

ORDINARY MEETING 22 OCTOBER 2014	1
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REEF 2050 LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

D Walton | 8/24/18-01 | #4506842v2

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council endorses the attached submission on the Reef 2050 Long-term Sustainability Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Australian and Queensland governments are seeking comment on The *Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan (Reef Plan)* with submissions closing 26 October 2014.

The Reef Plan is the overarching framework for protecting and managing the Great Barrier Reef from 2015 to 2050.

Local government is identified as a key stakeholder in 19 of the 108 actions listed in the Reef Plan.

Local government implications arising from the Reef Plan relate primarily to urban water quality management and community benefits derived from the reef. Additionally, Council is not identified as a key stakeholder in any of the economic benefits actions. Attachment one responds to these inclusions and omissions accordingly.

In addition to the responses on the Reef Plan theme and associated actions (Attachment 1) key points to consider include:

- A resourcing strategy for the Reef Plan is yet to be developed – this represents an opportunity for Council to outline its resourcing requirements when this process is undertaken and has been flagged accordingly in Council's submission.
- Regionally-based implementation plans and sector-based (government, reef industries, community groups and other sectors operating adjacent to the reef) implementation plans are likely to be the key instruments for on-ground delivery of many actions contained within the Reef Plan. These plans will enable local and regionally specific issues to be addressed, provided they are developed collaboratively and accompanied by appropriate resourcing. This has also been flagged in Council's submission.

BACKGROUND:

The Australian and Queensland governments are seeking comment on The *Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan (Reef Plan)* with submissions closing 26 October 2014.

The Plan builds on a three-year comprehensive Strategic Assessment undertaken by the Australian and Queensland governments that looked at development and multiple use issues in Queensland and identified how to strengthen the protection of the Reef's environmental values. Council's submission to the Strategic Assessment process was endorsed at the Ordinary Meeting 29 January 2014.

Local government is identified as a key stakeholder in 19 of the 108 actions listed in the Reef Plan which are presented under the themes of:

- Water quality
- Ecosystem Health
- Biodiversity
- Heritage
- Community benefits
- Economic benefits
- Governance

Council's draft submission (refer to attachment 1) responds to each of these themes and concludes with general comments.

COMMENT:

The Reef Plan is an overarching strategy with limited reference to specific localities within the Great Barrier Reef catchment. While a resourcing strategy is yet to be developed for Reef Plan implementation, the move toward regionally-based implementation plans and sectoral-based implementation plans will enable actions to address issues specific to that region / sector.

OPTIONS:

1. That Council endorses the attached submission on the Reef 2050 Long-term Sustainability Plan.

Or

2. That Council endorses an amended submission on the Reef 2050 Long-term Sustainability Plan.

Or

3. That Council does not make a submission on the Reef Plan 2050.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Risk Management:

Changes in policy or legislation may result in additional regulatory requirements to Council.

Financial:

Changes in policy or legislation may require additional resources from Council.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

Corporate Plan 3.0 Environment: A sustainable, well managed and healthy environment that provides a balance between built infrastructure and the conservation of our world heritage features and natural and cultural resources.

Statutory:

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975 – this Act provides the framework for the management of the reef.

Policy:

Protection of the Natural Environment - No.1:04:43
Council's Role in Regional Economic Development - No. 1:05:02

Sustainability:

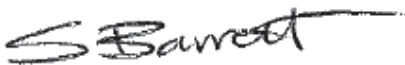
The Reef Plan 2050 is the long-term sustainability plan to conserve and restore the outstanding universal values of the Great Barrier Reef.

CONSULTATION:

Regional Development Australia – Far North Queensland and Torres Strait Islands
Cairns Regional Council – Economic Development Unit

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 - Council's draft submission to the Reef Plan 2050.
Attachment 2 – Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan - Questions and Answers



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Attachment 1 – Executive Attachment – draft submission to the Reef Plan 2050

Cairns Regional Council makes the following submission on the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan in accordance with the public consultation process.

Water Quality Actions: The Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2014 identifies poor water quality from land-based runoff as a major threat to the reef. The Reef Plan 2050 identifies Local Government as a key stakeholder in nine of the nineteen actions to address water quality.

Cairns Regional Council acknowledges the important role it plays in managing the impacts of the urban water cycle (i.e. water supply, wastewater management and stormwater management) and requests early and ongoing involvement in the development of a Regional Implementation Plan (page 5 of Reef Plan 2050) and an associated resourcing strategy to deliver on water quality actions in the Cairns region.

Ecosystem Health Actions: The Reef Plan 2050 identifies local government as a key stakeholder in three of the twenty-one actions to address ecosystem health.

Cairns Regional Council supports these actions and requests due consideration of resourcing as part of the Reef Plan 2050 resourcing strategy as it is developed.

Biodiversity Actions: The Reef Plan 2050 does not identify local government as a key stakeholder in any of the twenty actions to address biodiversity.

Cairns Regional Council draws attention to action BA10 – Identify, protect and manage key marine turtle breeding areas and foraging grounds.

Cairns Regional Council is a stakeholder in managing vehicle access to beaches from land under its control (e.g. foreshore parklands) and sees this as an important action in managing human impacts on turtle nesting and hatching sites (e.g. Bramston Beach).

Heritage Actions: The Reef Plan 2050 identifies local government as a key stakeholder in one of the eleven actions to address heritage values.

Cairns Regional Council acknowledges its role in increasing community awareness and appreciation of heritage values and supports the action accordingly.

Community Benefit Actions: The Reef Plan 2050 identifies local government as a key stakeholder in three of the eleven actions to address community benefits. Given that the draft Cairns Regional Planning Scheme is well advanced, **urgent clarification** is sought on all three of the following actions:

CBA1: Ensure the impacts on Reef health and resilience is addressed when responding to coastal hazards.

CBA2: Ensure community benefits derived from the Reef are considered in local and state-level policy and planning instruments and development and management decisions.

CBA4: Ensure the aesthetic qualities of the reefs, islands and the coast are considered and protected through planning and development decisions.

Economic Benefit Actions: The Reef Plan 2050 does not identify local government as a key stakeholder in any of the sixteen economic benefit actions.

Given that nature based tourism is a pillar of the Cairns regional economy, Cairns Regional Council seeks acknowledgement of trickle-down benefits that Council derives from infrastructure development to support the tourism, hospitality and construction sectors.

Governance Actions: The Reef Plan 2050 identifies local government as a key stakeholder in three of the ten governance actions.

As mentioned in the Water Quality response, Cairns Regional Council supports the actions to develop regionally tailored implementation plans and sectoral implementation plans and requests early and ongoing involvement in their development and resourcing for the Cairns region.

General Comments: Cairns Regional Council acknowledges that a resourcing strategy for the Reef Plan 2050 will be developed in due course and requests due consideration of local government support in the delivery of identified actions.

Cairns Regional Council acknowledges that the Reef Plan 2050 is an overarching framework for protecting and managing the Great Barrier Reef from 2015 to 2050 and looks forward to its involvement in the development of a Cairns Region Implementation Plan.

Attachment 2 - Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan Questions and Answers



Australian Government



Queensland Government



Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan Questions and Answers

1. What is the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan and how will it work?

The Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan is an overarching framework for protecting and managing the Great Barrier Reef from 2015 to 2050.

It sets out what Australians, as custodians for the international community, want the future of the Reef to be and how this can be achieved.

The vision is that *"By 2050 the Great Barrier Reef continues to demonstrate the Outstanding Universal Value for which it was listed as a World Heritage Area and supports a wide range of sustainable economic, social, cultural and traditional activities"*.

To achieve this vision, the Plan's outcomes framework defines outcomes, objectives, targets and actions for seven themes—water quality, biodiversity, ecosystem health, heritage, community benefits, economic benefits and governance.

- An **Outcome** which is a statement of what is expected to be achieved by 2050.
- **Objectives** which are expected to be achieved in the medium term.
- **Targets** which are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART), and are scientifically justified with an expectation that they can be delivered by 2020.
- **Actions** which are measures to be taken by government and other sectors of the community over the next five years to achieve the targets.

The Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan is based on the best available science and is flexible enough to respond to new and emerging issues. It will be revised at least every five years. This timing ensures actions and their effectiveness are monitored and any new issues can be considered.

The Plan will guide Reef management for everyone interested in the Reef including the local and wider community, industry, researchers, Indigenous people, and governments.

2. Why is it being developed?

The Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan is the Australian and Queensland governments' commitment to working with industry and the community to take determined, coordinated and wide-ranging action to ensure the Reef's ongoing health and resilience.

It follows the Australian and Queensland governments agreeing with the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in July 2011 that Australia would undertake a strategic assessment of the Great Barrier Reef and prepare a long-term plan for sustainable development.

In 2014, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's five-yearly review of the health of the Reef—the Outlook Report—identified the Great Barrier Reef as an icon under pressure. The Report calls for actions to reduce threats, help restore its condition and improve its outlook.

Maintaining and protecting the natural and cultural integrity of the Reef, while considering the needs for long-term sustainable development, is one of the Plan's key priorities.

There are tough questions to answer: How do we make the Reef more resilient to storms and cyclones? How do we continue to grow industries and business endeavours vital to the lifeblood of our country without impacting the Reef? How do we ensure new perspectives and approaches to environmental management are promoted and used by the many who work, play, traverse, and observe the Reef? How do we do this while maintaining the Outstanding Universal Value for which the Reef was declared a World Heritage Area? How do we protect this international icon for future generations? The Plan seeks to answer these questions.

3. Who developed the Plan and how?

The Australian and Queensland governments formed a Partnership Group with key organisations and industry groups to develop the plan.

The Partnership Group was tasked with advising government on the development of the Plan. It met several times to discuss actions, targets and outcomes.

Members represented the following organisations:

- AgForce
- Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators
- Australian Committee of International Union for Conservation of Nature
- Australian Institute of Marine Science
- Indigenous community
- Local Government Association of Queensland
- Ports Australia
- Queensland Conservation Council
- Queensland Farmers' Federation
- Queensland Resources Council
- Queensland Seafood Industry Association
- Regional Natural Resource Management Groups Collective
- World Wildlife Fund

4. How has the Indigenous community been involved?

Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owners have important and long-standing connections to the marine environment and are key stakeholders in the long-term management, protection and conservation of the Reef.

The Giringun Aboriginal Corporation undertook consultation with the Indigenous community on behalf of the governments. This involved analysis of existing land and sea country plans, Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement, Indigenous Land Use Agreements and Community Action Plans to identify relevant actions and ensure no duplication of effort. It also involved engagement with the Queensland Indigenous Strategic Policy Group to ensure ground truthing and agreement on targets and actions for the Plan

5. How have Local Marine Advisory Committees been involved?

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority engaged directly with its Local Marine Advisory Committees to raise awareness about the Plan and to seek their input.

These local, voluntary community-based committees enable local communities to effectively input into managing the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and provide a community forum for interest groups, government and the community to discuss issues around marine resources. There are 12 Local Marine Advisory Committees—Cape York, Port Douglas, Cairns, Cassowary Coast, Hinchinbrook, Townsville, Bowen-Burdekin, Whitsunday, Mackay, Capricorn Coast, Gladstone and Burnett. The membership comprises a wide range of stakeholders representing the interests of tour operators, conservationists, farmers, traditional owners, researchers, educators, port operators, local governments and fishers; and differs depending on the location of the Committee.

6. What about consulting with others interested in the Reef?

Following initial collaboration with Partnership Group members, anyone with an interest in the Reef is invited to make a submission. The Plan, along with other supporting information and an online feedback form, is available on the Department of the Environment website.

Consultation is open for a six-week period from 15 September 2014 to 27 October 2014. Feedback can be submitted via www.environment.gov.au/marine/great-barrier-reef/long-term-sustainability-plan or via email to GBRlongtermplan@environment.gov.au.

7. What will you do with the feedback?

The feedback from consultation will be considered by the Australian and Queensland governments and the Partnership Group and will inform the final version of the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan. The final Plan is expected to be released in late 2014. Consistent with a commitment to openness, the government's policy is to make feedback forms and submissions publicly available (including by publishing them on the website) and include your name and State (but not your contact details). If you are concerned about your privacy you may submit feedback anonymously. More information on the Privacy Act is available at www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/about-privacy.

8. Wasn't consultation about the reef already done for the strategic assessment?

Rather than starting from scratch, the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan builds on the outcomes of the strategic assessment, recognising that this immense body of knowledge provides important insight into the long-term management of the Reef.

The comprehensive strategic assessment undertaken by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and Queensland Government was the largest, most wide-ranging and complex strategic assessment ever in Australia.

The assessment examined the Reef's economic, environmental and community values, and the most prevalent threats to the longevity of the Reef's health. It also considered an appropriate management approach to addressing cumulative impacts. The assessment not only covered the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area but also the adjacent coastal zone where a range of activities occur that can impact on the environmental and health values of the Reef.

Extensive consultation was undertaken as part of the assessment. This included asking people for their opinion on what might be included in the Long-Term Sustainability Plan. More than 6600 submissions were received as a result of the three-month comment period which closed in January 2014. After consideration of the feedback, the final reports were endorsed in August 2014.

For more information about the Great Barrier Reef region strategic assessment which assessed the marine environment, visit the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's website at www.qbrmpa.gov.au/managing-the-reef/strategic-assessment. For more information about the Great Barrier Reef coastal zone strategic assessment which assessed Queensland's planning, development and coastal management processes, visit the Queensland Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning's website at www.dsdip.qld.gov.au/qbr-strategic-assessment.

9. What happens to the strategic assessment now?

The strategic assessment reviewed the broad suite of management measures in place to protect the Reef. It identified a range of initiatives that will be adopted by the Australian and Queensland governments including:

- A cumulative impact assessment policy and guidelines for a transparent, consistent and systematic approach to identifying, measuring and managing collective impacts on the region and its values
- A net benefit policy to guide actions aimed at restoring ecosystem health and improve the condition of values.
- Prohibiting dredging for the development of new ports outside the key long-established ports of Townsville, Abbot Point, Hay Point-Mackay and Gladstone.
- A Reef Recovery programme to support local communities and other stakeholders to protect and restore sites of high environmental value and critical ecosystem functions through cooperative regional-scale management approaches.

- Reef-wide integrated monitoring and reporting that underpins the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's adaptive management and provides good feedback on the effectiveness of management actions.

10. How does the Outlook Report fit in?

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority prepares an Outlook Report for the Great Barrier Reef every five years. The Report provides an overview of the current condition, use, factors influencing the condition, management effectiveness, resilience, risks to its future and likely outlook. The recently released Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2014 reiterated the need and urgency for positive action to maintain the Outstanding Universal Value of the Reef. It has been taken into account when developing the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan.

The most recent Outlook Report can be found on the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority website at www.qbrmpa.gov.au/managing-the-reef/great-barrier-reef-outlook-report.

11. How will the Plan be implemented? Who will complete the actions under the Plan?

Achieving the Plan's vision, outcomes and targets is a collective responsibility and a whole-of-community approach will be needed. Partners from all levels of government, Reef industries, community groups and other sectors operating adjacent to the Reef will help implement relevant actions. This is consistent with the partnership model used in the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan 2013.

Actions are measurable and time-bound, with implementation timeframes of one to five years. Lead agencies and organisations as well as contributing partners have been identified for each action, and they will be responsible for periodic progress reporting.

Key government initiatives that underpin the effective implementation of the Plan include:

- the new Reef Trust program
- areas of action from the strategic assessment
- the regulatory and policy framework for offset requirements for development that will have an adverse impact on matters of environmental significance
- ongoing delivery of an effective on-ground field management program
- continued implementation of Reef Water Quality Protection Plan.

12. How will implementation of the Plan be resourced?

The Plan brings together a range of existing programs and activities to ensure greater coordination, efficiency and effectiveness when managing and protecting the Reef. It does not duplicate or replace any existing plans or programs. The Plan identifies the mechanisms already in place to resource activities relevant to the Plan. They include different approaches being funded and delivered by governments and a range of partners.

Existing initiatives which will contribute to the implementation of the Plan include the:

- Queensland Ports Strategy
- Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership
- crown-of-thorns starfish control program
- Reef Water Quality Protection Plan 2013
- Reef Trust program
- areas of action from the strategic assessment
- the regulatory and policy framework for offset requirements for development that will have an adverse impact on matters of environmental significance
- ongoing delivery of an effective on-ground field management program.

The governments will continue working closely with partners to develop implementation action plans addressing the Plan's objectives and outlining how actions will be implemented, including deliverables and tasks, resourcing, roles and responsibilities, and timing.

A key focus has been identifying how all levels of government, non-government organisations, industry and community groups can work together to further strengthen existing and implement new initiatives for managing and protecting the Reef.

13. Who will approve and govern the Plan?

The Plan is expected to be approved by the Australian and Queensland governments through the Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Forum which is due to meet in late 2014.

An Intergovernmental Operational Committee comprising senior officials from Australian and Queensland governments will be created to oversee implementation of the Plan and be responsible for reporting to the Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Forum.

A multi-sectoral Reef Advisory Committee will be established by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to facilitate consultation with industry and the broader community regarding the implementation and review of the Plan. In addition, an Independent Science Panel will provide advice to the Reef Advisory Committee to inform adaptive management of the Plan and the associated Reef Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program. The science panel will comprise a multidisciplinary group of experts with an independent chair and will take an advisory and review role to the Intergovernmental Operational Committee.

14. Will the Plan become legislation?

The Reef, adjacent coastal zone and catchments are managed through an integrated framework of legislative instruments and management arrangements. Once finalised, the Plan will form part of these management arrangements and the objectives of the Plan will be considered in relevant decision making. Existing legislation, international agreements and policies will continue to influence the management of the Reef.

It is proposed that the Plan be adopted as a schedule to the *Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement (2009)*. This Agreement ensures a collaborative approach to managing the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, the adjacent coastal zone and catchments. Signed in 2009 by the Australian and Queensland governments, the implementation of the Agreement is overseen by the Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Forum.

In addition, the Australian Government is a signatory to the World Heritage Convention. Countries that sign up to the World Heritage Convention are considered 'State Parties' and they agree to identify, protect, conserve and present World Heritage properties. The Plan is the newest component of Australia meeting its obligations to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the Reef.

15. How will we know the Plan is working?

Implementation reporting will assess progress. All reports will be provided to the Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Forum and made available on the Department of the Environment website.

An annual report will be prepared by the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the relevant Queensland Government Departments. This report will assess performance in the delivering the outcomes and progress towards implementing the actions and achieving the targets.

A mid-term (three-year) review will be undertaken in 2018 to assess effectiveness and efficiency of actions. The first five-year review of the Plan will be delivered in 2020 and will be informed by the 2019 Outlook Report—a statutory assessment and reporting requirement under the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*. The Plan will then be reviewed every five years.

This system of reporting will be underpinned by an Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program that will be established to measure and report progress towards the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan's targets and outcomes. The Program will contain ecological, social and economic elements and will contribute to evaluating the success of actions and guide adaptive management. It will improve the integration and coordination of existing monitoring programs. Overall coordination and management of the Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program will be the responsibility of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

16. Does the Plan ban any activities?

When the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1981, it was acknowledged that it had been and would continue to be a multiple-use area that supports a range of activities and industries such as tourism, fishing, boating and shipping and these will continue. To manage the potential impacts of these uses, there are multiple robust Environmental Impact Assessment processes within Commonwealth and Queensland legislation which apply to development proposals on or adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef.

In 2009, the Australian and Queensland governments reaffirmed their ongoing commitment to prohibit activities for the exploration and recovery of minerals or petroleum, and any drilling and mining within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, including for the purpose of depositing materials. This commitment was captured in the *Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement 2009*.

More broadly, jurisdictional responsibility for the management use, access and protection of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area is shared between the Australian and Queensland governments. The current Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and Queensland Coastal Zoning Plans continue to be the principle tools for managing activities on the Reef.

The Australian Government is responsible for regulating activities that have or are likely to have a significant impact on Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act). Under the EPBC Act, the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the Great Barrier Reef National Heritage Place are considered MNES as are several threatened and migratory species that use these waters.

Which process and approval path applies is determined by the location, scale and nature of the proposed activity. Impacts on MNES are specifically considered and strict conditions are recommended that address both direct and indirect impacts.

More information on the EPBC Act can be found at www.environment.gov.au/epbc.

17. Will the Plan put a stop to dredging?

The Reef's 1981 World Heritage listing acknowledged it is a multiple-use area that supports a range of activities and industries such as tourism, fishing, boating and shipping.

The Plan supports the targets and actions outlined in the Queensland Ports Strategy (www.dsdip.qld.gov.au/queensland-ports-strategy) and the North East Shipping Management Plan (www.amsa.gov.au/community/consultation/documents/NESMP-August-2013.pdf).

The Plan also commits to a dredge management policy and strategy that prioritises the beneficial re-use of dredged material. It encompasses both industry and government-led initiatives to ensure the sustainable management of dredging and placing of dredge material in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

For the next 10 years, the Queensland Ports Strategy prohibits dredging within and adjoining the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area for the development of new, or the expansion of existing, port facilities outside priority port development areas (PPDAs). PPDAs will be established at the long established major ports of Abbot Point; Gladstone; Hay Point and Mackay; and Townsville. All activities that occur on the Reef will continue to be carefully managed within strict environmental limits.

18. Does the Plan affect the existing Zoning Plan for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area?

The Plan does not affect existing statutory plans or policies including the current Zoning Plan for the Reef under the Commonwealth's Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act.

19. How does the Plan meet the requirement of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee?

The Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan is a key component of the Australian Government's response to the 2012 decision of the World Heritage Committee regarding the ongoing protection and management of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage property.

The decision requested Australia:

"...complete the Strategic Assessment and resulting long-term plan for the sustainable development of the property for consideration by the World Heritage Committee at its 39th session in 2015, and to ensure that the assessment and long-term plan are completed against a number of defined criteria for success, fully address direct, indirect and cumulative impacts on the reef and lead to concrete measures to ensure the overall conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property."

The Australian and Queensland governments believe this Plan provides a clear framework to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the Great Barrier Reef. In drafting the Plan, close attention has been paid to the specific elements of the various World Heritage Committee decisions and the report from the 2012 Reactive Monitoring Mission. The Plan will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review along with the State Party Report in late January 2015 for consideration by the World Heritage Committee in mid-2015.

More information about the World Heritage decision is available on the Department of the Environment website at www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/world/qbr/more-information.

20. How were the targets developed? Are the targets based on scientific evidence?

The targets were developed in consultation with the Partnership Group which comprises representatives from government, key industry organisations and interest groups. They are based on the best available information and expert opinion.

Specifically, the targets:

- align with and contribute to the outcomes for water quality, biodiversity, ecosystem health, heritage, community benefits, economic benefits and governance
- recognise and build upon existing targets (such as Reef Water Quality Protection Plan 2013) which are directly related to the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and activities which have the potential to impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the Reef
- aim to be meaningful and SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound)
- are subject to review over the life of the Plan, including explicit consideration of conceptual/ quantitative models and underlying ecological/social/economic knowledge.

While the Plan is out for comment, an expert review of biophysical and social/economic objectives, targets and actions will be undertaken to ensure they are robust.