will progress streamlined environmental assessments and approvals that maintain existing high environmental standards including consideration of the Outstanding Universal Value and integrity of the property when development proposals are being considered. Queensland has also committed to strengthen legislation to protect native vegetation, including in Great Barrier Reef catchments, effectively manage the coastal zone including wetlands, and ensure that water extraction is managed in accordance with the principles of ecologically sustainable development.</p> <p>www.environment.gov.au/one-stop-shop</p>	 In place
Overall protection and management of the property	
<p>Australia is fully committed to maintaining the Outstanding Universal Value and integrity of the Reef. Strong protection and management foundations are already in place. The integrated delivery of existing and new measures will be given effect through the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan. The plan and the updated <i>Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement</i> will ensure that the Reef's Outstanding Universal Value is maintained and is central to the protection of the property.</p>	 In place
Request for progress reports on the state of conservation of the Reef	
<p>Australia has responded to all World Heritage Committee requests since 2011 for progress reports on the state of conservation of the Reef, most recently through the 2015 State Party Report and Addendum, the <i>Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2014</i> and the <i>Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan</i>.</p> <p>www.environment.gov.au/world-heritage/gbr</p>	 In place