

TRADITIONAL OWNER IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



REEF
2050



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Acknowledgements

The Steering Group responsible for overseeing this Plan's development firstly acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef and its Catchment and their deep and ongoing connections to Country. We acknowledge their continuing custodianship and shared efforts to care for and protect Country and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge the numerous Traditional Owners and previous work dating back to the 1980's that has informed this Implementation Plan. This work is recorded in a number of documents and the Steering Group considered the recommendations and outcomes from these reports in preparing this Plan. Key reports included:

- Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: The Next Generation of Reef 2050 Actions (2018) (Final report from the Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Aspirations Project).
- Strong Peoples – Strong Country Indigenous Heritage Monitoring Framework (2019) (Final report of the Indigenous Heritage Expert Group)
- New and Revised Targets and Indicators for the Reef 2050 Plan: Communique from the Traditional Owner's Workshop Townsville (31 Oct - 1 Nov 2019)
- Traditional Owner Theory of Change for the Great Barrier Reef Workshop Proceedings (2018) Reef 2050 Long Term Sustainability Plan – Indigenous Implementation Plan (2016)
- Traditional Owners and Sea Country in the Southern Great Barrier Reef - Which Way Forward? (2016); and
- Reef 2050 Long Term Sustainability Plan Indigenous Targets Project Report from the Indigenous Sea Country Policy Group and the Cape York Turtle and Dugong Taskforce Steering Committee (2014).

The Plan's Steering Group was made up of Ms Chrissy Grant (Traditional Owner member of the Reef 2050 Advisory Committee), Mr Duane Fraser (former Traditional Owner member of the Reef 2050 Advisory Committee), Mr Malcolm Mann (Chair of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee), Ms Liz Wren (Director Great Barrier Reef Foundation Traditional Owner Partnerships) and Ms Jean Fenton (Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Assistant Director, Strategy and Partnerships). This Group provided overarching direction and guidance on Traditional Owner-led actions within the Reef 2050 Plan drawing on information from the above reports. Mr Malachi Johnson and Ms Jessie Courtney, emerging leaders in their communities, joined the Steering Group in the later stages of the Plan's development. They were successful candidates of an Expression of Interest process to encourage and support the involvement of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Reef 2050 process.

Steering Group workshops and the Plan's drafting was facilitated by Ms Josh Gibson. The Plan's design, layout and artwork was coordinated by Indigenous-owned strategic design consultant's 'Saltwater People'. The artwork used in the brand identity is Dulgku (Reef) by Josie Olbar.

Reef 2050 government and funding partners included the Queensland Department of Environment and Science, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation. The Steering Group would like to acknowledge the support and thank Mr Matthew Fullerton, Ms Kirsten Macey and Ms Simone Voysey from the Office of the Great Barrier Reef who coordinated this process on behalf of Reef 2050 government partners.

Foreword



The Great Barrier Reef is at the heart of its Sea Country peoples' lives and informs an interconnected relationship between the natural, spiritual, economic, and cultural worldviews of the Reef's Traditional Owners.

The Reef is promoted as one of the world's greatest natural assets; however, Traditional Owners view it as a very significant cultural landscape imbued with special cultural meaning and spirituality.

We have cared for and looked after the Reef and all that it sustains. We have cared for the rivers, catchments, coastal habitats, forests and islands for thousands of years and will continue to fulfil our cultural obligations now and for future generations.

Last year, a group of influential Reef Traditional Owners met to develop a statement called *Heart of the Reef – A Call for Healing*. The statement talks of our connection to the Reef and the current impacts on the Reef. It is a call for us all to work together to heal the Reef. Some of this statement is highlighted in this Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan; however, the Heart of the Reef statement can be accessed in full [here](#).

Over many decades, Reef Traditional Owners have participated in good faith in continuous planning processes, informing numerous strategies and plans with very little realisation of our aspirations or their accompanying actions to support the management of the Reef and its interconnecting systems.

Ultimately, we feel that we have not been heard and what we have said has not been interpreted in the way that we would have expected. We are here, nearly at the half-way mark for the Reef 2050 Long-term Sustainability Plan, and we now know what needs to be done.

For the past three years, a small group of Traditional Owners from the Reef governance sector have come together as a Working Group to review what Traditional Owners have been saying for decades. We have unpacked and reiterated these aspirations, turning them into actions - in line with current government policy - to write our own Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan. This approach represents a significant departure from a government-led process to one where we have our hands on the steering wheel.

In doing this, we acknowledge and honour the work of many dedicated and committed Traditional Owners who had come before us and tirelessly advocated for and influenced the Reef space on our behalf.

This acknowledgement is reflected in the development of a historical timeline representing significant events in our journey, which brings us

to the present. This timeline is a web-based tool supporting Traditional Owners and others to look back, learn from the past and improve approaches for a better Reef and a better future.

Our strategic intent is that the Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan empowers Traditional Owners and inspires government and industry to actively contribute to the sustainable management and protection of the Reef for its natural and cultural values.

Traditional Owners now have a Plan that acknowledges the value of Traditional Knowledge as Indigenous science which when aligned with western science provides greater management and protection for the Reef in the face of its greatest threat – climate change.

We encourage Traditional Owner groups to provide feedback on the Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan and how it can work for your groups in the management of your sea Country.

We have also developed culturally appropriate communication tools to support your awareness of what is in the Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan and how your community can benefit from the application of the Plan across the work areas of Climate Change; Land and Coasts; Sea Country; Partnerships and Capacity; Knowledge systems; and Investment.

The Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Steering Group would like to acknowledge the Office of the Great Barrier Reef, and Ms Josh Gibson for their unwavering support in getting the Plan to where it is.

With the appropriate level of support, resources and goodwill, this Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan is a big step in the right direction for Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef and all its systems.



Chrissy Grant
Traditional Owner
Kuku Yalanji and Mualgal (TSI)



Malcolm Mann
Traditional Owner
Darumbal



Malachi Johnson
Traditional Owner
Gooreng Gooreng



Jessica Courtney
Traditional Owner
Butchella and Erub Island



Duane Fraser
Traditional Owner
Wulgurukaba and Bidjara



Liz Wren
Specialist Advisor to
Traditional Owners



**“
... If there was ever
a time for us to come
together that time is
now. If there was ever
a time for the voice of
Traditional Custodians
to be heard - this is that
time.”**

**HEART OF THE REEF
– A CALL FOR HEALING**

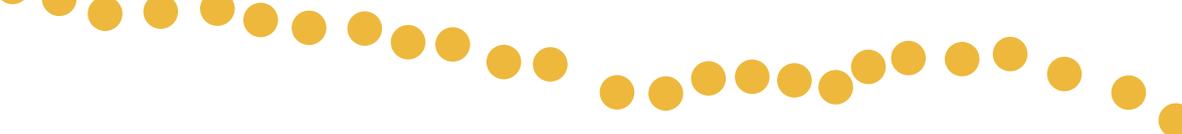


Table of Contents

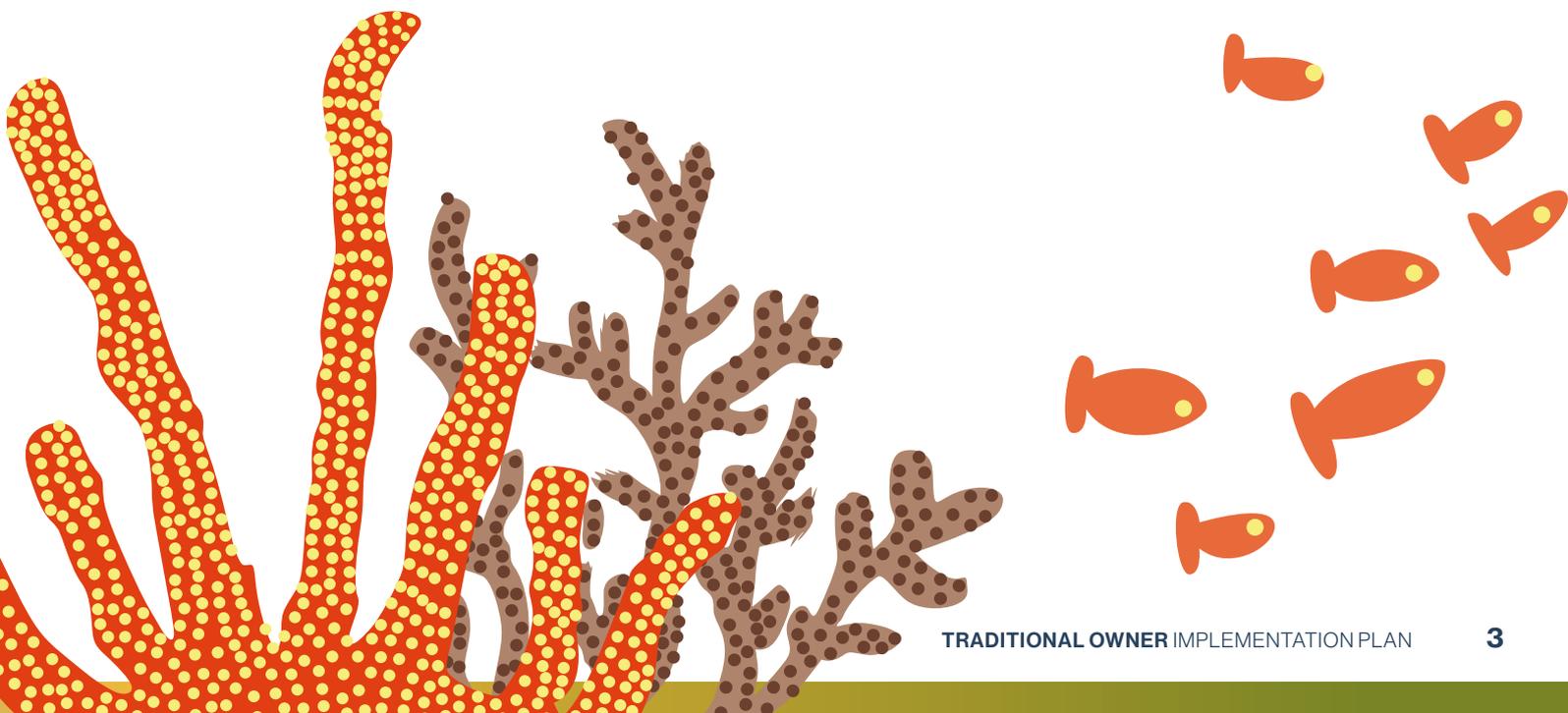
Foreword	IV
Glossary of Terms	2
Introduction	4
1.1 What is the Traditional Owner Implementation Plan?	9
1.2 Why is it important?	10
1.3 Who is responsible for delivering the Implementation Plan?	11
1.4 A living document	13
1.5 How often will the Plan be reviewed?	13
1.6 Maintaining accountability	14
Work areas	17
2.1 Climate change	20
2.2 Land and coast	26
2.3 Sea Country	32
2.4 Partnerships and capacity	40
2.5 Knowledge systems	48
2.6 Investment	54
Appendix 1 – Developing the Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan	59

Glossary of Terms

TERM	MEANING
Agreement	A negotiated and typically legally binding arrangement between parties as to a course of action. Source: <i>Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: The Next Generation of Reef 2050 Actions, 2018</i>
Co-design (with Traditional Owners)	An agreed collaborative approach to design a plan, project or initiative by working with identified parties such as Traditional Owners (see definition below), other First Nations people, community and stakeholders in culturally grounded ways, ensuring that there is recognition for Traditional Owner equal power sharing, influence, cultural knowledge and decision making in the process. Source: <i>Reef 2050 Plan, 2021-2050</i>
Co-delivery (with Traditional Owners)	Ensuring that implementation or delivery of a co-designed plan, project or initiative incorporates Traditional Owner leadership with support from community and stakeholders in culturally grounded ways. Source: <i>Reef 2050 Plan, 2021-2050</i>
Co-management	To share the responsibility for management – jointly undertaking the actions to achieve given objectives. Source: <i>Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: The Next Generation of Reef 2050 Actions, 2018</i>
Co-governance	To share governance – jointly deciding what the objectives are, sharing power, authority and responsibility, and being jointly held accountable for outcomes. Source: <i>Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: The Next Generation of Reef 2050 Actions, 2018</i>
Country	A person's land, sea, sky, rivers, sites, seasons, plants and animals; and place of heritage, belonging and spirituality is called 'Country'. The term 'Country' refers to the interdependent relationship between Traditional Owners and their ancestral lands and seas. Source: <i>Reef 2050 Plan, 2021-2050</i>
Design	Development of a project or program. From initial concept to planning. Source: Working definition
Delivery	Implementation of a plan, project or program, including monitoring, evaluation and reporting. Source: Working definition
Free, Prior and Informed Consent	<p>Free implies that there is no coercion, intimidation or manipulation.</p> <p>Prior implies that consent is to be sought sufficiently in advance of any authorisation or commencement of activities and respect is shown to time requirements of Indigenous consultation/consensus processes.</p> <p>Informed implies that information is provided that covers a range of aspects including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the nature, size, pace, reversibility and scope of any proposed project or activity; • the purpose of the project as well as its duration; locality and areas affected; • a preliminary assessment of the likely economic, social, cultural and environmental impact, including potential risks; • personnel likely to be involved in the execution of the project; and • procedures the project may entail. <p>This process may include the option of withholding consent. Consultation and participation are crucial components of a consent process. Source: <i>Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: The Next Generation of Reef 2050 Actions, 2018</i></p>
Governance	Is about who decides what the objectives are, what to do to pursue them and with what means; how those decisions are taken; who holds power, authority and responsibility; and who is (or should be) held accountable. Source: Governance for the Conservation of Nature, Borrini-Feyerabend and Hill, 2015
Increase	In this Plan's context, a measurable rise compared to 2020-2021 figures. Source: Working definition



Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA)	An Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) is a voluntary agreement between a native title group and others about the use and management of land and/or waters. When registered, ILUAs bind all parties and all native title holders to the terms of the agreement. Source: National Native Title Tribunal website
Indigenous Protected Area (IPA)	Indigenous Protected Areas are areas of land and sea managed by Indigenous groups as a protected areas for biodiversity conservation through voluntary agreements with the Australian Government. Source: Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment website
Management	Is about what is done in pursuit of given objectives; the means and actions to achieve such objectives. Source: Governance for the Conservation of Nature, Borrini-Feyerabend and Hill, 2015 . In the context of the Great Barrier Reef it includes functions such as planning, policy, field operations, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.
Partnership	An arrangement between two or more parties based on shared decision making, risk, accountability and robust relationships, and where parties might receive benefits. Source: Working definition
Reef	Refers to the Great Barrier Reef as depicted in Figure 1 of this Plan.
Reef 2050 Plan	Refers to the Reef 2050 Long Term Sustainability Plan – Australia’s long-term strategy for protecting and managing the Great Barrier Reef.
Traditional Estate	An area inherited from ancestors and belonging to a descent-based group of people. It includes the land and waters, the resources located in it and cultural and intellectual property rights. Source: <i>Reef 2050 Plan, 2021-2025</i>
Traditional Owners	In this Plan, Traditional Owner refers to the Traditional Owners of Great Barrier Reef land and sea Country. Traditional Owners are the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples who have connections to their apical ancestors and ongoing traditional and cultural association with the land and sea, and possess rights and interests under Traditional and Customary Lore and Australian and Queensland government laws. In some parts of the Reef and Catchment Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples refer to themselves as Bama, Traditional Custodians or Australian First Nations Peoples.
Traditional Use of Marine Resource Agreement (TUMRA)	Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRA’s) are community-based plans for management of traditional resources accredited in legislation. They describe how Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner groups work in partnership with the Australian and Queensland governments to manage traditional use activities on their sea country. Their management of traditional use is based on cultural lore and contemporary science. Source: Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority



Introduction

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Great Barrier Reef and its Catchment¹ and as First Nations peoples hold inherent rights, interests, and obligations to protect and care for their Country.

There are over 70 Traditional Owner groups along the Queensland coastline whose traditional estates extend over the Great Barrier Reef and many more groups whose customary estates form part of the Reef's Catchment (**Figure 1**).

Traditional Owner connections with the Great Barrier Reef extend over many thousands of years. It is a rich cultural land- and seascape and Traditional Owners continue to be actively involved in the management of their Country.

The Reef was declared a Marine Park in 1975 and a World Heritage Area in 1981. Since this time, Traditional Owners have been seeking greater recognition of their rights, responsibilities and interests as the traditional custodians of the Great Barrier Reef.² And from the 1990's Traditional Owners have been coming together to seek more cohesive approaches to securing their aspirations for a 'Healthy Reef and Healthy People'.³

The [Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan](#) (known as the 'Reef 2050 Plan') is Australia's overarching long-term strategy for protecting and managing the Great Barrier Reef (**Figure 2**).

It brings together actions across governments, Traditional Owners, industry, researchers and the broader community to create a shared pathway for achieving a 'Healthy Reef and Healthy People'. The Plan's vision is: *'In 2050 the Great Barrier Reef is sustained as a living natural and cultural wonder of the world.'*

Traditional Owners have been involved in the Reef 2050 process since it began almost a decade ago and the pathway forward is clear. It has been voiced many times and is outlined in a number of Traditional Owner-led reports (**Figure 3**) including most recently the final report from the [Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Aspirations Project](#).⁴

This Traditional Owner Implementation Plan seeks to honour that previous work and ensure the work of our Elders is respected and their voices are not lost. The Plan builds on a strong history of Traditional Owners articulating their priorities for the Reef and provides an operational platform to strategically coordinate and advance the delivery of actions to achieve our aspirations. To get on with the job of doing. Of working together to help our Reef and People get healthy again.

¹In this report the term "Catchment" is used to describe the Great Barrier Reef Region's Catchment as shown in Figure 1

²Traditional Owners and Sea Country in the Southern Great Barrier Reef - Which Way Forward? Dale et al., 2016

³*Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: The Next Generation of Reef 2050 Actions*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2018

⁴*Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: The Next Generation of Reef 2050 Actions*, Commonwealth of Australia 2018



The **'Heart of the Reef – A Call for Healing'** Healing Country Statement describes the deep relationship between Traditional Owners and the Great Barrier Reef and its significance to Traditional Owners' identity. It describes how the health of the Reef has deteriorated, the threats she is facing, and the need to rebuild connections with Country and come together to care and heal the Reef and ourselves. The Statement was prepared by a group of Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owners as part of a Great Barrier Reef Foundation Healing Country Workshop in July 2021. We commend this statement to readers.

Figure 1 /

Map of the Great Barrier Reef and its Catchment



The term **'Outstanding Universal Value'** means a place of cultural and/or natural significance that is so exceptional it's of global importance to humanity and its permanent protection is of the highest importance to the international community. To be considered a place of 'Outstanding Universal Value' World Heritage properties must meet a set of criteria. Importantly, the values described under the criteria for the Great Barrier Reef - in its Statement of Outstanding Universal Value - include the "strong ongoing links between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and their sea-country".

Figure 2 /

The Reef 2050 Plan is Australia's overarching long-term strategy for protecting and managing the Great Barrier Reef.



The first [Reef 2050 Plan](#) was released in 2015. It was led by the Australian and Queensland governments in response to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee's recommendation to develop a long-term plan for sustainable development to protect the Reef's **Outstanding Universal Value** (see Text Box). The Plan was developed with input from Traditional Owners, industry, researchers and the broader community. There was a [mid-term review](#) and update of the first Reef 2050 Plan in 2018.

The [second, or 'current' Reef 2050 Plan](#) covers the period 2021-2025 and was released in December 2021. This Traditional Owner Implementation Plan outlines actions to achieve Traditional Owners aspirations for the Great Barrier Reef as part of the second Reef 2050 Plan.

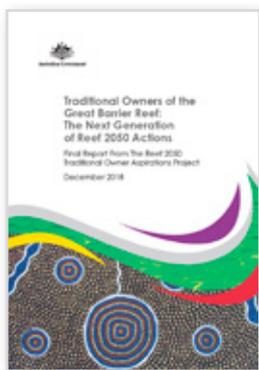
UNESCO's World Heritage Committee receives regular reports on the implementation of the Reef 2050 Plan as part of Australia's international obligations to protect the Great Barrier Reef under the [Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage](#) (World Heritage Convention).

Traditional Owners have been involved in the Reef 2050 process since it began almost a decade ago.

The following documents outline Traditional Owner aspirations, recommendations, objectives, targets, actions and implementation priorities for the Reef 2050 Plan and provide valuable context and greater detail around actions included in the Implementation Plan.

Figure 3 /

Traditional Owner reports



Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: The Next Generation of Reef 2050 Actions (2018).

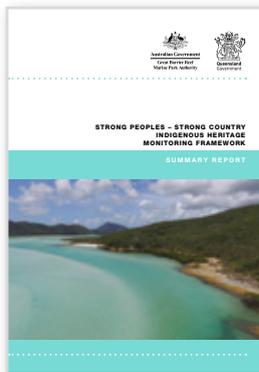
(Final report from the Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Aspirations Project). This report brings together and consolidates the work of Traditional Owners over the last few decades. It presents a strategic blueprint and ten recommendations as pathways to achieve a 'Healthy Reef and Healthy People'.

[READ](#)



New and Revised Targets and Indicators for the Reef 2050 Plan (2019).

Communique from the Traditional Owner's Workshop Townsville – 31 October and 1 November 2019. This workshop revised Reef 2050 Traditional Owner targets to identify gaps and strengthen targets to address Traditional Owner concerns and interests. It built on the frameworks and outcomes from reports outlined below.



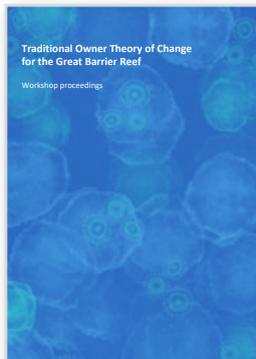
Strong Peoples – Strong Country Indigenous Heritage Monitoring Framework (2019).

(Final report of the Indigenous Heritage Expert Group). A Traditional Owner-led approach for systematic monitoring of the condition of the Reef and its Catchment as an Indigenous heritage asset. It reflects the Traditional Owner worldview that our quality of life is connected inseparably to and underpinned by, our land and sea Country.

[READ](#)

Figure 3 /

Traditional Owner reports



Traditional Owner Theory of Change for the Great Barrier Reef Workshop Proceedings (2018).

This workshop brought Traditional Owners together to create a Theory of Change building on past work on the priorities for the Great Barrier Reef. It identified action pathways to achieve Traditional Owner long-term goals for the Reef.



Reef 2050 Long Term Sustainability Plan – Indigenous Implementation Plan (2016).

Developed to guide the implementation of Traditional Owner-led actions in the first Reef 2050 Plan. It identified three key areas to focus on as priorities for implementation: coordination, cultural heritage and business capacity. For each area the Implementation Plan outlined known challenges and opportunities, pathways to address them and expected outcomes from implementation.

[READ](#)



Traditional Owners and Sea Country in the Southern Great Barrier Reef - Which Way Forward? (2016).

Explored the history of Traditional Owner attempts to achieve a more 'joined-up' approach across the Great Barrier Reef. It revisited core aspirations for managing sea Country and identified a coordinated framework for increasing Indigenous participation in sea Country management: building the capacity of Indigenous land and sea organisations; building partnership frameworks for engagement; and effective information and knowledge generation.

[READ](#)



Reef 2050 Long Term Sustainability Plan Indigenous Targets Project (2014).

(Report from the Indigenous Sea Country Policy Group and the Cape York Turtle and Dugong Taskforce Steering Committee). This report documents the process to develop targets and actions by Traditional Owners as part of the first Reef 2050 Plan. Targets and actions were developed for the Plan's seven themes: ecosystem health; biodiversity; heritage; community benefits; economic benefits; governance.

1.1

What is the Traditional Owner Implementation Plan?

The Traditional Owner Implementation Plan outlines actions to achieve Traditional Owners' aspirations for the Great Barrier Reef as part of the Reef 2050 Plan. It brings Traditional Owner actions together from across the Reef 2050 Plan into a cohesive framework for implementation (See [Figure 4](#)).

The Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan is about:

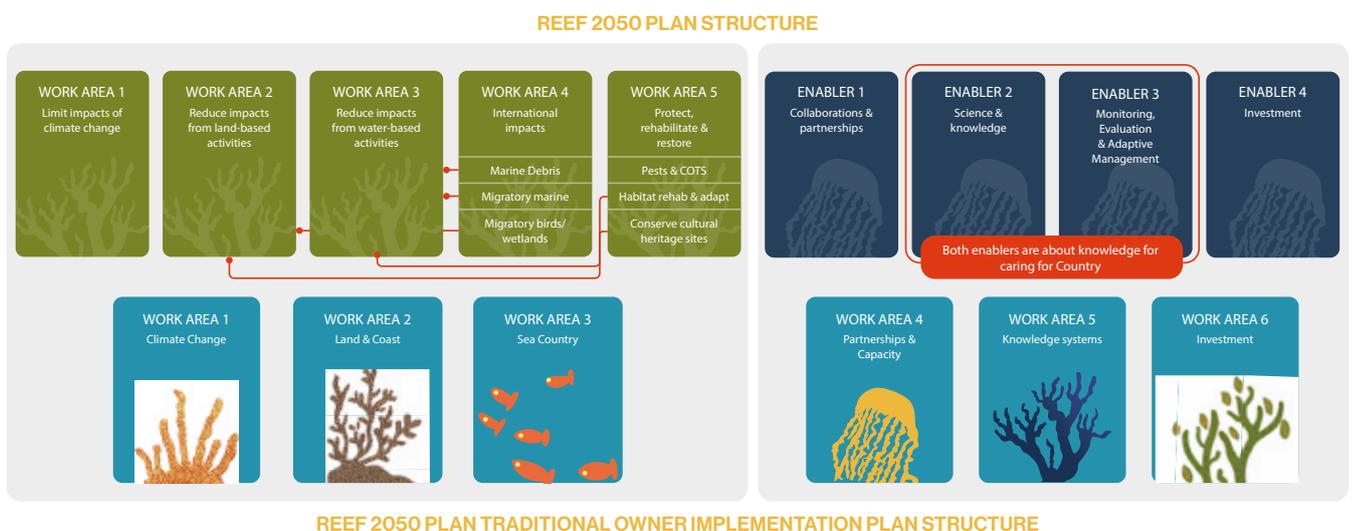
- **Delivering on Traditional Owner priorities** – bringing Traditional Owner actions across the Reef 2050 Plan together in one place
- **Honouring the past and looking into the future** – ensuring the work of our Elders is respected and their voices are not lost
- **Recognising our inherent rights, interests, obligations and aspirations** as Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Great Barrier Reef and that Country and People are one
- **Accountability** – ensuring actions are appropriately resourced, their progress tracked and implementation is reported on as part of the Australian and Queensland government's obligations to protect the Reef.

Information on how the Plan was developed is provided in [Appendix 1](#).

Figure 4 /

Governance for the implementation of the Reef 2050 Plan

The Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan outlines actions to achieve Traditional Owners aspirations for the Great Barrier Reef as part of the Reef 2050 Plan.



1.2

Why is it important?

The Implementation Plan is about getting on with the job of doing. Bringing Traditional Owner actions together in one place and providing a platform to coordinate and drive their implementation.

The Plan is a way for Traditional Owners to work with each other and Reef 2050 stakeholders to:

- a) improve the approach** – to adopt more holistic and inclusive approaches to the formal governance and management of the Reef
- b) build more effective partnerships and grow capacity** – to empower Traditional Owners to lead, co-design and co-deliver management programs
- c) better coordinate programs across the Reef and Catchment** – to align programs and build pathways of connection between programs that care for land, sea and people
- d) drive investment** – Traditional Owner actions are a priority for Reef 2050 investment and need to be clearly identified so they can be costed and funded, and
- e) tell their own stories** – to elevate the voice of Traditional Owners through the implementation of Indigenous-led approaches to reporting and their incorporation into integrated monitoring and reporting frameworks at local, national and international levels.



1.3

Who is responsible for delivering the Implementation Plan?

The Traditional Owner Implementation Plan forms part of the overarching Reef 2050 Plan.

Implementation of the Reef 2050 Plan is overseen by the Australian and Queensland governments. Governance arrangements for the Plan's implementation are outlined below. A key action within this Plan is to increase Traditional Owner participation, voice and capacity in Reef governance.



The Reef 2050 Plan is a schedule to the **Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement** between the Australian and Queensland governments. Its implementation is overseen by the **minister with responsibility for Reef matters from each of the Australian and Queensland governments**.

Regular reports on its implementation are provided to **UNESCO's World Heritage Committee** by the Australian Government as part of its obligations to protect the Great Barrier Reef under the World Heritage Convention.

Decision making and delivery of actions under the Plan are guided by advice from the **Reef 2050 Plan Independent Expert Panel**, the **Reef 2050 Advisory Committee** and relevant government departments and agencies.

The **Reef 2050 Plan Independent Expert Panel** includes members with scientific (biophysical, heritage, social and economic) expertise. The Panel currently has one Indigenous member, Adjunct Associate Professor Stephan Schnierer.

The **Reef 2050 Advisory Committee** includes Traditional Owners and individuals from a range of industry bodies and non-government organisations, local government and community representatives. Reef Traditional Owners hold two positions (one female and one male) on the Committee. There are also male and female Traditional Owner proxies. Ms Chrissy Grant (Kuku Yalanji & Mualgal Traditional Owner) is the current female member on the Committee. Long-standing Committee member Mr Duane Fraser (Wulgurukaba and Bidjara Traditional Owner) has recently resigned and the male Traditional Owner position is currently being advertised.

Day-to-day management of the Plan is coordinated by a **joint team of officials** from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment; the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority; and the Queensland Government Department of Environment and Science. This includes senior executive oversight by a **Reef 2050 Executive Steering Committee** with a member from all three agencies.



Creation of a Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner Taskforce

The Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Steering Group has proposed creation of a Traditional Owner Taskforce to oversee the delivery of the Implementation Plan. If successful, this will be the first time resources will be dedicated to an independent Traditional Owner-led body to drive implementation of actions under the Reef 2050 Plan.

The Taskforce's key priority will be to progress options around the establishment of a Reef-wide Sea Country Alliance (see Partnerships and Capacity Action PC-5, pp 43). This action, together with the establishment of a Futures Fund (See Investment Action I-4, pp 54) will be central to providing Traditional Owners a strong and representative voice and independent source of funding for achieving our long-term aspirations for the Reef.

The process to scope options and come up with a preferred model for a Sea Country Alliance will involve extensive engagement with Traditional Owner groups. It is anticipated that an options paper on models would be completed by the end of 2023 with work to implement the preferred option occurring in 2024.

While this work occurs the proposed Taskforce, working with Traditional Owners, will also oversee the delivery of strategic policy and capacity building actions (including investment actions) in this Implementation Plan. It is anticipated that this function will form part of the role of the Reef-wide Sea Country Alliance (or similar) once established.

The Taskforce also will coordinate monitoring and reporting of Traditional Owner actions in this Plan as part of the broader Reef 2050 monitoring and reporting process.

The Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner Taskforce would be responsible for overseeing delivery of the Implementation Plan.

The Taskforce would have three key priorities:

1. Engaging with Traditional Owners on options for a Sea Country Alliance (Reef-wide and regionally) and implementing the preferred option
2. Overseeing the delivery of strategic policy and capacity building actions in the Implementation Plan while a Sea Country Alliance is being established
3. Monitoring and reporting on the delivery of Traditional Owner actions in this Plan as part of the broader Reef 2050 integrated monitoring and reporting.

1.4

A living document

The Implementation Plan is designed to be a 'living document'. It seeks to honour the past by building on previous work and look to the future. It's important that the Plan remains relevant to Reef Traditional Owners and feedback is encouraged to ensure it remains on track and continues to address Traditional Owner priorities. The Plan's release is accompanied by a feedback form as part of our commitment to genuine and meaningful engagement with Reef Traditional Owners.

1.5

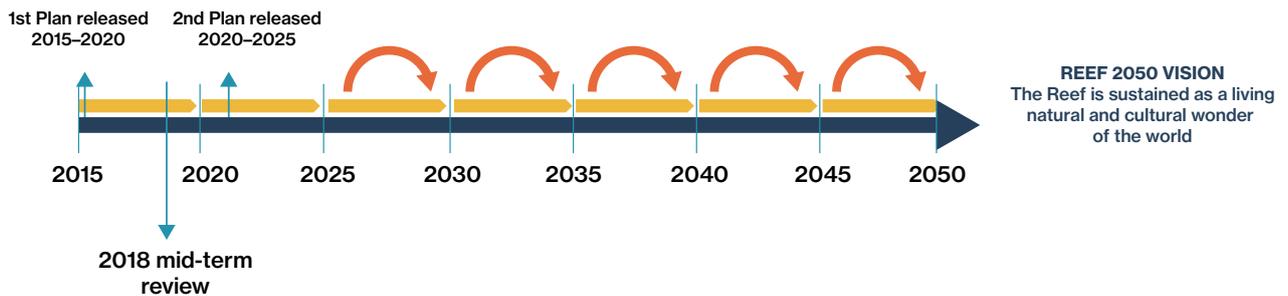
How often will the Plan be reviewed?

The Implementation Plan will be formally reviewed as part of the review of the Reef 2050 Plan. The Reef 2050 Plan is updated every five years following the cycle outlined in [Figure 5](#).

Achieving Traditional Owner aspirations for the Reef will take time and the long-term nature of the Plan enables important foundational work around partnerships, agreement making and building capacity to be progressed while continuing to implement existing and new programs which are delivering important outcomes for Country and our People.

Figure 5 /

The Reef 2050 Plan is reviewed and updated every five years. This Implementation Plan will be reviewed as part of this process



1.6

Maintaining accountability

A key purpose of the Implementation Plan is to drive accountability by bringing together Traditional Owner actions across the Reef 2050 Plan in a holistic way and into one place to track their progress.

Progress against the implementation of actions will be reported annually as part of Reef 2050 Plan reporting. These reports are publicly available on the Australian Government's Reef 2050 website. It is also proposed that annual updates be distributed to Traditional Owner groups by the proposed Taskforce.

Progress of actions towards achieving the outcome of a 'Healthy Reef and Healthy People' will be reported on every five years through the implementation of the 'Strong Peoples-Strong Country' Indigenous-led monitoring framework.

To improve accountability we want to move away from terms such as 'increase', 'improve' 'expand', 'enhance,' 'strengthen' and 'support' and work towards tangible and measurable targets to drive implementation. Defining targets is not always straightforward and isn't always about defining a number or percentage. For example, 'improved' governance covers many things including, male and female representation on governing bodies, with a delicate mixture of experience and mentoring of those willing to learn.

The first action in the Investment Work Area (see Action I-1, pp 57) is to describe, in a measurable way, what these terms mean so actions can be appropriately costed, resourced, and progress tracked and reported.

Tracking progress

A fit-for-purpose monitoring and reporting program, the **Reef 2050 Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program** (or RIMReP) and Reef Knowledge System is being developed to guide management decisions about the Reef and track the implementation and effectiveness of actions within the Reef 2050 Plan.

The **Strong Peoples – Strong Country Framework** forms part of the Reef 2050 Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program being led by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. It is a Traditional Owner-led Indigenous Monitoring Framework which aims to measure progress towards achieving a Healthy Reef and Healthy People and Traditional Owner actions in the Reef 2050 Plan. Its design was completed in the 2019 as part of the first Reef 2050 Plan and its further development is being informed through a series of community-based pilot projects which are outlined in this Plan (see Action K-6, pp 51).





“

... we've had a long, long, long association with the Reef. It is one of the seven wonders of the world but we also have a common culture and obligation to it.”

TRADITIONAL OWNER
MAMU COUNTRY, 2012

WORK AREAS

Actions within the Implementation Plan are divided into six work areas. They focus on continuing the good work underway and pathways to realising Traditional Owners aspirations as documented in the report 'Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: Next Generation of Reef 2050 Actions'.

The first three work areas are about reducing threats to Country from climate change, land-based and water-based activities. They focus on empowering Traditional Owners to lead and co-design and co-deliver programs to care for and heal Country.

The second three work areas are about moving towards genuine partnerships in the Reef's overarching governance and day-to-day management; the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from the Reef; strong, engaging and relevant science that reflects Traditional Owners interests and priorities; and investment, innovation and sustainable financing.

Education, employment and economic enterprises built around caring for Country are also central to empowering Traditional Owners. They enable Traditional Owners to rebuild connections with Country and are crucial to healing and caring for Country and People. These actions are embedded across each work area.

WORK AREAS

CLIMATE CHANGE

Actions reflect a community-based approach to tackling climate change. They include developing educational resources to showcase projects and guide work; implementing practical actions to reduce emissions and make electricity more affordable; and financing initiatives to support ongoing employment and enterprise development around caring for Country.

LAND & COAST

Actions are about reducing threats to the Reef from activities on the land and protecting and healing Country. They're about Traditional Owners having a greater role in the governance, design and delivery of programs to improve the health of freshwater, wetlands mangroves, estuaries, beaches and shorelines.

SEA COUNTRY

Actions are about reducing threats from water-based activities and protecting and healing sea Country. They're about implementing Country-based management models, stronger partnerships, better agreement making and having more Indigenous Rangers on the water. They include actions around reforming fisheries, controlling pests, reducing marine debris, and helping Country to recover from climate-related disturbances like cyclones and coral bleaching.



Figure 6 /

Six work areas and how they contribute to the Reef 2050 vision and outcome for a 'Healthy Reef, Healthy People'.



PARTNERSHIPS & CAPACITY

Actions focus on building genuine partnerships and growing capacity to help realise Traditional Owner aspirations for co-governance and greater involvement in the day-to-day management of the Reef. This work area looks at how Traditional Owner rights, interests and responsibilities are incorporated in current management arrangements and outlines pathways to increase and empower Traditional Owners' role in protecting and caring for the Reef.

KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

Actions focus on supporting Traditional Owners to document their knowledge and practices, record information on cultural values and safeguard and manage their heritage. They include implementing the Strong Peoples-Strong Country Framework through community-based pilot projects and exploring value-for-money options and alternate business models to delivering monitoring programs on Country. With our knowledge, Traditional Owners are in a prime position to tell our own stories to the world.

INVESTMENT

Actions focus on scoping tasks and costing actions within the plan and securing funds for their implementation. They include seeking a minimum 10% Traditional Owner funding allocation across major Reef-related government programs; establishing a Reef Traditional Owners future fund; developing an innovation strategy and actions to boost investment through partnerships, co-investment and sustainable financing initiatives.

WORK
AREA

1 Climate Change

Climate change is the biggest threat to the health of the Great Barrier Reef and to our People and culture.



AREA 1 Climate Change

Warmer temperatures are changing our seasonal calendars and weather patterns.



Within our lifetime we have seen more severe storms and floods, increased drought and more intense bushfires, our oceans warm and sea-levels rise.

These changes are causing the loss of many culturally important plants and animals, places and resources - things that form part of our identity and keep us healthy. It's adding further pressure to plants and animals already threatened with extinction.

As Traditional Owners we are highly experienced at observing and adapting to changes in our climate. We have been doing this for over 80,000 years. What's new is how fast it's happening. How it's disrupting the balance of Mother Earth and making it difficult for us to keep up with the rate of change and keep Country healthy.

Traditional Owners across Australia contribute least to climate change, yet its impacts are affecting us most severely. We need to tackle climate change head on but it's not something that Traditional Owners can do alone.

We need to bring together traditional knowledge and western science to better understand these changes and to plan for the future. To enable us to continue to adapt and care for our Country and People.

It's critical for Traditional Owners to be at the table with researchers, government, industry, businesses, farmers, miners, conservationists and other Indigenous People to design and deliver climate-related research, policy and programs to:

- build good relationships with partners who value and respect traditional knowledge and practices
- design more holistic programs based on circular economy principles - using renewable energy sources and reducing waste through re-use and recycling, and
- explore innovative ways for tackling this challenge that affects us all.

We need to look at opportunities to reduce our emissions that can leapfrog old technologies and provide our communities with affordable, secure and clean power. There are significant job opportunities that support renewable energy and energy efficiency practices and we need support to harness these.

We want to better understand and look at options for accessing carbon markets, including 'blue carbon' to help us develop sustainable economic

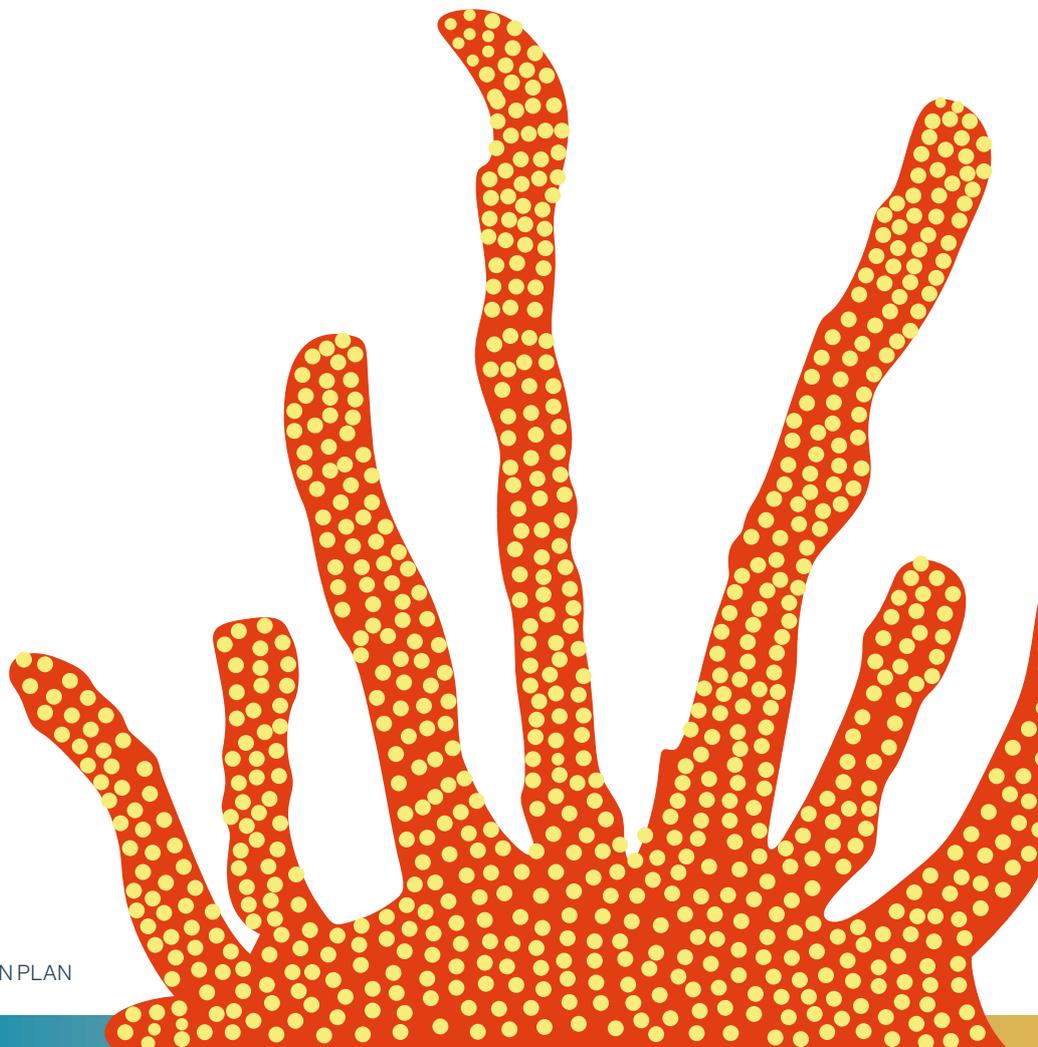
⁵ 2021 First Nation Peoples Statement on Climate Change

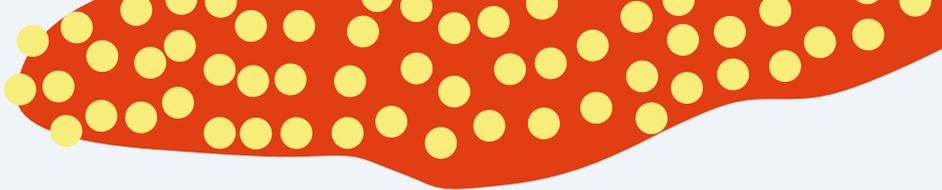


enterprises, employment and career pathways around caring and healing Country. Our mangroves, seagrasses and coastal ecosystems are important habitats for so many of our plants and animals, and store large amounts of carbon. They too are at risk from climate change and protecting them brings benefits to us all.

There's lots of good work for us to build on, learn from and contribute to, locally, nationally and internationally. We want to find out what has been done and what this means for us. We also want to document our perspectives and experiences of climate change. With this knowledge we want to create a resource for our communities to access and put into action what is important and relevant to them.

Actions in this part of the Plan focus on ensuring communities are equipped with the best available information to implement practical solutions and position Traditional Owners at the forefront of developing and adopting new technologies around renewable energy and generating sustainable revenue streams from climate initiatives.



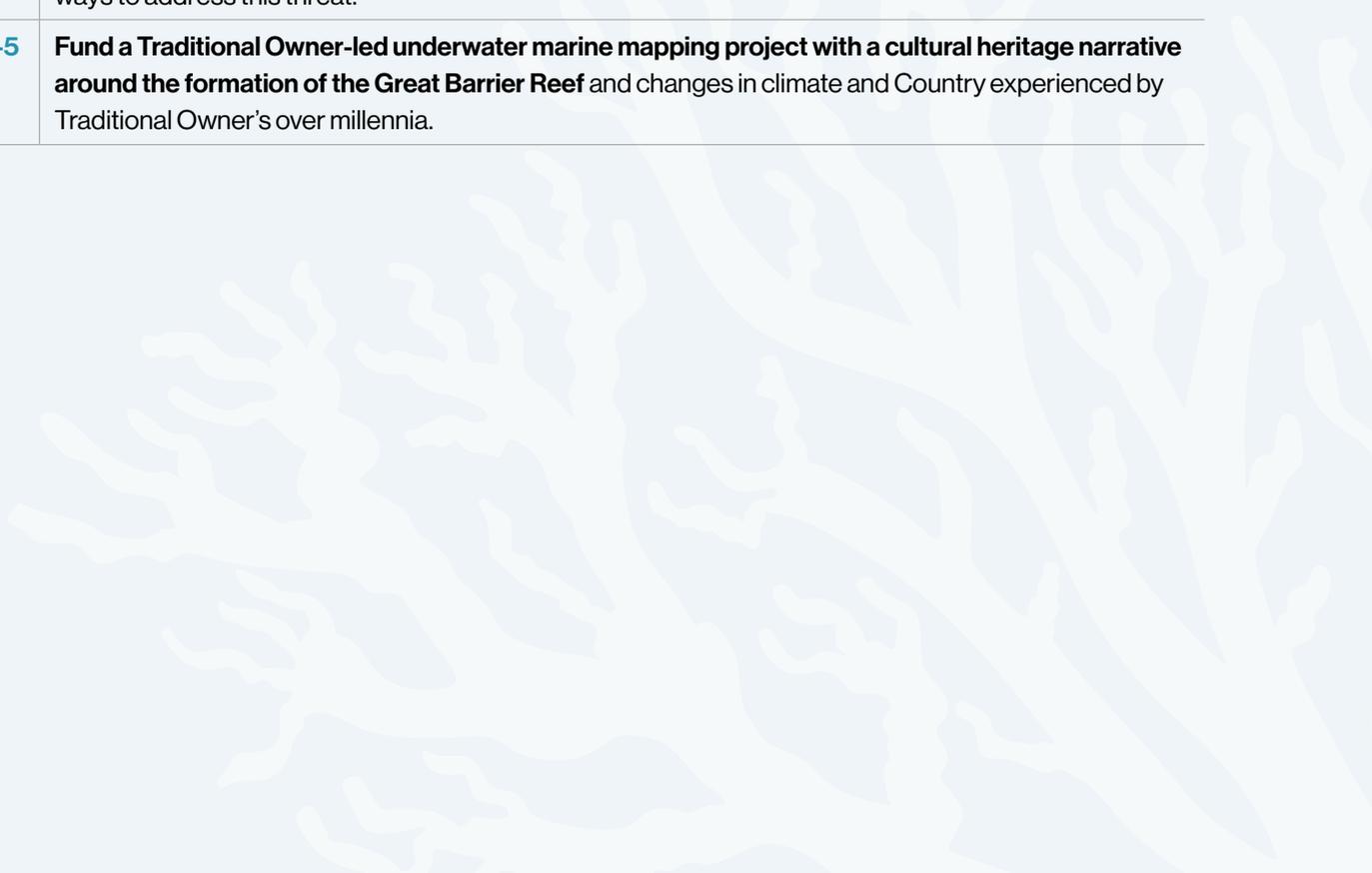


Pathways forward

The implementation of actions should be guided by recommendations in the *Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: The Next Generation of Reef 2050 Actions* and actions outlined in Reef 2050 Traditional Owner reports listed in **Figure 3**, pp 7.

Work Area 1 - Climate Change

C-1	Create on-line resource for communities to showcase projects and access information to better protect Country and guide future work. Undertake a scoping study and analysis of recent climate change work, including renewable energy and carbon initiatives, to inform development.
C-2	Implement programs that support Traditional Owners to foster partnerships, identify and implement practical actions to reduce emissions, secure affordable and reliable electricity, generate employment and develop sustainable economic enterprises. Build on outcomes and learnings from community-based low-carbon and waste management pilot projects, such as those at Masig Island and Palm Island ; and, resource the development of business cases for communities to apply for funds to transition to a low carbon and climate-resilient future.
C-3	Support Traditional Owners to investigate options around carbon markets, green bonds and social enterprises as means of sustainable financing to support employment, career and enterprise development pathways around caring for Country. Resource the development of business cases for communities to apply for funds to progress viable options.
C-4	Fund a Traditional Owner-led climate change webinar /face-to-face workshops to improve understanding of the impacts of climate change on the Great Barrier Reef and communities and ways to address this threat.
C-5	Fund a Traditional Owner-led underwater marine mapping project with a cultural heritage narrative around the formation of the Great Barrier Reef and changes in climate and Country experienced by Traditional Owner's over millennia.



Masig Islanders tackling climate change

Climate change is a familiar issue for the people of Masig Island in the Torres Strait who are already living with impacts, such as more extreme weather events and rising sea levels. While some of the risks associated with these impacts are unknown, others are well understood and set to increase over time.

For example, with sea level in the region currently rising on average **6 to 8 millimetres every year**, salt water is increasingly encroaching on the island, contaminating freshwater wells and inundating important sacred sites.

Over the past few decades, some steps have been taken to curb global carbon emissions in an effort to limit the progression of impacts like this. However, without immediate, drastic national and international action the current upwards emissions trend will continue, as will climate-related risks. Even if all emissions were to end today, some impacts are already locked in. For the people of Masig Island, the continued delay in climate action is palpable.

As a result, a number of Masig Islanders have commenced legal action against the Commonwealth, arguing that the government has a legal obligation to prevent the loss of their communities to climate change and should reduce greenhouse gas emissions to a level that will prevent Torres Strait Islanders from harm. The class action is being modelled on successful climate litigation in the Netherlands.

Outside court and with a more local focus, Masig Islanders also explored other ways to reduce emissions and adapt to local climate-related impacts, actively participating in the collaborative [Decarbonisation of the Great Barrier Reef Islands program](#) (Program), funded by the Queensland Government. As one of the four participating whole-of-island communities, they worked together with local organisations, key government agencies, and sustainability consultants, to understand their current carbon and sustainability footprint and to identify community-led and supported projects that could help reduce emissions and increase resilience.

From this, 18 projects were prioritised by the community, and comprehensive 'project-ready' business cases were developed for each. The projects, which address energy generation and efficiency, water supply and treatment, waste, inter and intra-island transport, and increasing resilience, can be found in the [Sustainable Masig Final Report](#). Following completion of the Program in early 2021, the Queensland Government – through its Queensland Climate Resilient Councils program – provided seed funding to activate projects on each of the four participating islands, up to \$125,000 for each.

For Masig Island, this funding supports several of their 18 priority projects identified in the Program, including the employment of a dedicated on-island sustainability officer who will oversee delivery of related projects. This arrangement is key to successful implementation and there is an ongoing need for this type of position and knowledge on Masig and in other low-lying communities.

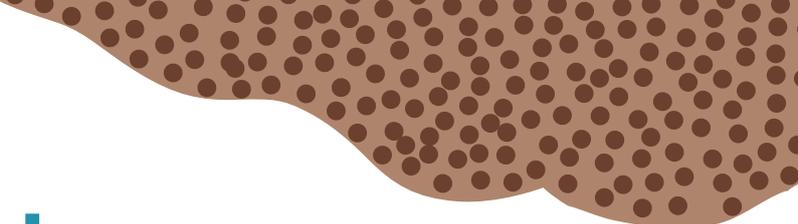
The true success of the Program's whole-of-community work was its commitment to cultural integrity and place-based design. Embedding this approach at all stages of the Program ensured respectful, meaningful engagement throughout. It also ensured that the final project options offered their deepest value, by elevating and strengthening cultural knowledge and expertise to better address climate change impacts and risks.



WORK
AREA

2 Land and coast

A lot of water flowing from the land to the Reef is polluted with sediment and nutrients as a result of widespread land clearing, agriculture, and waste from our towns.



WORK
AREA **2 Land and coast**

This poses a major threat to the health of the Great Barrier Reef's inshore waters, plants and animals.



This part of the Plan is about reducing impacts to the Reef from the land by improving the health of our waterways and coastal ecosystems. It is about freshwater. How it flows through Country and connects us all - from the top of the range, across land to the sea. And how we need to work together to design more holistic programs that tackle the things that have made our freshwater sick and how to make our Country healthy again.

There are a lot of big programs aimed at improving the health or 'quality' of water in the catchment. But until recently there has been little recognition of our connections to Country, our traditional knowledge and practices, or the value our culture places on water and our coastal ecosystems. What it means to us and how we care for Country. This is slowly changing but more needs to be done.

The Reef 2050 Plan outlines three sets of actions to limit impacts from land on the Reef. Actions are around water, wetlands, and shorelines. For us it is all Country and it's good to see a shift towards more integrated catchment-to-Reef programs which recognise cultural values.

When considering the health of our water and coastal ecosystems, we need Reef 2050 partners to recognise the presence of Indigenous communities as key elements of the ecosystem. Our rivers, creeks, waterholes, wetlands, mangroves, estuaries, shorelines, and beaches are all of immense importance to us. Like the Reef, they are an extension of us and keeps us healthy.

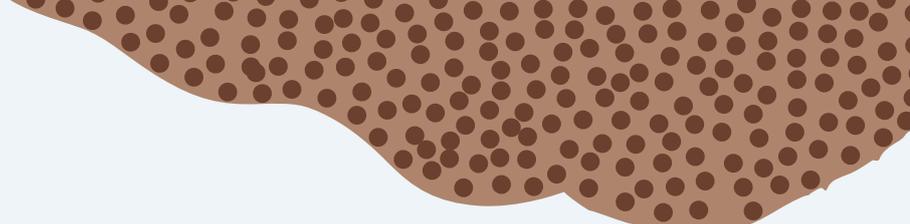
Through this Plan we hope to build the capacity and create opportunities for Traditional Owners to lead and work with Reef 2050 partners to co-design more holistic place-based programs which bring actions around water, wetlands, and shorelines together to help get Country and People healthy again.

Pathways forward

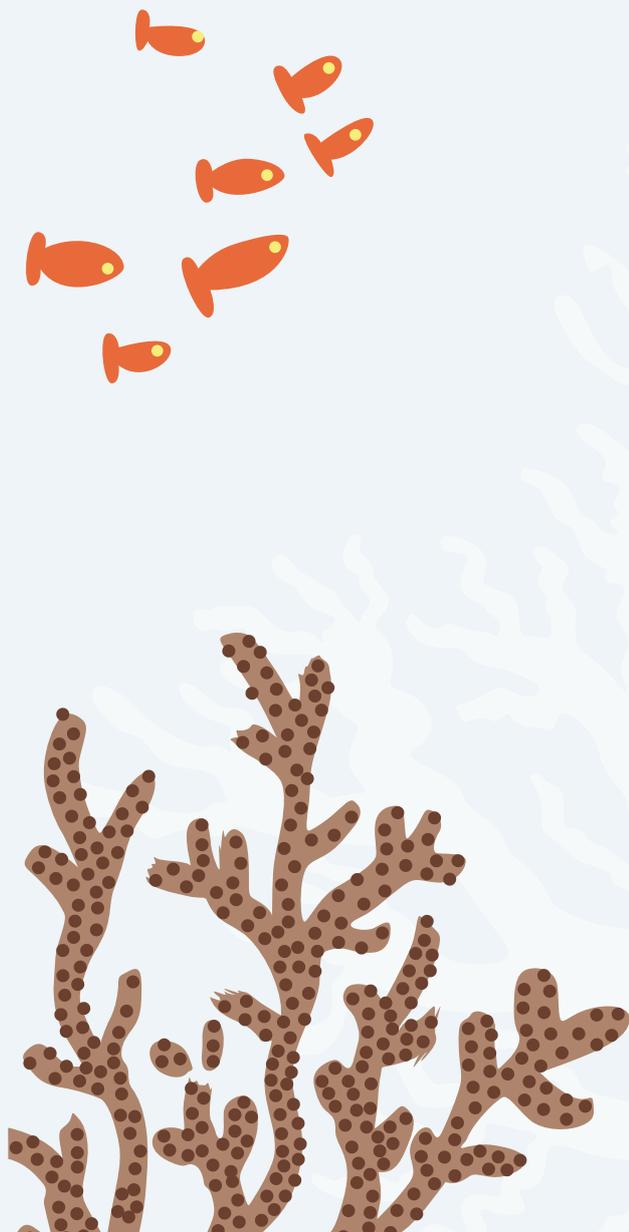
The implementation of actions should be guided by recommendations in the *Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: The Next Generation of Reef 2050 Actions* and actions outlined in Reef 2050 Traditional Owner reports listed in **Figure 3**, pp 7.

Work Area 2 – Land and Coast

L-1	<p>Deliver the next round of the Reef Trust Partnership Traditional Owner Healthy Water program grants (2022-2024) to further support Traditional Owners to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan and record how we want to care for our water sources • improve our leadership and competency levels • deliver on-ground management to improve the health of our water, and • promote our heritage and values associated with healthy water.
L-2	<p>Increase the level of Traditional Owner participation in the governance, design and delivery of major Reef Catchment programs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan, due for review in 2022 • Regional Water Quality Improvement Plans as they're updated, and • Wetlands in the Great Barrier Reef Catchment Strategy to improve recognition of cultural values and strengthen integrated landscape approaches.
L-3	<p>Allocate a minimum of 10% of funds from major Reef Catchment programs, including funding for the implementation of the Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan and the revised 'Wetlands in the Great Barrier Reef Catchment Strategy' as Traditional Owner-specified funds.</p> <p>a) Quarantine funds for Traditional Owner-led and co-designed programs, projects and initiatives to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › build capacity to record, store and manage traditional ecological knowledge associated with freshwater, wetlands, mangroves, estuaries and shorelines › protect and conserve our biocultural resources and species of importance to Traditional Owners within the Reef Catchment › increase participation in existing programs, including through pathways for employment, business enterprise and new technologies, and building capabilities, skills and relevant experience, and › improve recognition of Traditional Owner knowledge and cultural values associated with healthy water to inform mainstream science, planning and management for water quality improvements. <p>b) Investigate options for Traditional Owner entities to govern Traditional Owner-specified funding allocations for major Reef catchment programs.</p>
L-4	<p>Ensure Traditional Owners are engaged in the protection and management of Ramsar wetlands.</p>
L-5	<p>Increase funding through IPA and ranger programs to increase Traditional Owner connections with Country through cultural heritage mapping, planning and improved protection of sensitive sites.</p>



L-6	Support Traditional Owners to better understand market-based financing opportunities for environmental stewardship (e.g. natural capital markets, Reef Credit Scheme) and to develop business cases, as way to sustainably finance caring for Country programs/projects, including the rehabilitation of land and recovery of species.
L-7	Increase Traditional Owner involvement and leadership opportunities in the research, surveillance and management of biosecurity risks and delivery of community education to programs to increase awareness of threats and enable early detection.
L-8	Support development of business models and fee-for-service arrangements between Traditional Owners and Reef 2050 partners, including local councils, for invasive weed and pest control on Country.



CASE STUDY

Wanjuru-Yidinji First Nations people restoring land and sea country in the Russell River Catchment, integrating traditional knowledge and culture with mainstream approaches and partnerships

The Wanjuru First Nations people, through Jaragun EcoServices, are undertaking sustainable catchment management in a way that blends contemporary natural resource management with traditional knowledge. The vision to implement the cultural heritage value of “Bunda Waray Yurrbing”, meaning mountain, river, Reef, ensures caring for country combines cultural knowledge and practices with environmental rehabilitation in a modified landscape and addresses new challenges like climate change.

The sustainability approach underpins the custodial obligation to pass traditional knowledge to younger generations, with long-term employment providing opportunities to care for country and to build capacity in all aspects of catchment management. Wanjuru people are supported as future catchment managers through their work with scientists and Government to implement the Reef 2050 Plan.

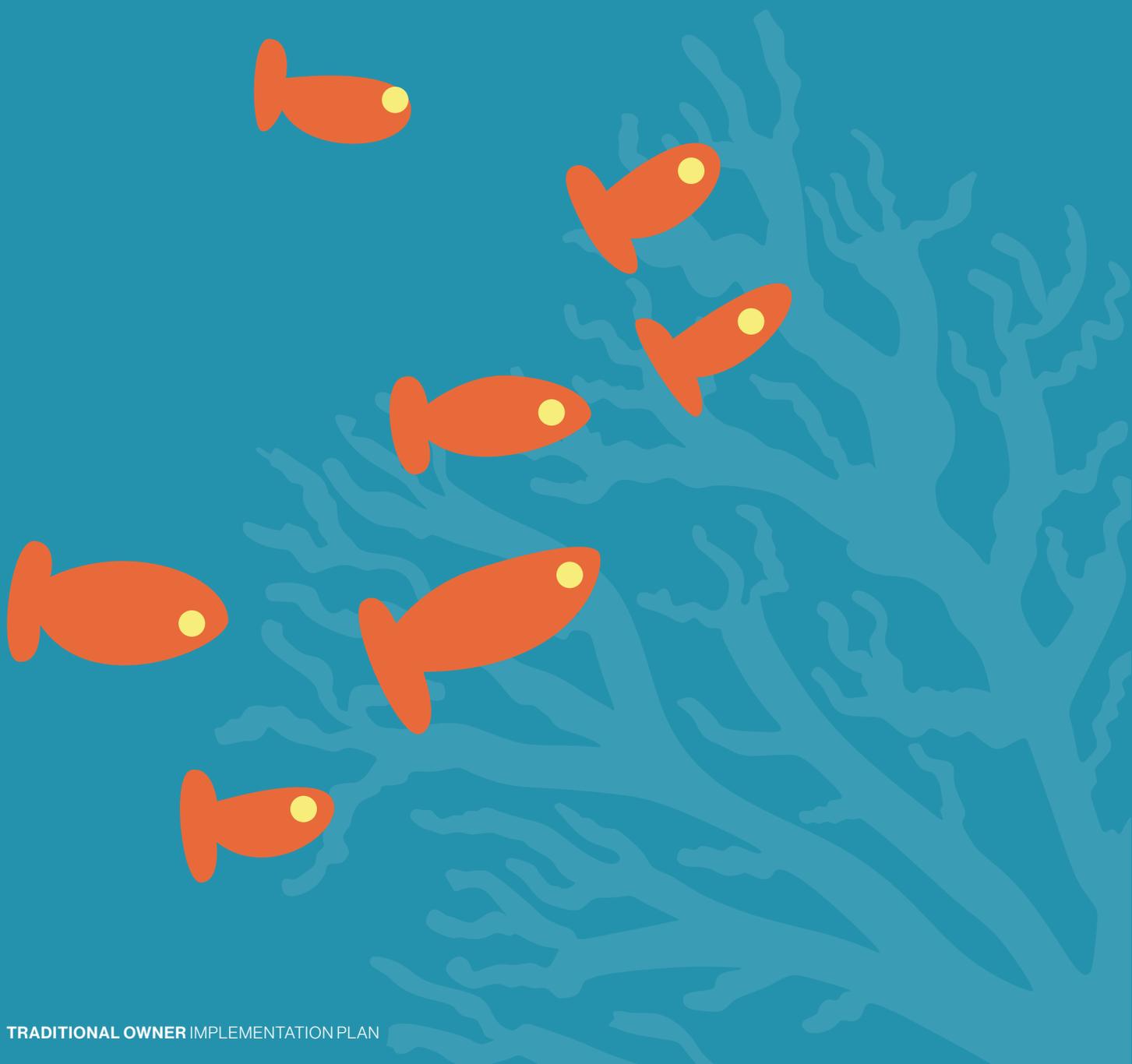
Wanjuru priorities encompass working across agronomic, water quality and natural capital to preserve the cultural values and high value biodiversity of the Russell River Catchment and the Reef. Working at the catchment scale includes protecting and restoring degraded ecosystems and waterways, implementing water quality improvement strategies and undertaking engineered solutions.

Collaboration is key to Wanjuru’s success – bringing together farmers, scientists, Traditional Owners, the and community State and local authorities in partnerships. By using an open dialogue approach, Wanjuru help to create a bridge between custodial responsibilities, Government objectives, contemporary science and local circumstances to deliver a strategic and cost-effective approach to managing country.



WORK
AREA **3 Sea Country**

The Great Barrier Reef is a rich cultural landscape of great significance to Traditional Owners.



WORK AREA 3 Sea Country

We have lived on and cared for the Reef for many thousands of years.



Our connections with the Reef are deep and enduring and form part of our identity. Through our custodianship the Reef remained healthy and provided for us.

Since the Reef's declaration as a Marine Park in 1975 and a World Heritage Area in 1981, the Reef's landscape has changed dramatically. Management today involves many partners, and the Reef supports a wide range of activities. Most significant is the Reef's deterioration in health over recent decades due to multiple and increasing pressures from many different sources.

Management of Reef-based activities such as fishing, tourism, recreation, research, defence, shipping, and ports has continued to improve over the last couple of decades and, on their own, are generally not considered to pose a major threat to the health of the Reef. However, when combined with climate and land-based impacts they have the potential to further affect the health of Country.

Actions in this part of the Plan are about how we can work together to further reduce the threats from activities on a system that is sick and stressed and helping Country recover from past disturbances and adapt to the pace of climate change and disruptive weather patterns.

There's a lot of different actions in this work area. They include increasing Traditional Owner's presence on the water; improving fisheries management; preventing the introduction of new pests and disease, and controlling existing pests, such as outbreaks of the coral-eating crown-of-thorns starfish; reducing marine debris and improving waste disposal practices; and helping Country to heal and adapt.

Importantly, this part of the Plan is about strengthening Traditional Owner involvement in the management of Sea Country to keep our heritage strong, safe and healthy. It includes a number of actions focused on further advancing the aspirations of our People for co-governance and co-management and returning to holistic approaches to make the Reef and our People healthy again. There are strong linkages between this work area and the following Partnerships and Capacity and Knowledge Systems work areas.

Pathways forward

The implementation of actions should be guided by recommendations in the *Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: The Next Generation of Reef 2050 Actions* and actions outlined in Reef 2050 Traditional Owner reports listed in **Figure 3**, pp 7.

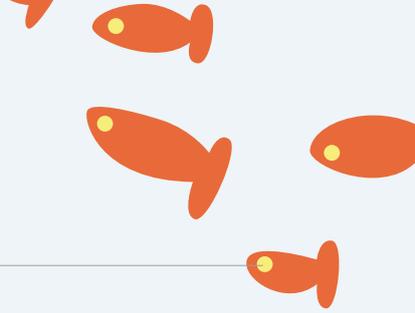
Work Area 3 – Sea Country

Strengthen partnerships and agreement making

S-1	Support the development and implementation of Country-based management models including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formal partnerships that involve shared decision making, risk and accountabilities, and • fee-for-service arrangements for environmental services creating economic opportunities and community benefits for Traditional Owners to care for Country.
S-2	Investigate options for Traditional Owner groups to enter into formal agreements for joint-management through the development and implementation of plans of management with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority under 39ZA Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975 . Document options and communicate outcomes to Traditional Owner groups.
S-3	Convene a Traditional Owner-led workshop to: review how cultural authority is being expressed through TUMRA's, IPA's and existing management arrangements ; look at options for formally recognising Traditional Owner rights and interests over sea-Country through legislative instruments; identify barriers and opportunities to progress Country-based co-management models; and, provide recommendations to address barriers and ensure agreements and management arrangements are being effectively informed by Law/Lore and custom, and decisions around Sea Country management, including compliance, are made in accordance with cultural authority. Document workshop and communicate outcomes to Traditional Owner groups.
S-4	Convene a workshop of Traditional Owners and Federal and State government partners to discuss outcomes from the Traditional Owner-led workshop including: options for formal recognition of Traditional Owner rights and interests through current legislation and management tools; barriers and opportunities to progressing Country-based co-governance models; and agreed pathways forward . Document workshop and communicate outcomes to Traditional Owner groups.

Increase Traditional Owners on-water presence

S-5	Increase the number of Traditional Owners employed by the Joint Field Management Program and improve the Program's engagement with Traditional Owner groups.
S-6	Expand marine incident response training for Indigenous land and sea rangers. Increase the number of rangers trained and establish Traditional Owner-led programs to support the recovery of marine life and protection of cultural values. Establish fee-for-service arrangements for the provision of incident response services by ranger groups .
S-7	Increase funding through TUMRA, IPA and ranger programs to strengthen Traditional Owner connections with Country through cultural heritage mapping, planning and improved protection of sensitive sites .
S-8	Support Traditional Owners to better understand market-based financing opportunities for environmental stewardship (e.g. blue carbon initiatives) and to develop business cases, as way to sustainably financing caring for Country programs/projects, including the restoration of coastal and marine ecosystems.



Fisheries reforms

S-9	<p>Commission independent Indigenous fisheries expertise⁶ to ensure the implementation of relevant* Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan actions consider the rights, interests and obligations of Traditional Owners in relation to the conservation, customary use and management of fisheries resources in line with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the CBD's⁷ objectives for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits including: Article 8(j) – traditional knowledge (including Traditional Fishing Knowledge), innovations and practices, and Article 10(c) – customary use of biological resources; and • the FAO⁸ Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, in particular Article 7.6.6 regarding the recognition of traditional practices, needs and interests of Indigenous people in the conservation and management of fisheries resources.
S-10	<p>Ensure the implementation of the Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy addresses the values of cultural fishing through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two-way capacity building - including the education of fisheries managers on Indigenous rights, interests and obligations in the conservation, customary use and management of fisheries resources; and through education and mentoring programs for Reef Traditional Owners in fisheries management; • the inclusion of cultural risk assessments and Indigenous sector allocations to preserve and maintain Traditional Fishing Knowledge, innovations and customary practices when developing and reviewing harvest strategies; and • the improved coordination between the State and Commonwealth on ecosystem-based fisheries management. <p>Report on the implementation of Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy Indigenous-related actions including: Action 3.3 (work with Indigenous groups to provide advice on fisheries management); Action 5.1 (consider Indigenous sector resource allocations); Action 7.6 (develop a traditional fishing policy); and work on improved engagement processes) in line with Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan reporting.</p>

Preventing and reducing outbreaks of pests, introduced species and disease

S-11	<p>Increase Traditional Owner involvement and leadership opportunities in the research, surveillance and management of marine biosecurity risks and the delivery of community education to programs to increase awareness of threats and enable early detection.</p>
S-12	<p>Support implementation of co-designed and co-delivered pest surveillance and control programs in TUMRA's and Indigenous land and sea ranger work programs.</p>

*Relevant Traditional Owner Implementation actions include: policy coordination (PC-1, PC-2), governance (PC-7, S-3, S-4), partnerships and agreement making (PC-8, PC-16), engagement (PC-21, PC-22), capacity building (PC-9, PC-10, PC-12), benefit sharing (PC-2, PC-15, S-1), knowledge systems (K1-K10) and investment (I-1, I-2, I-5).

⁶With links to the FRDC Indigenous Reference Group

⁷Convention for Biological Diversity

⁸Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



Crown-of-Thorns Starfish (COTS) research, surveillance and control

S-13	<p>Continue to strengthen Traditional Owner involvement and leadership opportunities in COTS management through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the increased involvement of Traditional Owners in the design and governance of COTS research, surveillance and control programs• the development and delivery of Indigenous research plans and university scholarships• the application of innovative approaches and new technologies• training and employment with existing COTS control service providers, and• fee-for-service arrangements, including as part of existing Indigenous ranger programs and Traditional Owner-led business enterprises.
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Reducing marine debris and improving waste disposal practices

S-14	<p>Continue to support Traditional Owners' participation in existing marine debris reduction programs and to better manage waste on Country through improved waste management practices, innovative technologies and partnerships.</p>
S-15	<p>Investigate economic development opportunities for the reduction of marine debris, including through the adoption of innovative technologies for the reduction, re-use and re-cycling of plastics and abandoned fishing gear. Support the development business cases for investment and partnerships to realise opportunities.</p>

Helping Country to heal and adapt

S-16	<p>Deliver the Reef Trust Partnership Traditional Owner Healing Country grant program as part of an integrated package of Reef restoration activities that link to improving the health of our waterways and land.</p>
S-17	<p>Continue to strengthen Traditional Owner involvement and leadership opportunities in Reef restoration and recovery projects and programs to help plants, animals and habitats adapt to climate change, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the increased involvement of Traditional Owners in the governance, design and delivery of programs• development of culturally appropriate education, training, employment and career opportunities• the application of innovative approaches and new technologies, and• fee-for-service arrangements, including as part of existing Indigenous ranger programs and Traditional Owner-led business enterprises.
S-18	<p>Convene an Indigenous-led forum on Reef restoration and recovery projects for Traditional Owners to learn first-hand about programs and projects that are helping to build the resilience of coral reefs, seagrass and many important animals to climate change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invite Reef 2050 and Indigenous funding partners to discuss options for fee-for-service arrangements and better coordination of grant rounds. Look at opportunities for innovative and sustainable financing of projects. Document and communicate workshop outcomes.



CASE STUDY

Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan – Annual Chili Beach Clean-up in Cape York

The annual Chili Beach clean-up started locally in 2011 as a day-long school clean-up with Lockhart River school students and has now grown into a 5-day annual event where the community comes together to Care for Country.

The event is the longest running remote clean-up in Cape York and represents a strong community collaboration that is supported by Tangaroa Blue Foundation through the [Australian Marine Debris Initiative](#). Over the past 10 years the support from the community has continued to grow, with involvement each year from Kuuku Ya'u Aboriginal Corporation and QPWS Rangers, Traditional Owners, Lockhart River locals and school students, Biosecurity officer, Border Force Australia and many volunteers.

Together, the community and volunteers have removed 39.3 tonnes of marine debris from Chili Beach since 2011. It is fantastic to see a decreasing trend in marine debris removed by the community – from 5.5 tonnes during the first full clean-up in 2012 to 3 tonnes in 2021 – showing the importance of regular clean sweeps. Wherever possible, items are sorted for recycling or reuse including fishing rope, net scraps, bottle caps and thongs that are repurposed in creative ways.

The Chili Beach clean-up is also known as the birthplace of the inaugural Golden Thong Award, a coveted honour for collecting the most thongs during beach clean-up. In 2012 a whopping 4,700 thongs were counted on Chili Beach.





Chili Beach thong collection 2012, © Tangaroa Blue



WORK
AREA

4 Partnerships & capacity

Building genuine partnerships and growing capacity is foundational to realising Traditional Owner aspirations for co-governance and far greater involvement in the day-to-day management of the Great Barrier Reef.



WORK AREA 4 Partnerships & capacity

The 2021-25 Reef 2050 Plan states:



“Improving involvement of Traditional Owners in protecting and managing the Reef is a priority for the Australian and Queensland governments. Traditional Owner rights are recognised in the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#), articles 8(j) and 10(c) and related guidelines, and the [Human Rights Act 2019 \(Qld\)](#). The National Partnership Agreement on [Closing the Gap](#) and the Queensland Government’s [Tracks to Treaty](#) program reflect government commitments to a new way of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in full and genuine partnership.

A broad societal shift towards reconciliation is necessary to enable achievement of Traditional Owner aspirations for the Reef. All Reef 2050 partners and stakeholders have a role to play. Reflecting this, the Plan has a strong emphasis on actions that recognise Traditional Owner rights and interests; and work towards increased participation, voice and capacity in governance processes for Reef protection and management.”

What this means in practice is Traditional Owners being represented all levels of Reef governance; resourcing Traditional Owners to enable equitable participation in all aspects of Reef management, use and benefit sharing; and Reef 2050 government agencies and stakeholder organisations reframing their relationships with Traditional Owners and committing to a new way of working together.

It requires genuine dialogue and agreement on what co-governance, co-management, co-design and co-delivery actually means and working together on pathways to achieve this. It’s about moving away from transactional relationships to genuine partnerships and the need for government agencies and organisations to assess their capability to facilitate the changes required to make this happen.

The rightful application of international protocols and instruments sits at the heart of realising many Traditional Owner aspirations. These include the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) and the concept of its [Nagoya Protocol](#) on access and benefit sharing. So much work has been done at the international level to guide and support implementation of policies and management approaches that formally recognise the customary rights and interests of Indigenous peoples. Now is the time to hold governments accountable to the application of this work at national and state levels and within management frameworks for protecting and managing the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.



Building consideration of 'Closing the Gap' issues into program design and delivery also presents real opportunities for change and opens the door to more holistic and diversified partnership and investment approaches. 'Tracks to Treaty' provides a genuine opportunity to change the way government works with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in line with the principles of self-determination, respect for culture, locally-led decision making, shared commitment, responsibility and accountability, empowerment and Free, Prior and Informed Consent⁹ and the ethical practice standards¹⁰ that are associated with these.

Strengthening the capacity and involvement of Traditional Owners in Reef 2050 management arrangements requires people to understand that our landscape is highly dynamic, and our needs and capacity vary over time and from community to community. Programs need to be based on an understanding of where groups are going, what's happening on Country and what's stopping us from going to the next step. It's not just about rolling out new or expanding existing programs.

Pathways outlined under this part of the Implementation Plan align strongly with aspirations voiced by Traditional Owners over many decades and documented in Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Reports. They are foundational to sharing and growing the collective contributions of Traditional Owners and Reef 2050 stakeholders and to help get Country and People healthy again.

Pathways forward

The implementation of actions should be guided by recommendations in the *Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: The Next Generation of Reef 2050 Actions* and actions outlined in Reef 2050 Traditional Owner reports listed in **Figure 3**, pp 7.

Work Area 4 – Partnerships and capacity

Formally recognising Traditional Owner customary rights, responsibilities and interests

PC-1	Improve policy coordination between Reef 2050 government agencies to support Traditional Owner aspirations. Review how government agencies are supporting Traditional Owner aspirations. Report back to Traditional Owners on how this is being achieved.
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⁶ <https://www.dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-partnerships/reconciliation-tracks-treaty/tracks-treaty/statement-commitment>

⁷ AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research <https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-10/aiatsis-code-ethics.pdf>



PC-2	<p>Ensure customary use of biological resources, increase access and benefit sharing agreements, and improve the capacity of Traditional Owners to generate economic benefits from the management of traditional estates.</p> <p>a) Establish a dedicated policy coordination unit with a strong policy understanding of these matters to unpack and describe what these actions looks like in practice.</p> <p>b) Draw on international treaties including the Convention of Biological Diversity and its Plan of Action on Customary Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing for guidance on the development of strong policies to move this forward.</p> <p>c) Look at existing tools available to Traditional Owners (TUMRAs, IPAs, ILUAs, Indigenous Compliance Programs and fisheries allocation and harvest strategies) and how they can be strengthened through the application of policies to better support the customary use and management of resources and access and benefits to communities.</p> <p>d) Ensure effective participation of Traditional Owner groups in the development of policy frameworks and their application to support local community-based on ground work.</p> <p>e) Identify indicators of where we want to be in five years to maintain accountability and drive implementation.</p>
PC-3	<p>Bring Traditional Owners and government agencies together to establish a shared understanding of the differences between co-governance and co-management and to identify barriers and pathways, including legislative changes, to achieving both.</p>
PC-4	<p>Increase co-design and co-delivery of Reef programs involving Traditional Owners and Indigenous land and sea rangers, building on the outcomes of Partnerships and Capacity Action PC-3 above.</p>
PC-5	<p>Establish a Sea Country Alliance</p> <p>a) Commission research into regional governance models in Australia to inform a Reef-wide Traditional Owner discussion on the proposed establishment of a GBR Traditional Owner Sea Country Alliance. This needs to be a highly participatory process with resources dedicated to looking at actions in the Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Aspirations Report and in the context of 'Tracks to Treaty' and changes in governance arrangements across the Reef Traditional Owner landscape (see Partnerships and Capacity Action PC-6 below).</p> <p>b) Develop and present an options paper on models for a Sea Country Alliance by the end of 2023. Led and driven by Traditional Owners working closely with Commonwealth and Queensland governments and in consultation with Native Title Representative. Additional and progressive governance expertise (such as Australian Indigenous Governance Institute) should be commissioned to support this process ensuring options adhere to traditional governance structures.</p> <p>c) Resource and support the operational foundations for establishing preferred options for a Sea Country Alliance (regionally and Reef-wide). This action links to the establishment of a Traditional Owner Futures Fund (see Investment Action I-4, pp 55).</p>

PC-6	<p>Undertake an audit, including in-depth analysis of the key cultural and organisational governance foundations of Traditional Owner groups, their core governance capacities and aspirational needs from Torres Strait to the Southern GBR boundary.</p> <p>a) Develop an interactive tool (i.e. web portal/interactive map) that identifies points of contact for Traditional Owner groups and the most relevant engagement protocols.</p> <p>b) With a specific focus on measures to support good governance, the audit should identify investment opportunities to address gaps in business capacity, administrative support and infrastructure (i.e. office systems and tools). This action should complement but not duplicate work undertaken as part of the broader workforce strategy assessment (see Partnerships and Capacity Action PC-12, pp 47).</p>
PC-7	<p>Increase Traditional Owner participation, voice and capacity in Reef governance</p> <p>a) Look at levels of Traditional Owner participation in current Reef governance, including fisheries management, and how to increase buy-in from mob.</p> <p>b) Address barriers to participation and Traditional Owner’s voices being heard.</p> <p>c) Work with Reef 2050 partners to address barriers and transform mainstream governance systems and practices to create a collaborative and shared space where Traditional Owners voices are respected and valued and acted on.</p>
PC-8	<p>Increase the use of formal and informal Traditional Owner partnerships and agreements to address management of ecosystems within our traditional estate.</p> <p>a) Commission a review of the capacity of rights-based agreement opportunities available to Traditional Owners at local, sub-regional, regional and Reef-wide scales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Explore the capacity of these agreements to deliver on the aspirations of the Traditional Owners as well as meeting the needs of other Reef users. › Include ILUAs, s39za of the GBRMP Act, TUMRAs, IPAs, fisheries management policies and strategies, data-sharing agreements, voluntary MOU’s and others as identified. › The Australian Indigenous Governance Institute may be appropriate to assist Traditional Owners in the commissioning the scope and design of this work. <p>b) Ensure agreements meet the requirement for Free, Prior and Informed Consent.</p>
Increasing capacity and involvement of Traditional Owner in protecting and managing the Reef	
PC-9	<p>Build on existing models and strengthen the delivery of ‘on-Country’ learning experiences to increase connections, learn new skills and provide young ones with an understanding of opportunities and career pathways.</p>
PC-10	<p>Support the development of education and career pathways, including as part of the delivery of major Reef and fisheries related programs, by increasing the number of opportunities available for Indigenous school students and youth to participate in education and training courses, internships and university scholarships.</p>
PC-11	<p>Support Traditional Owners to communicate what’s happening on Country where they’re going and assess what issues are stopping groups going to the next step. Link outcomes to the workforce strategy assessment (see Partnership and Capacity Action PC-12 below). Resource groups to address gaps and increase the capability and profile of work groups are doing.</p>
PC-12	<p>Undertake a workforce capacity assessment to identify capacity gaps, barriers and opportunities and develop a Traditional Owner capability and career pathway program to support successful implementation of actions in this plan. Develop sector-specific targets for employment.</p>



PC-13	Expand programs to develop local and regional capacity of Traditional Owners to govern and manage Country , including, but not limited to TUMRAs, IPAs and fisheries management, in line with outcomes of the workforce assessment outlined in action Partnership and Capacity Action PC-12 and needs identified through Partnership and Capacity Action PC-11 above. This includes increasing capacity within Reef 2050 partner agencies to build effective relationships with Traditional Owners and to understand and support the varying needs across groups.
PC-14	Work in partnership with Reef 2050 government agencies, the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) and Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) to address capacity gaps and increase the capacity of Traditional Owners to improve the health and condition of Country , building on outcomes of the workforce strategy assessment (see Partnership and Capacity Action PC-12 above)
PC-15	Support Traditional Owners to improve their capacity to generate economic benefits from use and management of their traditional estates , including through the development of education, employment, career and enterprise pathways building on the outcomes of action Partnership and Capacity Action PC-2c.

Fostering genuine partnerships for Reef protection

PC-16	Convene a workshop on 'partnerships' between Reef Traditional Owners with, marine park (GBRMPA, DES/QPWS) and fisheries managers to define what genuine partnerships mean in the context of shared decision making, shared risk, shared accountability and robust relationships . Assess capabilities of partner agencies and map pathways to achieve this.
PC-17	Using existing networks strengthen the capacity of local partners to build relationships with mob to bring an on-ground perspective on how to best support Traditional Owners in caring for Country.
PC-18	Elevate the voice of Traditional Owners and support direct lines of communications between Traditional Owners and the national and international community in promoting an understanding and appreciation of the Reef, the benefits it brings and our collective responsibility for its protection.
PC-19	Support Traditional Owner representation at international forums to engage in dialogue with communities and networks about agreement making, programs and partnerships to protect migratory animals and reduce international sources of marine debris.
PC-20	Increase Traditional Owner awareness of, and access to information on intervention conventions and protocols including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Nagoya Protocol.
PC-21	Progress Indigenous engagement and agreement making frameworks as part of the Queensland Government's 'Tracks to Treaty', GBRMPA's Traditional Owner partnerships and overarching engagement framework, and the Australian Government's Indigenous Voice Co-design Process.
PC-22	Benchmark Reef 2050 partners engagement practices , including the application of the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent and adoption of best practice guidelines
PC-23	Promote how Traditional Owners are protecting and caring for Country , including through TUMRA's, IPAs, Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger and compliance programs, to support the growth of genuine partnerships between Traditional Owners and other stakeholders and implement expanded stewardship, monitoring and education programs.
PC-24	Strengthen communication across Traditional Owners groups through online resources and tailored products which regularly update Traditional Owners on Reef-wide and local initiatives.

GBRF Reef Trust Partnership

Traditional Owners, as Custodians of the Great Barrier Reef, are continuing to secure formal recognition of their rights and interests and develop local capacities to govern and manage their traditional homeland estates.

Traditional Owners have informed partners they are seeking fair, equitable and effective involvement and influence in the co-design, procurement and delivery of all programs and tenders relevant to the management and protection of the Great Barrier Reef. In response to this call for action, the Great Barrier Reef Foundation are working together with Traditional Owners in a world-leading collaboration under the Reef Trust Partnership to care for the Great Barrier Reef through a co-design process, which recognises diverse knowledge systems and perspectives that look after Country.

The Reef Trust Partnership between the Australian Government's Reef Trust and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation seeks to build a new way of working together to deliver cost effective and strategic on-ground change that improves the outstanding universal value of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

In administration of the Reef Trust Partnership, the Foundation has elevated and drawn in the lived experiences and expertise of Traditional Owners to drive program design and delivery so that solutions are fit for purpose and Traditional Owners are seen, heard and valued for their unique contributions. Reciprocity in this approach sees Traditional Owners also benefitting from new innovations, learning new skills, leading new industries, and creating employment pathways.

Three key decisions made early in the Partnership enabled this work to stand strong and position strategically for systems change at a scale and complexity that has not been attempted before within the Great Barrier Reef region. 1. Allocating a minimum of 10% of Partnership funds to Traditional Owner Reef Protection providing \$51.8 million to deliver on the aspirations of Traditional Owners. 2. Elevating the voices and contributions of Traditional Owners' lived experience as a central pillar in the design and delivery of the Partnership. 3. Establishing a Traditional Owner Futures Fund – fulfilling an important aspiration and providing sustainable funding to support enduring outcomes. These decisions have created the conditions to facilitate the achievement of a strong Traditional Owner governance framework across the Partnership, commence a genuine co-design process with Traditional Owners, support on-ground Reef protection outcomes and deliver positive impacts over the life of the Partnership and beyond.

The Traditional Owner governance arrangements under the Partnership enable a deeper understanding about what is important to Traditional Owners in empowering the management of their cultural lands and seascapes. Importantly these governance roles are fully remunerated for the work undertaken – as well as the work fully attributed. This investment acts to catalyse and accelerate important activities that Traditional Owners have planned to look after Country, maintain cultural practice and build strong foundations for the future.

Co-designing across five separate Partnership components: 1) Water Quality; 2) Crown-of-Thorns Starfish Control; 3) Reef Restoration and Adaptation Science; 4) Integrated Monitoring and Reporting; and 5) Traditional Owner and Communities a total of 5 dedicated Traditional Owner grants programs have been designed delivering 68 projects that are supporting over 30 Traditional Owner groups – investing directly on-ground at the grass roots level of delivery.

Co-investment in Community Action Grants, COTS Innovation, Reef Restoration and Adaptation, and Healthy Water further support the commitment to integration and take the number of projects and partnerships to over 70.

Co-design from the initial ideas concept to development of tools and products to participatory implementation by Traditional Owners has resulted in a clearer identification of the conditions of success and together with on-ground activities turn aspirations into plans, plans into action, and action into stronger advancement and development of communities. Strengthening Traditional Owner involvement in decision making; co-designing and delivering fit-for-purpose Traditional Owner programs; building capacity and harnessing Traditional Owner leadership; and implementing pilot programs to connect people and projects are key areas of focus.

The co-design process has enabled a greater voice in design and decision making, driving a genuine partnership approach to governing the Reef Trust Partnership Agreement. This investment has resulted in an increase to Traditional Owner participation in the active management of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and supports, recognises and respects their rights, responsibilities and interests in the implementation of the Partnership.

Giving the Reef outcomes that live beyond the end of the Partnership, the Foundation in partnership with Traditional Owners are committed to strengthening the capacity of the system and driving long-term positive change. To achieve this Traditional Owners must remain central to the design and delivery of solutions that are critical to the health of the Great Barrier Reef.

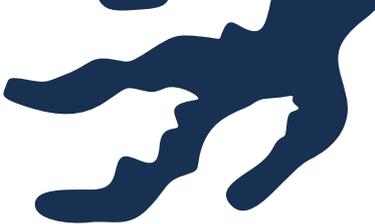


WORK
AREA

5 Knowledge systems

*Knowledge fuels
effective management.*





WORK AREA **5 Knowledge systems**

Traditional knowledge and western scientific knowledge are needed to help us understand the changes to the health of the Reef, what's causing these changes and if management actions are working to reduce threats and protect and care for the Reef are working.



The 2021-2025 Reef 2050 Plan places an increased focus on:

- engaging Traditional Owners in science and research to address management needs
- recognising, protecting and, where appropriate, sharing traditional knowledge through negotiated data sharing agreements to inform management decisions; and doing a better job at communicating science and research outcomes
- supporting Traditional Owner-led monitoring approaches, including the implementation of the Strong Peoples – [Strong Country Indigenous Heritage Monitoring Framework](#) through community pilot projects to provide objective indicators for the Reef 2050 Integrated Monitoring and Reporting process, and
- increasing the involvement of Traditional Owners in broader established monitoring programs, some of which have been running for many decades.

Our knowledge of the Reef extends over millennia. And while we welcome the increased emphasis on traditional knowledge, the implementation of the Strong Peoples-Strong Country Framework, and more inclusive approaches to monitoring, to date the focus of mainstream science and management has been on 'embedding' traditional knowledge into western approaches. This thinking needs to change.

Programs designed to monitor the health of corals, seagrass, dugong, fisheries, sea cucumbers, whales, dolphins, and water all need to see the Reef as a biocultural ecosystem and include Indigenous heritage. So too does all the monitoring that occurs on land looking at the health of our freshwater, wetlands, and coastal habitats.

Traditional Owners want to set their own research agenda based on their management priorities. To collaborate with leading research institutions to plan and negotiate a long-term strategy for addressing key Indigenous knowledge and research needs.

We need to maintain and build the capacity of all groups to record and manage traditional knowledge. Our knowledge is not static, and we require access to Country to carry out our cultural practices and preserve and maintain our Indigenous Ecological Knowledge. We need to develop data sharing agreements and protocols to ensure our knowledge is managed under Indigenous governance, our intellectual and cultural rights are protected, and most importantly to ensure that Traditional Owners feel confident that there are appropriate safeguards in place to protect their information.

Our landscape is constantly changing, and we need to continually evaluate and adapt management responses based on the available information. Traditional Owners need to be involved at every stage of the research, monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation process.

These steps, together with the principles of respect, Free, Prior and Informed Consent are foundational to creating the conditions for two-way knowledge transfer and establishing co-operative and holistic management approaches to caring for Country.

Pathways forward

The implementation of actions should be guided by recommendations in the *Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: The Next Generation of Reef 2050 Actions* and actions outlined in Reef 2050 Traditional Owner reports listed in **Figure 3**, pp 7.

Work Area 5 – Knowledge systems

Addressing Traditional Owner research needs – protecting cultural knowledge

K-1	<p>Establish and fund a Reef Traditional Owner research coordination unit to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> bring together relevant actions from previous Reef 2050 Traditional Owner reports (See Figure 3) identify research priorities to guide development of Reef Traditional Owner research agenda to guide investment over the next 3-5 years a Reef Traditional Owner forum to ensure research priorities reflect Traditional Owners’ management needs at local and Reef-wide levels bring Traditional Owners and leading research institutions together to collaborate and negotiate a long-term strategy to support Traditional Owner knowledge and research needs, including data and benefit sharing agreements, research protocols and ethical best practice engagement standards, and broker facilitation of research across Northern Australian including through the Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA); the National Environmental Science Program (NESP); the Coordinators Research Centre for Northern Australia (CRCNA); James Cook University (JCU); the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) Indigenous Reference Group; the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF) and its Indigenous Outcomes and Northern Australia Indigenous Reference Group; Reef 2050 Integrated Monitoring and Reporting (RIMReP) partners; and leading science and research institutions.
K-2	<p>Continue to fund programs to build the capacity of Traditional Owner groups to record and manage their traditional knowledge and collaborate with Reef 2050 partners on how this knowledge is shared and used to inform co-designed management approaches .</p>
K-3	<p>Continue to advance Reef Traditional Owner involvement in the governance of leading science and research institutions. Conduct a baseline audit to benchmark changes.</p>
K-4	<p>Establish education, traineeship and career pathway program(s) around knowledge and research needs including new and emerging sciences/technologies, professional development, business enterprises and collaborative opportunities with schools, universities and Non-Government Organisations (NGO's).</p>
K-5	<p>Work with science institutes and government agencies conducting Reef-related research to seek a commitment to the adoption of ethical best practice engagement with Reef Traditional Owners in line with the AISTISIS Code of Ethics.</p>



Monitoring, evaluation and learning

K-6	Implement the Strong Peoples – Strong Country Framework through a series of pilot projects designed to support community-based approaches to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• identifying indicators of Country health and how communities would like to monitor cultural values• developing data and information sets for recording information on what's important to us and informing management decisions• negotiating data-sharing agreements to protect our Intellectual Property and Indigenous knowledge, and• auditing monitoring skills, tools and assets; and, developing and implementing education and employment pathways
K-7	Continue to resource Traditional Owners to increase capacity, diversify skill sets and apply innovative technologies to enable recording and appropriate sharing of Indigenous Knowledge and information as part of cultural heritage research and mapping, Indigenous heritage and/or mainstream monitoring programs.
K-8	Increase formal and informal partnerships between Traditional Owners and Reef partners to ensure key Reef heritage values are identified, documented, protected and monitored.
K-9	Undertake a scoping study to look at value-for-money options and alternate business models for delivering monitoring programs on Country using Indigenous-led and partnership approaches to build skills, monitoring capacity, and create sustainable education and employment pathways.
K-10	Report on the implementation of actions in this Plan as part of the broader Reef 2050 monitoring and reporting process and provide annual updates to Traditional Owner groups on the progress of actions.



CASE STUDY

Partnering with First Nations peoples to use traditional knowledge in biodiscovery

As Australia's earliest scientists, First Nations peoples are the custodians of a deep and evolving wealth of knowledge of Australia's landscape, including its plants, animals, and climate. Biodiscovery involves the collection and analysis of native biological material, such as plants, animals, and other organisms for commercial applications, such as pharmaceuticals and insecticides. Traditional knowledge about the customary use of native biological material can be used to directly inform or accelerate the commercialisation of new products.

To ensure that any traditional knowledge used for biodiscovery is protected in a legally and culturally appropriate way, a [Traditional Knowledge Code of Practice](#) and associated [Traditional Knowledge Guidelines](#) were introduced under the Biodiscovery Act 2004 in August 2021, providing an Australian-first framework focussed on working with traditional knowledge custodians. The supplementary [Capacity Strengthening Toolkit](#) supports First Nations peoples to engage in biodiscovery and build the cultural capability of biodiscovery entities, such as researchers, universities and commercial research organisations.

The new requirements require the consent of custodians to use traditional knowledge and gain fair benefits from its use in biodiscovery in alignment with international standards such as the [Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing](#).

These reforms encourage science partnerships between First Nations peoples and biodiscovery entities. For example, the Dugalunji Aboriginal Corporation and The University of Queensland are collaborating to harness traditional knowledge of native spinifex grass to develop a variety of high-value nanotechnology products ranging from surgical gloves to road surfacing. James Cook University and the Mbabaram Aboriginal community are also investigating how traditional knowledge about the anti-inflammatory properties of rainforest plants could lead to new drugs.

The reforms support biodiscovery entities to collaborate internationally and access markets, with First Nations people to benefit in the process and in a way that supports First Nations peoples' cultural rights and self-determination.



6 Investment

This part of the Plan outlines existing funding commitments, priorities for future investment, and new actions to boost investment through partnerships, co-investment and innovative financing.



*The Reef 2050
Plan identifies
eight priority
areas for
investment:*



Traditional Owner actions, climate change, water quality improvement, integrated monitoring and reporting, crown-of-thorns starfish control, sustainable fisheries and modern management tools.

Our key investment priority is to have actions in this plan fully costed and funded. All actions together in one place – everything important for Traditional Owners so there's certainty going ahead.

Existing funds include: \$51.8 million as part of the Reef Trust Partnership to create opportunities and support greater engagement of Traditional Owners in Reef protection; \$24 million to expand the Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers Program; and \$3 million to deliver an expanded TUMRA program. Delivery of these funded programs will be a key priority through to 2025.

We know there are funding gaps and a need to build our capacity and capability in Reef management. Funding gaps need to be identified and costed and a workforce capacity assessment carried out to inform development of a capability and career pathway program to support successful implementation of this Plan.

At an operational-level we seek to have 10% of all future major government Reef-related programs allocated to Traditional Owners actions. Building on the precedent set by the Reef Trust Partnership, this will enable Traditional Owners to continue to build relationships and facilitate partnerships to address capacity gaps and build strong operational platforms for the design and on-ground delivery of Traditional Owner Reef protection actions. We also want to work with partners to improve coordination and alignment of funding cycles to improve certainty and continuity across programs

At a strategic-level, \$10 million has been committed to developing a Traditional Owner fund as part of the Reef Trust Partnership. Securing independent long-term financing is critical to supporting Traditional Owner governance and strategic investments to achieve our collective aspirations for the Reef. We need to move forward with developing a strategy to invest allocated funds and establishing governance and administrative arrangements for their use.

To strengthen the delivery of outcomes we want resources to bring onboard top innovators to develop a Traditional Owner innovation strategy. People don't realise how adaptable mob is and how we want to be at the centre of innovation. We want the innovation strategy to cover improvements in engagement and co-design, especially co-design at scale; data innovations and new technologies; emerging industries, including those built on circular economy thinking; and innovative financing, including initiatives like 'blue carbon.'

We realise the importance of partnerships and co-investment and want to bring more people and organisations onboard to help us to achieve our aspirations. We need the support of top economists and specialists working in this area to help us develop an investment prospectus to address funding and capacity gaps, including those identified through the workforce assessment, and to look at investment options that can be applied at Reef-wide or community levels.



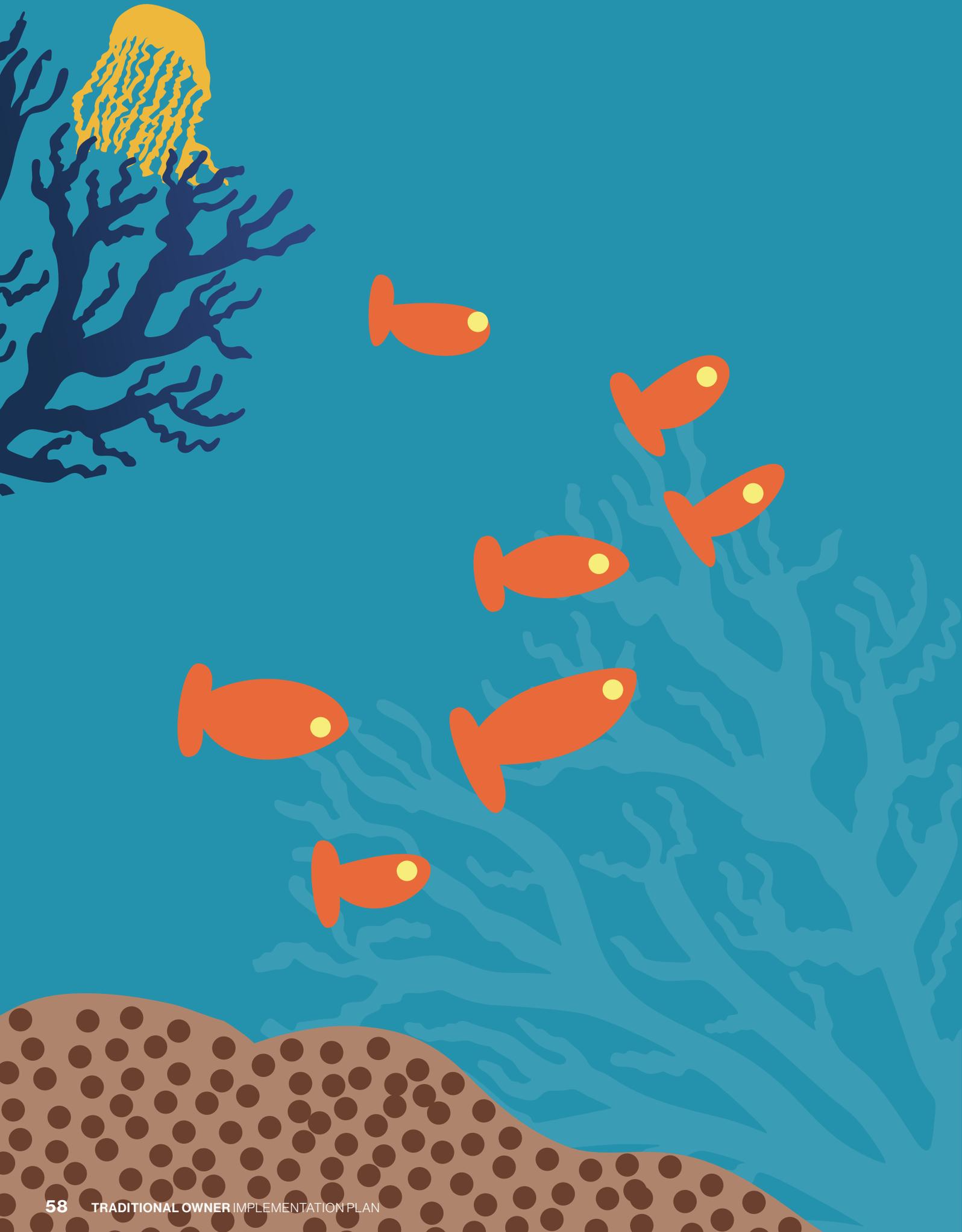


Pathways forward

The implementation of actions should be guided by recommendations in the *Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: The Next Generation of Reef 2050 Actions* and actions outlined in Reef 2050 Traditional Owner reports listed in **Figure 3**, pp 7.

Enabling Actions 3 - Investment

<p>I-1</p>	<p>Cost actions in the Implementation Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a cost estimate for all actions outlined in this Plan (2021-2025) and cost projections for the next phase of work (2026 to 2030). • For new actions scope deliverables, define measurable targets or benchmarks to track progress. • Identify funded and unfunded actions/programs. Map costs to existing and upcoming funding cycles.
<p>I-2</p>	<p>Fund the Implementation Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue/commence delivery of actions funded under existing commitments. • Identify additional investment required for unfunded actions and/or funds required for actions seeking to 'increase', 'improve' or strengthen the involvement of Traditional Owners in Reef governance and management. • Secure additional investment to meet funding gaps.
<p>I-3</p>	<p>Commit to applying the minimum 10% Traditional Owner funding allocation precedent, established by the Reef Trust Partnership, to future government Reef-related programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarantine funds for Traditional Owner-led and co-designed programs, projects and initiatives. • Investigate options for Traditional Owner entities to govern these funds.
<p>I-4</p>	<p>Establish a Reef Traditional Owners Future Fund to secure long-term financing to support governance and strategic investments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish governance and administrative arrangements for the Fund. • Prepare a strategy to invest allocated funds and attract additional funding.
<p>I-5</p>	<p>Commission a prospectus to boost investment in Traditional Owner programs through partnerships, co-investment and innovative financing at Reef-wide and community scales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract an economist to support the prospectus's development and implementation, including market-based approaches to financing environmental stewardship and options to address capacity gaps identified in the workforce capacity assessment.
<p>I-6</p>	<p>Commission and implement a Traditional Owner innovation strategy to strengthen delivery of outcomes including engagement, co-design at scale, rehabilitation techniques and monitoring.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategy should cover, but not be limited to, technology, financing, and emerging industries.



APPENDIX 1

Developing the Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan

The aim of the Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan was to bring together Traditional Owner actions from across the Reef 2050 Plan into one place and provide a cohesive framework and narrative to guide implementation.

A Steering Group was established to guide the process of bringing Traditional Owner actions together into a cohesive framework with clear implementation pathways. The Steering Group also provided guidance on the development of communication products for Traditional Owners about the Reef 2050 Plan and its role in advancing Traditional Owner aspirations.

The Steering Group was made up of the following members: Ms Chrissy Grant (Traditional Owner member of the Reef 2050 Advisory Committee Traditional Owner member), Mr Duane Fraser (former Traditional Owner member of the Reef 2050 Advisory Committee), Mr Malcolm Mann (Chair of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee), Ms Liz Wren (Director Great Barrier Reef Foundation Traditional Owner Partnerships) and Ms Jean Fenton (Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Assistant Director, Strategy and Partnerships). Mr Malachi Johnson and Ms Jessie Courtney, emerging leaders in their communities, joined the Steering Group in the later stages of the Plan's development.

The Reef 2050 Plan brings together actions across governments, Traditional Owners, industry, researchers and the broader community. The 2021-2025 Reef 2050 Plan has five work areas and four sets of 'enabling actions'. Traditional Owner actions are included across all these areas.

Through a series of workshops, the Steering Group worked through all the actions in the then draft Reef 2050 Plan. With a focus on Traditional Owner-led and Traditional Owner-partner actions, the Steering Group systematically identified key implementation steps for each set of actions and any gaps. The Group drew heavily on the outcomes of Traditional Owner-led reports listed in [Figure 3](#) to inform this work.

The Steering Group then looked at how actions sat together and developed a narrative to frame groups of actions. This narrative, which sits at the beginning of each section, also draws on the past work of Traditional Owners and readers are encouraged to look at the reports listed at the beginning of each set of actions for further background and context.

The resulting Reef 2050 Plan Traditional Owner Implementation Plan has a simplified structure with six sets of actions compared to that of the overarching Reef 2050 Plan with its nine sets of actions (five work areas and four sets of enabling actions).



Key differences between the structure of the Reef 2050 Plan and the Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan are outlined below.

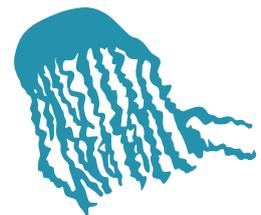
The Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan:

- adopts a more holistic approach to caring and healing Country. Instead of splitting actions relating to 'reducing impacts' and 'protecting, rehabilitating and restoring' into different work areas it brings these actions together and nests them under 'Land and Coasts', or 'Sea Country'.
- places a greater emphasis on capacity building. Consequently, the Reef 2050 Plan's enabler 'collaboration and partnerships' is reframed 'partnerships and capacity' to reflect this difference.
- brings together Reef 2050 Plan enablers 'science and knowledge' with 'monitoring, evaluation and adaptive management' under one work area – 'knowledge systems', and
- highlights the importance of education, employment and economic enterprises to empowering Traditional Owners and caring for Country and People. These actions are embedded across work areas

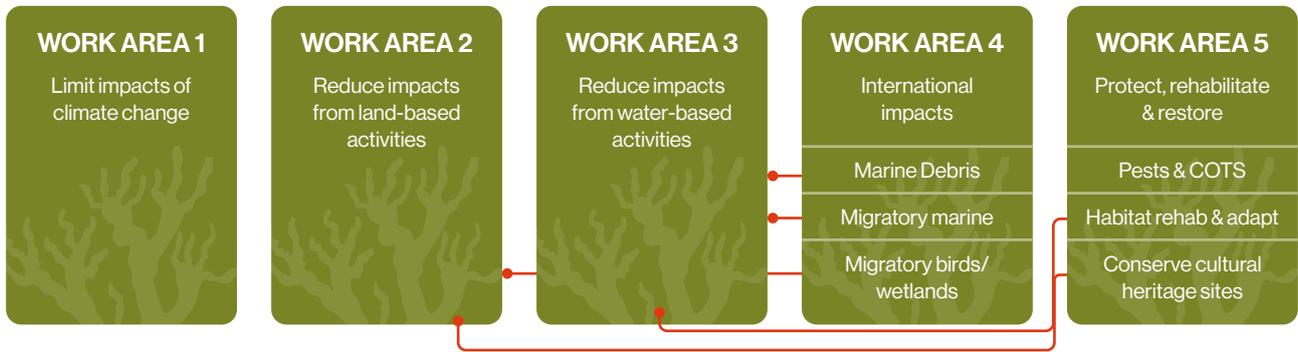
The resulting framework (see [Figure 6](#)) provides a cohesive and holistic framework for delivering on Traditional Owner priorities for the Great Barrier Reef. [Figure A-1](#) shows how work areas and actions in the Traditional Owner Implementation Plan map to actions in the Reef 2050 Plan.

Implementation resources

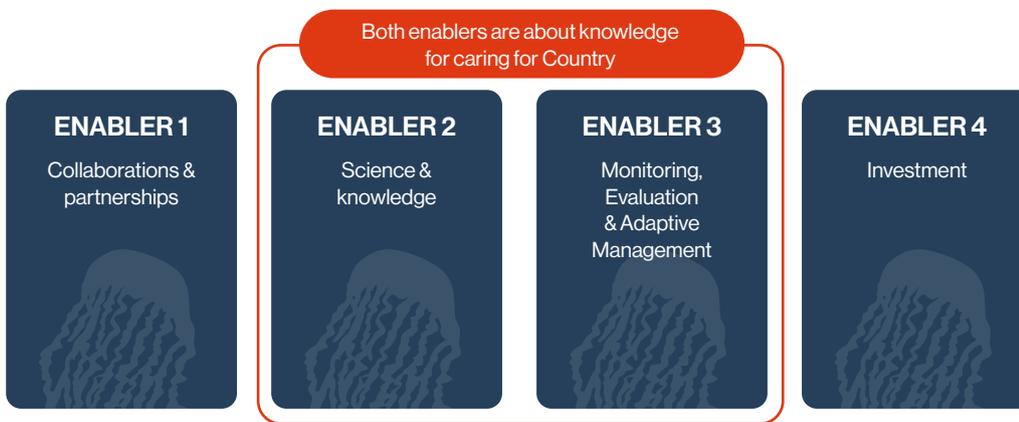
As part of developing the Plan, a number of tables were produced which categorise actions by 'type, identify related actions, and classify actions according to their funding status. These tables were not included in the Plan as the status of actions is regularly changing but they provide a valuable resource to assist with implementation.



The Reef 2050 Plan's five work areas are:



The Reef 2050 Plan's four 'enablers' (to underpin effective delivery of the work areas) are:



The Traditional Owner Implementation Plan has a simplified structure with six work areas. They are:



