



Natural Heritage Trust
Helping Communities Helping Australia
An Australian Government Initiative

Working with Indigenous Knowledge
in Natural Resource Management

Sea Forum Case Study

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The following case study is taken from the recently closed Sea Forum website as an example of an agreement between Indigenous communities and a Regional Natural Resource Management Body.

The main issues for Sea Forum are the sea rights and interests of the Southern Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owners, and the overall management of our sea country at the southern Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

As Traditional Owners, we have certain resource management goals. Existing management of the Southern Great Barrier Reef (SGBR) offers us opportunities as well as limitations in the pursuit of these goals.

Sea Forum has decided that to improve our chances of achieving these goals, we need to negotiate with the Government management agencies and industry to create a framework agreement for the whole region. It is hoped that this framework will help Traditional Owners negotiate at the local level and achieve their goals for their country.

Each sea country estate area will have its own management structures, based on the local needs and rights of Traditional Owners.

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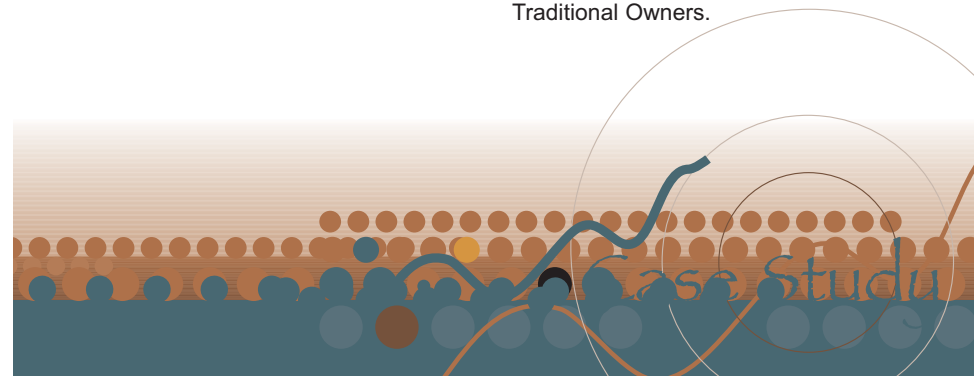
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The potential rights and goals of Sea Forum include:

1 Respect for Aboriginal goals when planning and managing resources

- Management agency will recognise Aboriginal rights for co-management.
- Aboriginal control input/participation in decision-making will be negotiated.

2 Sustainable resource use and management through cooperation

- Acceptance and official recognition that Aboriginal knowledge of resource use can improve existing arrangements.
- Intellectual property rights must be protected.
- Establish protocols to protect levels of resources.
- Make sure what happens on the land does not damage sea country.

3 Education

- Education for the wider community about culture and sustainable resource use (e.g. through tourism).
- Education about Aboriginal culture and management goals at the planning and policy stages by involving Aboriginal people in decision-making and management.
- Education for Aboriginal people (young and old) about how to manage resources and how to make policies.
- Use of resources to promote recognition of Aboriginal rights.

4 Cultural practice and regeneration

- The use of country to help resolve past conflicts.
- The use of marine resources to maintain and restore Aboriginal culture.
- Make a list of places that are culturally significant, then protect and manage them.

- Aboriginal control and management of cultural property and heritage.
- Resource management/ownership continuing as a basis for Aboriginal law.

5 Generate long-lasting social and economic benefits

- Securing and exercising economic (legal) rights.
- Ensuring on-going economic benefits to help improve Aboriginal health and standard of living and to break free of economic dependence.
- Recognition and improvement of Aboriginal subsistence economies.
- Providing employment and training through the use and management of resources.
- Establishing Indigenous business (e.g. through tourism) to promote education and economic development.

Traditional Owner groups share many goals, but it is up to individual groups to state and promote their own goals to negotiate within the framework agreement.

Issues

The Sea Forum was workshoped at Sea Forum IV on Fraser Island in March 1999 to identify issues that all Traditional Owner groups on the SGBR had concerns about.

The Forum identified a number of issues that needed to be negotiated between Traditional Owners and the agencies and industries involved.

The common issues people want addressed using the Regional Framework Agreement processes include:

- **Co-management**
 - More cooperation from the Government in developing sea management policies.
 - Making co-management easier.
 - More funding.



- **Permit and planning system**

- Traditional Owners being more involved in planning and the issuing of permits for using sea resources.
- Native Title procedural reform.
- Recognising Native Title rights in fisheries, marine and water resources.
- Working out better ways to deal with Future Act notices under the Native Title Act.
- Strengthening Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) through better understanding and use.

- **Fisheries issues**

- Putting the Indigenous Fisheries Strategy for Queensland into practice to create a better basis for commercial fishing/aquaculture.

- **Education and cultural awareness**

- For agency staff and the broader community.

- **Aquaculture issues**

- e.g. managing the impacts of aquaculture development on sea country.

The Sea Forum process involves the development of issues-based research papers for each identified topic, such as those listed above. It is hoped these papers will be jointly developed between the Forum and agencies as a basis for negotiations on each issue.

Glossary of terms

ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services
ARAP	Aboriginal Regional Advisory Panel
BBIFMAC	Burdekin Bowen Integrated Floodplain Management Advisory Committee
BRIG	Burdekin Rangelands Implementation Group
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
GIS	Geographic Information System
DAFF	Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
DEH	Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage
IAC	Indigenous Advisory Committee
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge Support
ILC	Indigenous Land Corporation
ILMF	Indigenous Land Management Facilitator
INRM	Indigenous Natural Resource Management Plan
IPA	Indigenous Protected Area
KLC	Kimberley Land Council
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAILSMA	Northern Aboriginal and Islander Land and Sea Management Alliance
NAPSWQ (also NAP)	National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality
NAREF	Townsville Thuringowa Natural Resource and Environment Forum
NHT	Natural Heritage Trust
NRM	Natural Resource Management
On country	In situ; in the actual place
RIS	Regional Investment Strategy
SAMLIV	Strategy for Aboriginal Lands in Victoria
SAMLISA	Strategy for Aboriginal Lands in South Australia
SECE	Social, Economic, Cultural and Environmental
TOR	Terms of Reference