



Australian Government

Review of the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*

Review Panel Report



Review of the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*
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Snorkellers with Low Isles in background, Port Douglas, Far North Queensland.

Image: A. Elliott



Fishing at Pelorus Island, Lucinda in background, Far North Queensland

Image: J. Jones



Coastal trader *River Embley*, en route to Gladstone through the Great Barrier Reef

Image: photographer unknown



Slashers Reef, Great Barrier Reef

Image: J Jones



Coral Cod on Stevens Reef, Great Barrier Reef

Image: Ben Cropp



Oblique view of North West Island reef, looking across top of reef towards the island, Capricorn Bunker Group, Rockhampton, Queensland

Image: photographer unknown



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Please note correction on p. 78

The second paragraph on this page should read:

The Capricorn Bunker Region is located off the Queensland coast between Rockhampton and Gladstone (Map 18). The area includes six bioregions, three of which are unique to the area and found in no other part of the Marine Park (Map 19). The Capricorn and Bunker Group of islands and reefs are an **important** habitat for threatened turtle species such as the loggerhead, green, and hawksbill turtles. The area is part of the Capricornia Cays National Park and includes significant seabird nesting sites.

Please note correction on page 156

The sixth paragraph on this page should read:

The EPBC Act, on the other hand, applies predominantly to Commonwealth land and waters, although some provisions **apply regardless of location**. These are provisions that regulate issues having a significant impact on 'matters of national environmental significance' (which include the world heritage values of World Heritage Areas). Another key difference is that the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* reflects and implements a cooperative approach to management between the Australian and Queensland governments that is underpinned by an intergovernmental agreement (the Emerald Agreement).

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This report is available at www.deh.gov.au

Foreword



The Great Barrier Reef is the world's largest coral reef, covering some 344 400 square kilometres of unparalleled biodiversity and unique ecosystems. Recognised internationally as a World Heritage Area, the Great Barrier Reef is an icon for all Australians.

The *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* established the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park some 30 years ago, and has been during this time an exemplar for marine management and conservation. An important part of this has been – and continues to be – a collaboration with the Queensland Government in managing and protecting the Marine Park.

In commissioning a review of the Act, the Australian Government has recognised the evolving needs and challenges of safeguarding the Marine Park for the future. Meeting these requires up-to-date, relevant legislation and an approach that provides for continued protection for marine life and biodiversity, as well as for ongoing sustainable economic and recreational activity and engagement with business and local communities.

I am pleased to present the report of the Review Panel, which sets out a clear direction for the future management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The Australian Government is committed to the long-term protection and wise use of this precious asset, and commends this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Campbell'.

Senator the Hon. Ian Campbell
Minister for the Environment and Heritage



Review of the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*

Senator The Hon Ian Campbell
Minister for the Environment and Heritage
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

In accordance with the terms of reference, we are pleased to present to you the report of the Review of the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*.

In conducting the Review, we have considered carefully the 227 substantive submissions to the Review made from a wide range of interested parties. We have also held a total of 36 consultation meetings with relevant industry, community, government and conservation organisations.

We are confident that our recommendations provide a framework for ensuring the effective protection and management of the Great Barrier Reef into the future.

Yours sincerely,

David Borthwick
Chair of the Review Panel
Secretary
Department of the
Environment and Heritage

28 April 2006

Barbara Belcher
First Assistant Secretary
Department of the
Prime Minister and Cabinet

28 April 2006

Jonathan Hutson
General Manager
Department of Finance
and Administration

28 April 2006

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Glossary of commonly used terms and acronyms

Authority – refers to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

Bioregion – an area which shares similar environmental, physical and climatic conditions and contains characteristic ecosystems of plants and animals. The protection of representative areas of each of the 70 bioregions in the Great Barrier Reef is a key objective of the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003*

CRC Reef – the Cooperative Research Centre for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. CRC Reef was established in 1994–95 as a knowledge-based partnership of coral reef ecosystem managers, researchers and industry. Its mission has been to plan, fund and manage science for the sustainable use of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. CRC Reef will cease in 2006 and will be largely superseded by the Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility

CSIRO – the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

Department – refers to the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage

Ecosystem-based management – an approach to environmental and resource management that seeks to manage ecosystems and their component parts on an integrated and holistic basis, rather than considering single issues in isolation from their environment and other inter-related issues. The key objective of ecosystem-based management is the maintenance of ecosystem processes and biodiversity

EEZ – Exclusive Economic Zone

Emerald Agreement – a 1979 agreement between the Australian and Queensland governments that provides the current framework for intergovernmental cooperation in the protection and management of the Great Barrier Reef (see Appendix E)

EPBC Act – *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwlth)

EMC – Environmental Management Charge

Executive management – an approach to governance, outlined in Uhrig (2003), under which governance of a statutory authority is primarily the responsibility of the government

GBRMPA – Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

Governing board – an approach to governance, outlined in Uhrig (2003), under which governance of a statutory authority is primarily the responsibility of a board of directors accountable to the government

Great Barrier Reef – used in a non-technical sense to refer in general terms to the area of the Great Barrier Reef

Great Barrier Reef Region – the areas in relation to which the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park may be established. This area is defined in the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*. Around 98 per cent of the Great Barrier Reef Region has been declared to be a part of the Marine Park

Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area – the area constituting the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, as inscribed on the World Heritage List. This area has the same outer boundaries as the 'Great Barrier Reef Region', but also includes Queensland islands and areas considered to be 'internal waters' of Queensland within this Region. Around 98 per cent of the World Heritage Area has been proclaimed as part of the Marine Park. An additional 1 per cent has been proclaimed by Queensland to be national parks (island areas) and a marine park (areas considered to be 'internal waters' of Queensland)

Green Zone – refers to Marine National Park Zones, as established by the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003*. Green Zones are closed to extractive uses such as fishing

Gross Value Added (GVA) – a measure of the economic value of the *net* output produced by an industry. Generally, this equates to the profit of the industry

Gross Value of Production (GVP) – a measure of the economic value of the *gross* output of an industry. Unlike GVA, GVP does not deduct the costs of producing the output, thereby providing an indication of the value added by upstream industries

IUCN – World Conservation Union (formerly International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources)

LMAC – Local Marine Advisory Committee

The marine and national parks – refers collectively to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, the Queensland Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park and Queensland national parks established in relation to islands in the Great Barrier Reef

Marine Park – refers to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park established under the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* (Cwlth) and not used to refer to the Queensland marine or national parks

Marine Protected Area – refers generically to protected areas of various forms (e.g. national parks, reserves) established in relation to marine areas for the purpose of the protection and maintenance of biological diversity and of natural and associated cultural resources. The term is not used in this report to refer to areas closed to extractive uses (i.e. 'no-take' areas), as is sometimes the case

Ministerial Council – the Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Council, established pursuant to the Emerald Agreement of 1979

Multiple use – a management objective applied to some protected areas (including the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park), whereby social, economic and cultural uses of the area are permitted and managed subject to overarching environmental protection and conservation objectives

Portfolio – the Environment and Heritage portfolio. Encompasses the Department of the Environment and Heritage and executive agencies and statutory authorities (including the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority) for which the Minister for the Environment and Heritage is responsible

Precautionary principle – the principle that lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing a measure to prevent degradation of the environment where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental harm. The precautionary principle is a component part of the concept of ecologically sustainable development

RAC – Reef Advisory Committee

RAP – Representative Areas Programme

Statutory authority – a public sector entity established by legislation

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

WWF – World Wildlife Fund

2003 Zoning Plan – refers to the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003*