

Great Barrier Reef coastal zone strategic assessment

Fact sheet—August 2014

Introduction

The Queensland Government is committed to protecting the Great Barrier Reef (GBR).

As part of this commitment the Queensland Government is ensuring that planning and development within the coastal zone adjacent to the GBR occurs in a sustainable manner and is managed to avoid or mitigate unacceptable impacts on the reef.

The Queensland Government has undertaken a strategic assessment of the Great Barrier Reef coastal zone in accordance with section 146 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

The strategic assessment describes and assesses the way in which the state's planning, development and coastal management processes identify and protect matters of national environmental significance (MNES) and OUV (Outstanding Universal Value) within the GBR coastal zone.

Queensland's strategic assessment provides a broad, landscape-scale assessment of how the state's legislation, policies, plans and programs (the Program) protect the reef.

As part of the process, the Queensland Government is building upon its robust environmental and development management framework to further protect the GBR's unique environmental values.

The GBR coastal zone strategic assessment is part of a [comprehensive strategic assessment](#) which includes a strategic assessment of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWHA) being undertaken by the [Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority](#).

Matters of National Environmental Significance

MNES are described and protected under the EPBC Act. The MNES considered in the strategic assessment are:

- world heritage properties
- national heritage places
- wetlands of international importance
- listed threatened species and ecological communities
- listed migratory species
- Commonwealth marine area
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

The Program

The Program is the Queensland Government's coastal management, planning and development process as it applies to the GBR coastal zone.

The Program involves both legislative and non-legislative components that provide a robust regulatory and management system. It outlines existing management activities and the commitments and outcomes that will be delivered for MNES and OUV as a result of the strategic assessment.

The Program delivers five strategic outcomes to ensure the identification, protection and enhancement of MNES and OUV within the GBR coastal zone:

- **improved planning** for urban areas, industry and ports
- **rigorous EIS assessment processes** for major projects
- **better guidance** for development activities
- **enhanced management, recovery and monitoring** programs
- **strong joint management** initiatives.

Through the Program, the Queensland Government will ensure that development in the GBR coastal zone occurs in a sustainable manner and that unacceptable impacts on MNES and OUV do not occur.

Outcome

Queensland's package of final documentation has been endorsed by the Australian Minister for the Environment. Through this endorsement, the Australian Minister has deemed the Program to be an effective system for identifying and protecting MNES in the GBR coastal zone and that strong frameworks are in place to monitor and report on potential impacts.

Under the Program, the Queensland Government will ensure that planning and development in the GBR coastal zone occurs in a sustainable manner, that it is appropriately managed to avoid or mitigate unacceptable impacts on MNES and OUV, and that the GBR continues to be one of the best managed marine areas in the world for future generations.

Reports

The GBR coastal zone strategic assessment is presented in a package of final documentation, developed in accordance with the [Strategic Assessment Agreement](#) and [Terms of Reference](#).

Draft strategic assessment reports were released for public consultation in late 2013. Over a period of 13 weeks, over 6 500 public submissions were received. These submissions have informed the development of the final documentation. A report on the outcomes of consultation is available at www.dsdip.qld.gov.au/gbr

In accordance with the TOR the draft reports were also subject to an [independent review](#). The independent review report was released in October 2013 and some recommendations were addressed in the draft reports in the period of time before public consultation. The outstanding recommendations have been addressed in the final documentation.

The final documentation includes three reports:

- **Program Report** which describes the Queensland management, planning and development framework relevant to the GBR coastal zone. The report supersedes the draft program report.
- **Strategic Assessment Report** which assesses the outcomes on MNES and OUV from the implementation of the Program. The report was issued in draft form for public consultation.
- **Supplementary Strategic Assessment Report** which provides further information in response to matters raised during public consultation and recommendations from the independent review.



Reef 2050 – Long Term Sustainability Plan

The [Reef 2050 – Long Term Sustainability Plan](#) (LTSP) will build on the findings of the comprehensive strategic assessment and bring relevant programs and activities under one plan to ensure greater coordination, efficiency and effectiveness of efforts to protect and manage the GBR.

The Australian and Queensland governments are developing the LTSP to guide the protection and management of the GBRWHA to 2050. It responds to recommendations by the World Heritage Committee that Australia develop a long-term plan for sustainable development that will protect the OUV of the GBR.

Figure 1 Elements of the Reef 2050 – Long Term Sustainability Plan



Further information

- www.dsdip.qld.gov.au/gbr
- www.gbrmpa.gov.au
- www.environment.gov.au

Images courtesy of Tourism and Events Queensland