

Protecting the Great Barrier Reef

Welcome

Welcome to the Protecting the Great Barrier Reef e-newsletter which features work the Queensland Government is doing alongside our partners to protect the Reef.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter and encourage you to share it with your friends and colleagues who can subscribe [here](#).

What's new



Great Barrier Reef World Heritage status retained

The Queensland and Australian governments welcomed the [UNESCO World Heritage Committee's decision](#) not to add the Great Barrier Reef to its World Heritage 'In Danger' list.

The committee adopted the decision at its 46th session on 25 July 2024 noting a progress report will be submitted in February 2025.

This is to be followed by an update to the State of Conservation of the Great Barrier Reef Report in February 2026.

The decision recognises government's continued efforts to make significant progress on climate change, water quality and sustainable fishing to [protect the Reef](#).



Experts agree on science for Reef protection

The Australian and Queensland governments welcomed confirmation of the scientific evidence underpinning Reef protection policies with the release of the 2022 Scientific Consensus statement (the Statement).

The Statement brings together the latest peer-reviewed scientific evidence on how land-based activities can influence water quality on the Great Barrier Reef. It involved many experts including 78 authors and 69 reviewers from Australia and overseas and its outputs are based on evidence from over 4,000 publications.

The Statement, including its detailed conclusions, is available [here](#) or at www.reefwqconsensus.com.au.



Regional waterway partnerships release their annual report cards

[Wet Tropics Waterways](#), [Healthy Waters Partnership for the Dry Tropics](#) and the [Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership](#) released their annual report cards in July.

The [regional report cards](#) report on local waterway condition using the best available data, with partners working together to improve the health of their waterways and ultimately the Reef.

The Queensland Government invests \$1.25 million annually across the five regional report card partnerships.



AIMS releases their annual Long-Term Monitoring Program Report

The Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) [released their annual report](#) of coral reef condition for the Great Barrier Reef in August.

The 2023-2024 report finds that coral cover has increased on the Reef and is at regional highs in two of the three regions. While this is good news, the results come with caution.

Most of the surveys contributing to these findings were completed before the recent mass bleaching event, so data has not captured whether bleached corals survived or died. This will be captured in next year's report.

You can read a [summary](#) or view the full report [here](#).

Photo credit: Australian Institute of Marine Science

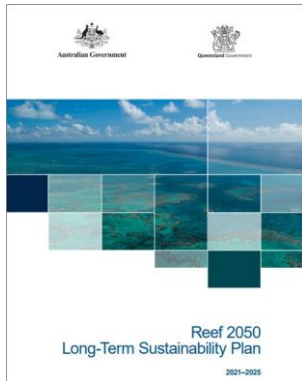


Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2024 released

The [Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2024](#) was released in August. Prepared every five years by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, the 2024 report examines the Reef's health, pressures, management and likely future, with data from January 2019 to December 2023.

The Report concludes the overall outlook for the Great Barrier Reef remains one of future deterioration due largely to climate change. Recent recovery in some parts, including improvements in coral cover and seagrass meadows, is encouraging and demonstrates the Reef retains resilience. However, its capacity to tolerate and recover is being compromised by a rapidly changing climate.

The Report found the Great Barrier Reef Region continues to be well-managed. The investment by the Australian and Queensland governments through the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan is delivering significant reforms in fisheries, marine park management, and for climate adaptation.



Reef 2050 Independent Expert Panel and Advisory Committee welcomed new Chairs

The Queensland and Australian governments welcomed [Professor Margaret Sheil AO](#) and Dr Annabelle Bennett AC SC as incoming Chairs for the Reef 2050 Independent Expert Panel (IEP) and Reef 2050 Advisory Committee (RAC), respectively, earlier this year.

Both [IEP and RAC provide advice](#) to government under the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan (Reef 2050 Plan). The IEP provides scientific and expert advice related to the Reef and RAC provides strategic advice on actions and stakeholder priorities and issues.

Working together with community, industry, science and research organisations and Traditional Owners is critical to protecting the Reef.

Project updates

Call for agricultural extension professionals and host organisations

The [Agricultural Extension Work Placement Program](#), funded through the Queensland Reef Water Quality Program and delivered by the Queensland Farmers' Federation is calling for applicants and host organisations.



The program supports the placement of early career agricultural extension professionals in host organisations to increase their capacity and knowledge around practices that reduce nutrients, sediment and pesticides flowing into the Reef.

Applications to become a host organisation **close on 27 September** with the call for trainee applications **closing on 10 November 2024**. You can read more or apply [here](#).

Photo credit: Trainee cohort for 2024-2025

Summary findings help councils benchmark their urban water management practices

The [2022-2023 Round Summary Findings](#) for the Urban Water Stewardship Framework are now available.

The Urban Water Stewardship Framework supports councils and the development and construction industry in the Reef catchment to evaluate their urban water management practices against current best practice standards with the aim of reducing pollutants flowing to the Reef.

The assessment framework includes a focus on erosion and sediment control, stormwater treatment and the operation of sewage treatment plants. It has been implemented twice in the Reef catchment with 13 councils participating in the most recent report.

The Queensland Reef Water Quality Program supports a number of initiatives to [manage urban and non-agricultural run-off](#) to the Reef.



Great Sandy Marine Park zoning changes

Zoning and management changes aimed at further protecting the Great Sandy Marine Park's unique habitats, while supporting enhanced nature-based tourism and recreational fishing, have been in effect since May.

[Visit the website](#) to learn more about the new zoning plan and to download the handy new Marine Parks Southern Queensland App to access and understand zoning and designated area rules in the Great Sandy Marine Park and Moreton Bay Marine Park.



Gillnet fishing update

Stage 3 of the structural adjustment for the commercial fishing sector affected by the implementation of [gillnet fishing reforms](#) in the Great Barrier Reef, Great Sandy Marine Park (GSMP) and Gulf of Carpentaria is now open.

Available in this stage are:

- buybacks of useable gillnets at a rate of \$12.50 a metre, and an opportunity for unusable gillnets and mesh panels to be surrendered free-of-charge. Nets will be recycled and repurposed into products such as carpets and sunglasses
- grants of up to \$50,000 for gillnet boat refits
- matched diversification and resilience grants of up to \$100,000 for the Reef and GSMP supply chain businesses that have lost 75 per cent or more of their business turnover due to the changes.

The Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority will assess all applications and administer payments – [apply online](#) or call 1800 623 946. Applications for Stage 3 applications **close 30 January 2025**.



Get involved



Survey closing soon: Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan review

A [review](#) of the Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan (Reef 2050 WQIP) is underway. The review provides an opportunity to incorporate knowledge and experience of Reef communities in future planning.

The WQIP guides how governments, Reef communities, Traditional Owners, industry, and partners work together to improve the quality of water from the Reef catchments to the Great Barrier Reef.

Public information seminars were held throughout July and August to share information and seek input on different topics. You're invited to view the seminar recordings and share your thoughts via a survey [here](#). **The survey closes on 30 September.**

Your input will inform the development of the next plan – including the objectives, implementation principles and priority actions.



Survey closing soon: Have your say on how we conserve Queensland's biodiversity

The Great Barrier Reef is one of the most diverse ecosystems on the planet and Queensland is Australia's most biologically diverse state. Many of Queensland's native plants and animals, and landscapes are found nowhere else in the world.

The Queensland Government is proposing a new Performance Framework for Queensland's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy. This framework sets ambitious targets, actions and supporting indicators to drive conservation efforts in Queensland.

You can provide feedback on the proposed targets, actions and indicators and help ensure Queensland's biodiversity is conserved. Have your say [here](#). Consultation **closes 5pm on 11 September 2024.**

[Want to help protect the iconic Great Barrier Reef? Complete the survey | LinkedIn](#)

[Exciting news in Reef science and protection! | LinkedIn](#)

Contact us

For more information about any of these projects, to provide feedback or story ideas, email officeoftheGBR@des.qld.gov.au.



Q OurReefOurWonder



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