



Member's report on activities to ICRI

Presented by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

Reporting period July 2008 – April 2009

1. General Information

Representation to ICRI (Country / Organization):	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA)
Focal Point 1:	John Baldwin
Focal point 2:	vacant
Last meeting attended:	Ft Lauderdale, Florida, July 2008
How do you circulate ICRI information within your country (a) and/or organization (b)?	Formalised intra- and inter-governmental committees (a) and Senior Executive briefings (b)
Budget allocated for coral reef related activities (please mention for year/period):	\$AUD46,000,000 (2007/08 year)

2. For countries only:

National Action Plan / Initiative	
Do you have a National Coral Reef action plan?	YES ¹ / NO
Is this plan publicly available? If so, please provide location:	http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mpa/commonwealth/coord/index.html
Do you have a National Coral Reef Initiative or Task Force?	YES ² / NO
Are you engaged in any regional programs / initiatives relevant to coral reefs:	The Australian Government is engaged in various multi-lateral and bilateral environmental initiatives within the Asia/Pacific region with coral reef implications.
If yes, please indicate which programs/initiatives:	

3. Member contribution to the ICRI GM: Your responses to the following questions will assist the Secretariat in assessing contributions towards the major themes of the Mexico-United States action plan. Due to the heavy schedules of ICRI members, we have tried to keep the questions to a minimum and value any response you can provide.

NOTE: The Secretariat will compile Members' responses to the below questions into a general presentation to be given during the April GM. The Secretariat will also request specific Members to highlight certain initiatives, should additional information be of interest to the full ICRI membership. Please keep this in mind when filling out this report and place special emphasis on calling attention to new initiatives/programs/projects of your government/organization which will be of interest to the ICRI Members.

¹ Within the context of the Australian National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas (NRSMPA)

² Within the context of the Australian "Marine Protected Areas Working Group"

- a. Please provide any lessons you have learned from your experiences of developing partnerships with the private sector that might be relevant to ICRI members?

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) is the Australian Government agency responsible for the management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Tourism is the largest commercial activity in the Great Barrier Reef region, generating over \$AUD5 billion per annum to the Australian economy

Ensuring the sustainability of the marine tourism industry in the Marine Park combines a comprehensive regulatory framework with a strong industry-government partnership. Maintaining the diversity, integrity and productivity of the Great Barrier Reef is essential for sustainable tourism use.

The basis of the GBRMPA's relationship with the marine tourism operators is guided by the understanding that a healthy and appreciated Reef can drive a healthy tourism industry, now and in the future. Working in partnership with the tourism industry to ensure best practice and sustainable tourism, provides a key way to help protect the Reef, communicate the message about Great Barrier Reef values, fulfil Australia's World Heritage Area obligations, and simultaneously produce world-class, sustainable tourism products that support the national economy. This has proved to be a strong foundation for the continuing partnership between the GBRMPA and the Great Barrier Reef tourism industry.

For more, please visit:

- www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/key_issues/tourism

- b. Are you aware of programmes or policies by your country/organization for implementing integrated ecosystem management from watershed to reef slope?

The Reef Water Quality Protection Plan (Reef Plan) brings together people and projects to help improve the quality of water entering the Great Barrier Reef (the Reef) lagoon within 10 years. Launched in 2003, it is a joint initiative of the Australian and Queensland Governments.

The goal of the Reef Plan is to *halt and reverse the decline in water quality entering the Reef within 10 years*. There are two objectives to achieve this goal:

1. Reduce the load of pollutants from diffuse sources in the water entering the Reef; and
2. Rehabilitate and conserve areas of the Reef catchment that have a role in removing water borne pollutants.

The Reef Plan focuses on agricultural land use in catchments adjacent to the Reef.

For more, please visit:

- www.reefplan.qld.gov.au/
- www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/key_issues/water_quality

- c. Are there any monitoring or research activities you are either involved in or aware of aimed at improving understanding of adaptive management of coral reefs and related ecosystems that may be of interest to ICRI members?

Examples could include any efforts through workshops, environmental education programs, beach and underwater clean ups, etc. with coastal/local communities to promote understanding and recognition of the environmental services coral reefs provide.

Try some of these:

- [Bleachwatch](#)
- [Eyes and Ears incident reporting](#)
- [Eye on the Reef monitoring program](#)
- [Marine Monitoring Program](#)
- [ReefTemp](#)

- [High Standard Tourist Operators](#)
- [Reef Guardian Schools](#)
- [Reef Guardian Councils](#)
- Research indicates that “no take” zoning aids biodiversity:
 - www.environment.gov.au/programs/cerf/publications/rezone-gbr.html
 - www.rrrc.org.au/mtsrf/theme_4/project_4_8_2.html
 - www.rrrc.org.au/mtsrf/theme_1/project_1_1_2.html

- d. Please indicate the effects of the Live Reef Food Fish Trade on your government/organization. Are you aware of any programs/policies in place to address these impacts?

The East Coast Reef Line Fishery is a significant fishery operating throughout the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The commercial fishery primarily targets live coral trout (*Plectropomus leopardus*), as well as emperors, snappers, reef cods and some pelagic species. Most of the coral trout caught in this fishery (total allowable catch: 1350 tonne) is exported live to Asia via Hong Kong. The fishery supplies about 30% of the Hong Kong Live Reef Food Fish Trade for coral trout.

This fishery is managed by the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (QDPI&F) under a Management Plan. Commercial fishery is managed using limited entry (about 400 licences), a total allowable catch, fish size limits.

The fishery is also restricted to about 70% of the reef and shoal areas of the GBRMP through Marine Park zoning.

The fishery was assessed in 2008 under the Australian Government's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* for export approval. The Assessment (valid for 3 years) considered that the fishery is unlikely to be detrimental to the survival or conservation status of any taxon to which the fishery operation relates, or threaten any relevant ecosystem.

- e. What other new initiatives/programs/projects/progress, in particular since January 2008, has been made by your government/organization relative to Marine Protected Areas, Ramsar site designations containing coral reefs, integrated coastal zone management measures, policy changes influenced by economic valuation of coral reef ecosystem services, etc., which you believe would be of general interest to other ICRI Members?

“Caring for our Country – Reef Rescue”

Reef Rescue is a key component of Caring for our Country, the Australian Government's \$AUD2.25 billion, initiative to restore the health of Australia's environment and improve land management practices. Reef Rescue's objective is to improve the water quality of the Great Barrier Reef lagoon by increasing the adoption of land management practices that reduce the run-off of nutrients, pesticides and sediments from agricultural land.

Reef Rescue is made up of five integrated components that will work together to achieve the above objective:

- Water Quality Grants (\$146 million over five years)
- Reef Partnerships (\$12 million over five years) Land and Sea Country Indigenous Partnerships (\$10 million over five years)
- Reef Water Quality Research and Development (\$10 million over five years)
- Water Quality Monitoring and Reporting, including the publication of an annual Great Barrier Reef Water Quality Report Card (\$22 million over five years).

GBRMPA's involvement is generally around the Marine Monitoring and Land and Sea Country Indigenous Partnerships.

For more, please visit:

- www.nrm.gov.au/funding/2008/reef-rescue.html
- www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/key_issues/water_quality/marine_monitoring
- www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/key_issues/conservation/indigenous_partnerships

The Great Barrier Reef “Reef Guardian Councils” Program

One of the major sources of pollution in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area is declining water quality coming from the creeks and rivers that feed into the marine environment. The decline in river water quality is largely attributed to land-based activities such as urban development, agricultural production, tourism developments and mining within the Great Barrier Reef Catchment.

Management of the downstream effects from these activities is complex and requires a cooperative effort from all levels of government, as well as participation from industry sectors and the community.

The Reef Guardian Council programme has been designed to recognise and foster environmental stewardship for the Great Barrier Reef from local government and the general community.

The programme seeks to raise awareness and encourage best management practice in local government activities, while recognising that effective protection and management of the Great Barrier Reef requires partnerships at all levels of government, industry and the community.

For more, please visit:

- www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/key_issues/water_quality/reef_guardian_councils
- www.gbrmpa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/18723/ce754_reef_council_update_02.pdf

Check out the Great Barrier Reef through Google Earth

As part of the International Year of the Reef, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority has made spatial information about the Marine Park available through Google Maps. This information is downloadable as Google Earth layers. The technology enables users to search for and locate islands, reefs, cays and rocks in the Marine Park.

For more, please visit:

- www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/info_services/spatial_information_services/google_maps

For any of the above questions, please provide links to further information. As appropriate, the Secretariat will compile such information to make it accessible to all Members on the ICRI Forum.

ICRI and Other Meetings

Are your ICRI Focal Points (No), GBRMPA staff (Yes) considering attending any of the following meetings in 2009?

- IMCC, Washington DC **YES**
- World Ocean Congress, Manado, Indonesia **POSSIBLY**
- The 1st international Conference on Marine Mammal Protected Areas – Hawai'i, 2-3 April 2009