

Commonwealth Management of the Great Barrier Reef

**Great Barrier Reef Marine Park
Authority**

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Canberra ACT
23 February 1998

Dear Madam President
Dear Mr Speaker

The Australian National Audit Office has undertaken a performance audit of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, in accordance with the Authority contained in the *Auditor-General Act 1997*. I present this report and the accompanying brochure to the Parliament. The report is titled *Commonwealth Management of the Great Barrier Reef*.

Yours sincerely

P. J. Barrett
Auditor-General

The Honourable the President of the Senate
The Honourable the Speaker of the House of
Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT

AUDITING FOR AUSTRALIA

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Abbreviations / glossary

1979-1988 Agreements	This refers to the various agreements between the Commonwealth, Queensland Governments and the Authority regarding the day-to-day management arrangements of the GBRMP
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
The Authority	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
AHC	Australian Heritage Commission
AFMA	Australian Fisheries Management Authority
AMSA	Australian Maritime Safety Authority
ASL	Agreed staffing levels
DDM	Day-to-day management of the GBRMP
EMC	Environmental management charge
GBR	Great Barrier Reef
GBRMP	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park
GBRWHA	Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area
GBR Region	The area delineated in the GBRMP Act within which the GBRMP could be established
GBR Ministerial Council	A Council comprising of two Commonwealth Government Ministers and two Queensland Government Ministers, established in 1979 for the purposes of coordinating policy related to the GBR
OCS	Offshore Constitutional Settlement. An agreement between the Commonwealth, the States and the Northern Territory which includes a division of jurisdiction related to different fisheries
QA	Quality assurance
QB&FP	Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol, part of the Queensland Department of Primary Industry
QDEH	Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage (now the Queensland Department of Environment)
QDoE	Queensland Department of Environment
QDPI	Queensland Department of Primary Industry
QFMA	Queensland Fish Management Authority
SMAs	Special Management Areas

Part One

Summary and Recommendations

Summary

Introduction

1. The Great Barrier Reef (GBR) Region's total area is approximately 349 000 square kilometres, of which approximately 344 000 square kilometres is contained within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMP) boundaries. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (the Authority) is responsible for the management of this marine park as well as for the protection of the world heritage values of the GBR Region.
2. The GBR extends for more than 2 000 kilometres from just south of the Tropic of Capricorn northwards into the Torres Strait and includes 2 900 reefs, 618 continental islands, 300 cays, and 44 wooded islands. The Government of Queensland has direct management responsibility for the majority of the islands and cays. The major portion of the total area (called the GBR lagoon) is under the water.
3. The GBR is a significant economic region which is subject to a constant increase in users undertaking a wide range of activities. The Authority has estimated that direct and indirect economic activity is approximately \$2 billion per annum. A more complete description of the Great Barrier Reef is provided in Appendix 1.

Audit objective and scope

4. The objective of this audit was to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Commonwealth's management of the Great Barrier Reef as implemented by the Authority. This audit was undertaken because of the environmental significance of the Great Barrier Reef Region; its growing economic importance; recent changes to the Authority's budget arrangements; and because the Authority had not been subject to a performance audit since its establishment approximately 20 years ago.
5. During the course of the preliminary study for this audit, the Minister for the Environment appointed a consultant to conduct an additional review of the Authority. The resultant report has been released by the Minister but no statement has been made regarding acceptance or otherwise of the recommendations. Some details about the report can be found in Appendix 2. Taking the terms of reference of this parallel review into account with several significant issues that the ANAO identified, the

ANAO considered that the course of action that would add the most value was to present the results of its preliminary study as soon as possible. Consequently, this report focuses on the issues arising from examination of the Authority's:

- planning systems and procedures;
- Day-to-Day Management (DDM) of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMP) carried out by the Queensland Department of Environment (QDoE); and
- reporting to Parliament.

6. The conduct of this audit was facilitated by both the Authority and QDoE. This can be attributed to their dedication to the management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the far-ranging reviews that they have undertaken. The majority of the issues identified during the course of this audit, which are summarised below, have been identified through these (mainly internal) reviews. In addition, the Authority and the QDoE have made a number of 'milestone decisions' which are leading to the establishment of systems and procedures to address these issues.

Key findings

General conclusion

7. In regard to the three issues which were the focus of this audit, the audit concluded that:

- the complexity of the Authority's planning hinders the development of practical and useful performance information for management and accountability purposes;
- a more comprehensive risk assessment would lead to an improvement in the day-to-day management of the Reef. The improvement would occur, partly through revision of the Authority's data requirements of the QDoE which conducts day-to-day management subject to the Authority;
- the Authority does not have adequate data to determine whether it is achieving its primary objective of protecting, conserving and allowing for reasonable use of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. This lack of performance data has a flow-on effect to the development of strategies and plans to achieve these objectives, and on

stakeholders'/agency's ability to assess the Authority's performance;
and

- the Authority has inadequate data to report comprehensively to Parliament on its effectiveness as a result.

8. The ANAO also found that, while there are features of the Authority's systems and procedures which limit its efficiency, the Authority has identified, and is taking steps to address, these limitations through extensive reviews.

Simplifying the Authority's planning and program structure

9. The ANAO found that:

- the Authority's planning systems and procedures and the resulting products were too complex for effective management;
- a wide range of performance indicators and measures, both activity and effectiveness oriented, were available which were intended to address different top-level planning statements and documents. Despite this array of indicators and measures, few were used for reporting purposes or had supporting information;
- the Authority had not designated particular officers with the responsibility to monitor or report on its performance, for example, in a particular GBR planning zone. The risk of management systems and procedures being ineffective is significantly increased without this type of delegated responsibility; and
- the scope of planning was incomplete (for example, there is no comprehensive identification of commitments) leading to the possibility of the Authority failing to undertake a compliance obligation.

10. As a consequence the ANAO recommends that the Authority simplifies its planning and program structure and allocates responsibility for the monitoring and reporting of program effectiveness. To facilitate the implementation of this recommendation, the ANAO also suggests several measures that the Authority should undertake, including the adoption of a clear, simply structured set of goals and objectives to replace the current more complex goals and aims.

Improving the Authority's management control of DDM

11. The ANAO found the following associated areas of concern during the examination of the DDM systems and procedures:

- while DDM reporting (by QDoE) scrupulously complies with requirements (specified by the 1979-1988 Agreements and the Authority), it is not effectiveness oriented and it does not report risk assessments. The ANAO concluded that this is mainly because the Authority does not request this type of information. The Authority advised in its response to this report that: *there is an Authority decision which specifically requests information on effectiveness*;
- the Authority does not have costing information which will allow it to determine accurately if the Commonwealth is receiving value for money from the funds it contributes to DDM (approximately \$4 million per annum paid to the Queensland Government);
- the Authority does not undertake formal quality assurance of work reported as having been undertaken by the Queensland Government on the Authority's behalf;
- there are significant differences between the Queensland Government's and the Authority's administrative and reporting systems and procedures which add to coordination and data translation costs and which appear likely to continue under present arrangements; and
- the Authority and QDoE are aware of these and other issues as a result of recent DDM reviews, conducted by both the Authority and the Queensland Government, and are seeking solutions to the outstanding problems. Several reports resulting from these DDM reviews have not progressed beyond the 'final draft' stage. Where these drafts have involved the participation of QDoE, the Department pointed out that they were not formal reports of the Queensland Government. However, since they are being used by the Authority as a basis for decisions and change, they were considered in the context of this audit.

12. To address these areas of concern, the ANAO recommends that the Authority should:

- cost and separately identify GBRMP DDM activities in the DDM budget which can be clearly delineated;

- establish a quality assurance program examining DDM activities undertaken by QDoE;
- develop DDM planning, reporting and accountability mechanisms which are oriented to the Authority's organisational structure, reporting and accounting practices rather than to those of the QDoE; and
- allocate priorities to the findings and recommendations of the various DDM reviews and arrange for their implementation without delay.

13. The ANAO also made several suggestions to facilitate the implementation of this recommendation, including:

- continuing to develop planning and reporting systems and procedures which identify areas of discretionary and non-discretionary costs, as well as fixed and variable costs; and
- extending the improved use of risk assessment processes, addressed in a later recommendation, to DDM as a major means of achieving better planning, liaising and reporting.

Clarifying and establishing priorities for the Authority's statutory and other obligations and commitments

1. During the course of the audit several common perceptions emerged from the interviews conducted with all levels of staff at the Authority relating to the Authority being over-committed, the increasing number of obligations and commitments being taken up by the Authority, and expectations of what the Authority is in a position to do.

2. Following further investigation the ANAO found that:

- while certain management activities were undertaken by agencies other than the Authority in the GBR Marine Park, a clear statement of the responsibilities and roles of these agencies does not appear to be regularly provided by the Authority to Parliament or the public. Consequently, confusion about the extent of the Authority's powers can arise;
- some externally imposed and other internally accepted new obligations are not subject to an examination of their cost implications; and

- the Authority's reports to the Minister and Parliament could portray more realistically the Authority's operational constraints and limitations which will facilitate decision-making.

3. The ANAO considers that these circumstances significantly raise the risk of the Authority being over-committed and being, or being perceived to be, less than effective. To address this issue, the ANAO recommends that the Authority should:

- report fully to Parliament its obligations as well as identifying clearly the areas of GBR Marine Park management in which other agencies play a significant role, and cross reference to their respective performance reports; and
- revise its priorities and consequent resource allocation for greater efficiency and effectiveness. Where such a revision identifies a significant risk to the Authority's ability to deliver against its objectives, then the Minister should be immediately advised of the implications.

4. The ANAO made several suggestions to assist in implementing this recommendation, including that the Authority should:

- be in a position to be able to cost particular projects and programs (for budget purposes) so that when the Authority's budget is finalised there is clear agreement on which projects and programs will be undertaken; and
- reconsider the necessity and practicality of reviewing the zoning plans every five years or so and, if necessary, recommend a change of approach to the GBR Ministerial Council. This review requirement has not been met as well, the introduction of other processes and management tools indicates that the need for the five yearly reviews may no longer exist.

Management and parliamentary reporting

1. The Authority would be in a better position to report on its effectiveness if better use were made of its risk assessments of the use of natural resources in the GBR Marine Park, and if better use were made of data from its management information systems. The risks include the assessed risk to the GBR Marine Park, or parts thereof, of not being protected; conserved or allowing reasonable use; and of misuse of natural resources through fraud. Consequently, the report recommends that the Authority express clearly its information requirements. This process should lead to development of a fraud control plan, as required by the Commonwealth Government.

2. Implementation of the related recommendations, as indicated earlier, would have a beneficial effect on the development of strategies and plans to deal with the most important issues. In addition, implementation would place the Authority in a better position to improve its reporting to Parliament on its effectiveness in achieving its legislative objectives, corporate goal and associated aims in accordance with the Commonwealth's reporting guidelines. Such an improvement is warranted because, at present, the Authority's external reporting is much more activity than effectiveness focused.

3. An overall theme throughout the report is the need to improve information for management and external reporting purposes.

Authority's response to the key findings

4. The Authority generally endorses the recommendations of the review, and in most cases had already taken decisions that are leading to establishment of systems and procedures that address the issues raised in the report. However, the Authority is concerned that, if taken out of the context of the report as a whole, the way some of the key findings are expressed may lead the reader to incorrectly believe that the Authority is less than effective in meeting its obligation for protecting, conserving and allowing for reasonable use of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

5. The review suggests that the Authority's planning is too complex, hindering performance information. From elsewhere in the report it is apparent that this comment relates to the Strategic and corporate planning. In this context the Authority agrees. The Twenty Five Year Strategic Plan for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area was completed in 1994 to guide the actions of Commonwealth and State government agencies and all other stakeholders in effective management of the World Heritage Area. The process of developing the strategic plan with all stakeholders has been invaluable, and the strategic direction set by the plan is a very sound basis for effectively managing the World Heritage Area. However, the Authority's experience in implementing the plan suggests that the long and relatively complex list of five year objectives could be further refined to more strategic statements which will form a clearer basis for performance evaluation and integration into the corporate planning for each of the stakeholders.

6. The Report suggests that the Authority does not have adequate data to report comprehensively to Parliament on its effectiveness. The adequacy, or inadequacy, of available data is primarily a function of the relatively short time that has been available to collect trend information, the adequacy of scientific methods that are currently available to collect the desired data and the limitations of funding. Since the Authority was established it has driven and supported the process whereby knowledge of the Reef has improved dramatically providing a much better basis for assessing the adequacy of management but equally identifying critical data shortfalls that must be improved over time. The Authority believes that the proceedings of the State of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Workshop (November 1995) provide a sound basis for evaluation of performance. The conclusions of that report were summarised and reported to Parliament in the Authority's annual report of 1995-96.

QDoE's general response to the report

7. Although the QDoE was not audited because it is a State government agency, the Department was invited to comment on the draft report because of its critical responsibility in reef management.

8. The QDoE indicated that it receives funds from a variety of Commonwealth sources, and the Authority already appears to be more accountable than most. Whilst the need for accountability in management is fully endorsed, requirements need to be realistic, and there needs to be reasonable parity across different Commonwealth programs. It also needs to be recognised that the Queensland Government has processes in place for audit and responsible administration.

9. The Chairman of the Authority and the Director-General of QDoE have recently agreed to relocate the responsibility for co-ordination of the day to day management program within QDoE to Townsville. This decision was made to ensure the closest possible working relationship between QDoE and the Authority.

10. The Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Council has also directed that there is to be a review of the inter-governmental agreements regarding the day to day management of the Great Barrier Reef. This review is intended to update and streamline the arrangements, as well as to ensure clarity in responsibilities, programming and reporting.

Recommendations

11. The ANAO made seven recommendations framed to assist the Authority in enhancing the effectiveness of its governance including in particular the efficient and effective achievement of its stated objectives. The Authority agrees with six recommendations and agrees in broad principle with the other (Recommendation No.2).

Recommendations

The ANAO considers that the Authority should give priority to all the following Recommendations.

Recommendation No. 1
Para. 2.7 The ANAO recommends that the Authority takes steps to simplify its planning and program structure and to clearly allocate responsibility for monitoring and reporting of program effectiveness to allow efficient and effective management and reporting to Parliament as part of its functional accountability.

Response: Agreed.

Recommendation No. 2
Para. 2.12 The ANAO recommends that, in order to establish an adequate level of management control over DDM, the Authority should:

- (a) cost and separately identify in the DDM budget Great Barrier Reef Marine Park DDM activities (which can be clearly delineated) to minimise the level of uncertainty regarding achievement of value-for-money outcomes;
- (b) establish a quality assurance program examining DDM activities stated to be undertaken by QDoE to verify Departmental reports of efficiency and effectiveness (upon which part of the Authority's reports to Parliament are based);
- (c) develop better DDM planning, reporting and accountability mechanisms which are oriented to the Authority's organisational structure, reporting and accounting practices rather than those used by the QDoE; and to reduce any inefficiencies due to different systems and procedures between the Authority and QDoE; and
- (d) allocate priorities to the agreed recommendations of the various DDM reviews and arrange for their early implementation.

Response: Agreed in broad principle.

**Recommendation No. 3
Para. 2.17** The ANAO recommends that the Authority should, for the purposes of better informing Parliament and improving annual programming:

- (a) summarise and report its statutory and other agreed obligations to Parliament;
- (b) summarise and report to Parliament the areas of GBR Marine Park Management in which other agencies play a significant role. This should include a cross reference to the respective agencies performance reports (as they relate to the GBR Marine Park) can be obtained; and
- (c) ascertain and advise its Minister on the cost and resource implications of significant current commitments and on significant new commitments.

Response: Agreed.

**Recommendation No. 4
Para. 2.22** The ANAO recommends that the Authority annually reports its effectiveness in achieving its goals and objectives to Parliament to ensure compliance with the Commonwealth's reporting guidelines.

Response: Agreed.

**Recommendation No. 5
Para. 2.25** The ANAO recommends that the Authority develops its risk assessment systems and procedures so that this information can be better used for management and reporting purposes.

Response: Agreed.

**Recommendation No. 6
Para. 2.28** The ANAO recommends that the Authority develops a fraud control plan based upon a formal risk assessment, to comply with the Commonwealth's requirements.

Response: Agreed.

Recommendation No. 7
Para 2.32 The ANAO recommends that the Authority expresses clearly its information requirements and links these to its strategic planning structure, DDM reporting requirements and reports to Parliament.

Response: Agreed.

Part Two

Audit Findings and Conclusions

1.

Introduction

Background

1.1 The objective of this audit was to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Commonwealth's management of the Great Barrier Reef implemented by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (the Authority). This audit was undertaken because of the environmental significance of the Great Barrier Reef Region, recent changes to the Authority's budget arrangements and because the Authority had not been subject to a performance audit since its establishment some 20 years ago.

1.2 During the course of the preliminary study for the audit, the Minister for the Environment appointed a consultant to conduct an additional review of the Authority. Taking the terms of reference of this parallel review (listed in Appendix 2) into account with several significant issues that the ANAO identified, the ANAO considered that the course of action that would add the most value was to present the results of its preliminary study as soon as possible. Consequently, this report focuses on the following issues arising from the examination of the Authority's:

- planning systems and procedures (Chapter 3);
- Day-to-Day Management (DDM) of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMP) carried out by the Queensland Department of Environment (QDoE) (Chapter 4); and
- reporting to Parliament (Chapter 5).

Criteria used to examine each of these areas are summarised at the start of each respective chapter.

1.3 Field work for this audit was conducted between October 1996 and July 1997. The audit was carried out through interviews and documentary and data reviews in the Authority's headquarters in Townsville and in the Authority's Canberra Office. The audit was conducted in accordance with the ANAO Auditing Standards and cost \$230 000.

The Authority

1.4 The Authority is a Commonwealth Government regulatory agency established by the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* (the Act) which specifies the following objective:

to make provision for and in relation to the establishment, control, care and development of a marine park in the Great Barrier Reef Region in accordance with the provisions of its legislation.

1.5 The Authority began operations in 1976 and consists of a full-time Chairperson and three part-time members. All Authority members are appointed by the Governor-General. However, one is nominated by the Queensland Government and one represents the interests of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMP). The area, for which the Authority has management responsibility, is illustrated in Diagram 1 and has the following characteristics;

- the GBR Region's total area is approximately 349 000 square kilometres, of which approximately 344 000 square kilometres is contained within the GBR Marine Park (GBRMP) boundaries. The reef extends for more than 2 000 kilometres from just south of the Tropic of Capricorn northwards into the Torres Strait;
- four administrative sections (the origin of the sections is based upon the history of declaration):
 - Far Northern Section;
 - Cairns Section;
 - Central Section; and
 - Mackay/Capricorn Section;
- 2 900 reefs, all of which have been allocated reference numbers for management purposes;
- 618 continental islands, 300 cays, and 44 wooded islands; and
- the major portion of the total area (called the GBR lagoon) being the waters inshore of the outer reef.

Appendix 1 provides a more complete description of the Great Barrier Reef.

1.6 A Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Council (Ministerial Council) was established in 1979 for the purposes of policy coordination. The Ministerial Council comprises two Ministers from the Commonwealth Government and two Ministers from the Queensland Government.

1.7 The Authority has defined its goal as:

to provide for the protection, wise use, understanding and enjoyment of the Great Barrier Reef in perpetuity through the care and development of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

1.8 The Authority's goal and associated aims, which are derived from the Act, are listed in Appendix 3.

1.9 While the Act specifically makes the Authority responsible for the management of the Marine Park, the functions and powers (sections 7 and 8) of the Act detail what the Authority can do. In general, however, the Authority describes itself as the principal management authority and adviser to the Commonwealth Government on the care and development of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

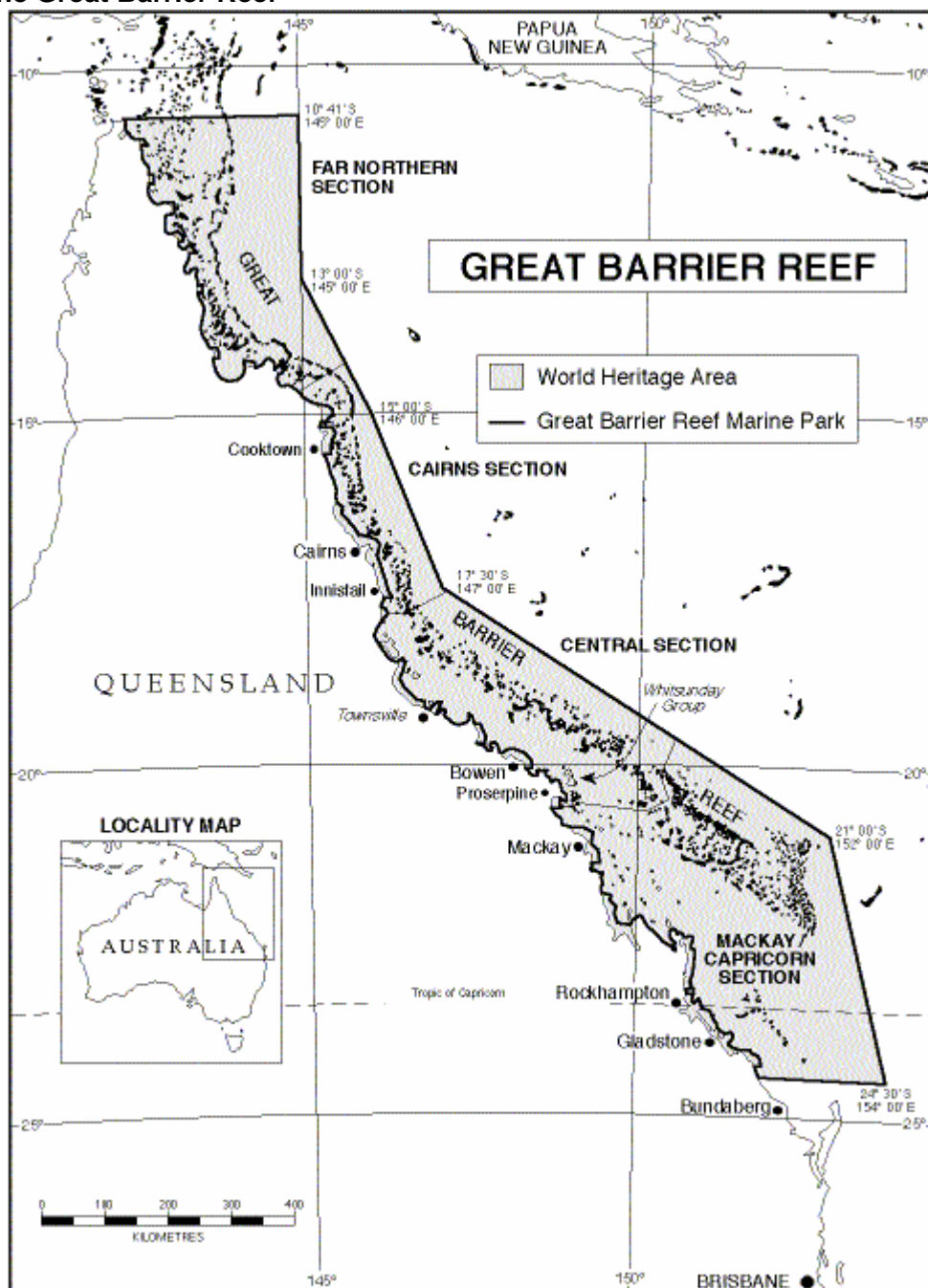
1.10 Certain functions of the Authority are performed by other agencies from the Queensland Government (the Department of Environment (QDoE), formerly the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage; the Queensland Fisheries Management Authority (QFMA); and the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol (QB&FP)) and from the Commonwealth Government (the Department of Transport, the Department of Defence and the Australian Fisheries Management Authority) being the main agencies. All Australian Federal Police officers are inspectors under the Act.

1.11 The Authority's staffing levels have been between 136 and 147 since 1991-92. This figure includes aquarium staff whose numbers are not reported as part of the staffing levels in the Budget Papers. The figure does not account for the Queensland Government's DDM staff which include staff mainly from QDoE. The DDM permanent staffing level of QDoE for 1997-98 is 107.

1.12 The organisation chart, as at November 1996, divides the staff of the Authority into three main areas with several sub-divisions, as illustrated in Diagram 2.

1.13 In the last quarter of the 1996-97 financial year, the Authority decided to reduce the number of senior executive officers and realign the various branches and sections of the organisation. At the time of the completion of this audit this process remained to be finalised.

Diagram 1:
The Great Barrier Reef

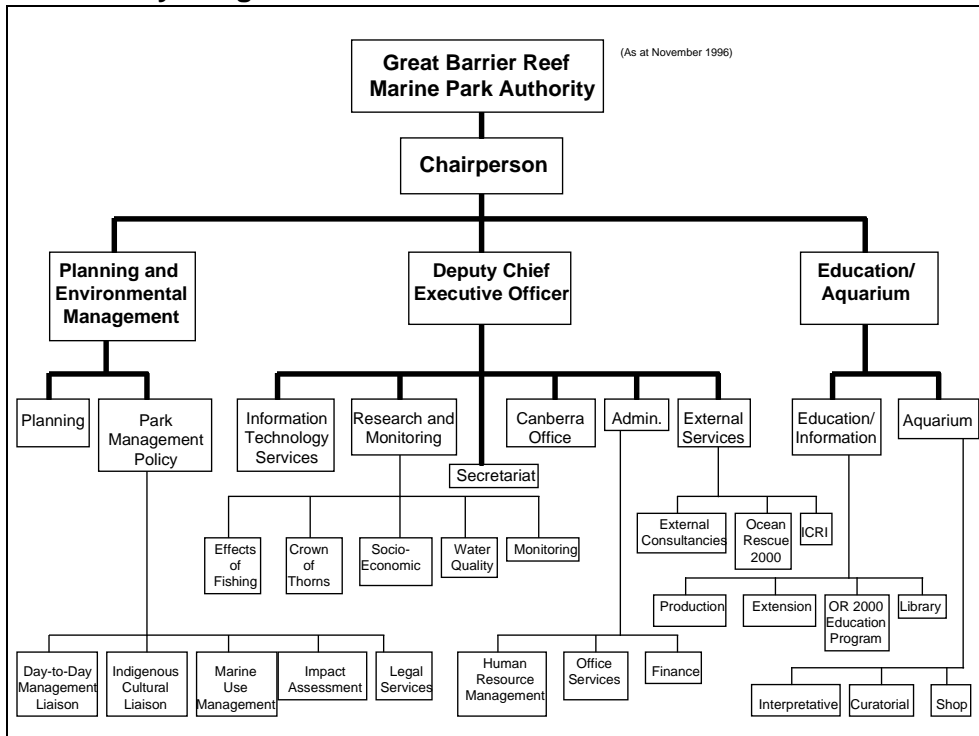


BRA Q188 1994

(Source: the Authority, 1997)

Diagram 2:

The Authority's organisation chart



(Source: the Authority, 1997)

1.14 Diagram 3 illustrates the Authority's funding since 1984-85 including the forward estimates to the year 2000. The sources of funds are also shown. Of interest are:

- the gradual increase in the total level of funding to 1996-97 and the tapering of funding to the year 2000;
- the introduction and gradual increase in funds derived from the Authority's Aquarium;
- the two separate sources of funding (Commonwealth and Queensland Governments) for the DDM function. This topic is described later in this chapter and in Chapter 4; and
- the introduction and predicted significant increase in the environmental management charge (EMC) which is a user pays charge for visits to the GBRMP.

1.15

The Authority's total annual operating expenses (including DDM) currently exceeds \$26 million. The Authority generates (in revenue) 30 per cent or more of its total operating expenses from sources other than Commonwealth and Queensland appropriations.

Previous reviews

1.16 While the Authority has not been subject to an efficiency audit by the ANAO in the 20 years that it has been operating, it has been subject to regular reviews both internal and external. These include a review in January 1995 of funding arrangements for the Authority which was commissioned by the Minister for the Environment (DDM was specifically excluded) and reviews of DDM. These will be referred to later in this report.

1.17 In 1992-93, as part of the former Portfolio of the Arts, Sport, Tourism and Territories Portfolio Evaluation Plan, a consultant was commissioned to review the role, operations and management program of the Authority. The resulting report *Managing Multiple Use in the Coastal Zone - A Review of the Authority* was tabled in the Commonwealth Parliament on 17 December 1993. While the then Government did not officially respond to the report, there were responses by the Authority and the then Department of the Environment, Sport and Territories (DEST). Several changes have been made by the Authority as a result and these are summarised in Appendix 4.

Commonwealth-Queensland agreements and DDM

1.18 When the Authority commenced operations in 1976 there were no areas of the Great Barrier Reef Region declared as a Marine Park and the staff, and all management systems and procedures, had to be established. By 1977 the Townsville office of the Authority had opened, and by 1979 the Authority had recommended to the Government the establishment of the first section of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park - the Capricornia Section in the most southerly part of the GBR Region.

1.19 On 14 June 1979, an agreement (the 'Emerald Agreement') was reached between the then Prime Minister and the then Queensland Premier. The Emerald Agreement, among other things, dealt with the administration of the Capricornia Section of the Great Barrier Reef and came into effect on 1 August 1980. In May 1988 an agreement was signed by the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments and the Authority, confirming that the above mentioned arrangements for day-to-day management would apply to all other parts of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. An additional agreement for the control, use, maintenance and disposal of assets created under the main agreement was also signed.

1.20 These agreements (the 1979-1988 Agreements) define the division of the GBR Marine Park administration into field operations, called day-to-day-management (DDM), to be undertaken by the Queensland Government subject to the Authority, and other functions (planning and policy), to be undertaken by the Authority.

1.21 The 1979-1988 Agreements determined that DDM shall be carried out by such instrumentalities of the State of Queensland as shall be determined from time to time by the Queensland Government following consultation with the Commonwealth Government and with the Authority. DDM includes:

- administration;
- education and information;
- monitoring;
- resource management;
- surveillance; and
- enforcement.

1.22 Appendix 5 lists the activities currently undertaken by the various Queensland agencies involved in DDM.

1.23 The 1979-1988 Agreements established several requirements including:

- the Authority would prepare management guidelines in consultation with the Queensland Government;
- the Queensland Government would develop operational procedures in consultation with and approved by the Authority;
- the Queensland Government would determine which of its instrumentalities would perform DDM;
- a three-year rolling program would be developed jointly in accordance with the management guidelines. The program would require approval by the Authority and endorsement by the Ministerial Council;
- an annual program of expenditure would be developed by the Queensland Government in consultation with the Authority on the basis of the three-year rolling program, approved by the Authority and submitted to each Government in the context of their budgets;
- the Commonwealth would meet the initial costs of capital works with all capital costs after the initial capital works program and all recurrent costs to be shared 50:50. Recurrent costs would include those incurred by the

Queensland Government in managing the Queensland national park islands and marine parks lying within the boundaries of the GBRMP in accordance with the annual program; and

- the Queensland Government would meet all capital costs for Queensland National Parks and Marine Parks which were not in the GBRMP and were not part of the initial agreed program.

1.24 The 1979-1988 Agreements establish general planning and reporting systems and procedures. These requirements include a rolling triennial program, an annual program and periodic reporting.

1.25 The management guidelines referred to above were developed and endorsed following the 1979-1988 agreements and were amended once in 1992 in relation to reporting details and time-frames and procedures for the transfer of funds. These guidelines cover the scope and focus of DDM operations and procedures; the listing of DDM and related activities in Appendix 5 illustrates this.

1.26 Since 1988 the Authority has made several decisions which expand and refine the DDM management guidelines; e.g. the development of a program/issue orientation to the three-year and annual programs; particular details that should be reported six-monthly; and the way initiatives should be proposed. Only some of the Authority's decisions have been proposed to, and accepted, by the Ministerial Council as changes to the Guidelines.

1.27 Chapter 4 examines the DDM organisational structure and related systems and procedures in greater detail.

The Environmental Management Charge

1.28 One significant issue affecting the Authority during the course of this audit was the Environmental Management Charge (EMC). The EMC is a charge on tourist operators for their commercial use of the GBRMP. It was introduced in 1993 by the Commonwealth Government to recover some of the GBRMP costs of management. It is calculated on a per head per day basis for visits to the GBRMP. The resulting revenue contributes to the management, education and research functions of the Authority.

1.29 The EMC has a significant effect on the resources of the Authority (in terms of time spent in dealing with the tourist industry and related government matters) and the Authority's revenue. The ANAO decided, however, not to include this issue within the scope of this audit because all the related issues had already been clearly enunciated by the Authority, the tourist industry and others and the final decision is a government policy matter. The ANAO has

developed its recommendations and suggestions in such a way that it is not expected that the EMC issue will negate their intended impact.

2.

Effectiveness and efficiency

Introduction

2.1 As outlined in Chapter 1, the ANAO examined the Authority's:

- planning systems and procedures;
- day-to-day Management (DDM) of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMP); and
- reporting to Parliament.

Detailed findings and the supporting evidence can be found in the chapters on Planning, DDM and Reporting.

2.2 As a result of this examination the ANAO concluded that:

- the complexity of the Authority's planning hinders the development of practical and useful performance information for management and accountability purposes;
- a more comprehensive risk assessment would lead to an improvement in the day-to-day management of the Reef. The improvement would occur, partly through revision of the Authority's data requirements of the QDoE which conducts day-to-day management subject to the Authority;
- the Authority does not have adequate data to determine whether it is achieving its primary objective of protecting, conserving and allowing for reasonable use of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. This lack of performance data has a flow-on effect to the development of strategies and plans to achieve these objectives, and on stakeholders'/agency's ability to assess the Authority's performance; and
- the Authority has inadequate data to report comprehensively to Parliament on its effectiveness as a result.

1.1

2.3 The ANAO also found that, while there are features of the Authority's systems and procedures which limit its efficiency, the Authority has identified, and is taking steps to address, these limitations through an extensive review process. These include the improvement of current, and the development of new, performance measures and assessments. This is occurring through:

- the continuing implementation of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area's 25 Year Strategic Plan, incorporating a wide range of performance indicators;
- revision of the Authority's corporate plan to adopt an issues/program orientation;
- the revision of the DDM program and associated reporting requirements to (among other things) provide a greater level of Authority involvement; and
- the development of project/program accounting.

2.4 The remainder of this chapter expands on these findings and associated issues.

Simplifying the Authority's planning and program structure

2.5 Through the examination of the Authority's planning and program structure, the ANAO found that:

- the Authority's planning systems and procedures and the resulting products are too complex for effective management, in terms of:
 - too many different top level planning statements and documents which are not necessarily incompatible but which have different purposes and focuses. The lack of a clear strategic planning 'starting point' can obscure or alter the desired focus throughout an organisation;
 - overlapping but separate reporting lines caused by the large number of top level planning statements and documents. This can lead to duplication in data acquisition and unnecessary data processing;
 - dissimilar DDM administrative and accounting systems and procedures used by the Authority and the Queensland Department of Environment (QDoE); and
 - different administrative and planning regions used by the Authority and the QDoE;
- a wide range of performance indicators and measures, both activity and effectiveness oriented, are available which were intended to address different top-level planning statements and documents. Despite this array of indicators and measures, few were used for reporting purposes or had supporting information;

- the Authority had not designated particular officers with the responsibility to monitor or report on its performance, for example, in a particular GBR planning zone. The risk of management systems and procedures being ineffective is significantly increased without this type of delegated responsibility. QDoE advise that the Authority has frequently assigned specific staff as project officers to monitor and develop management strategies in relation to particular issues such as the effects of shipping;
- the scope of planning is incomplete (there is no comprehensive identification of commitments) leading to the possibility of the Authority failing to undertake a compliance obligation;
- the Authority's risk assessment processes are not fully employed, the results of which could be used to report effectiveness; and
- the performance information which is being acquired is insufficient to determine the effectiveness of the Authority's management instruments, enabled by the Act (zoning plans, other plans and permits), and best practice guides.

2.6 Drawing these findings together, the ANAO considers that:

- the Authority's complex planning and program structure inhibits the delivery of practical performance information to management;
- insufficient use is made of formal risk assessments of the risk to the protection, conservation and reasonable use of the GBR; and
- insufficient performance information regarding the Authority's management instruments, enabled by the Act, and best practice guides is being acquired for effective management and reporting purposes.

Recommendation No.1

2.7 The ANAO recommends that the Authority takes steps to simplify its planning and program structure and to clearly allocate responsibility for monitoring and reporting of program effectiveness to allow efficient and effective management and reporting to Parliament as part of its functional accountability.

The Authority's response

2.8 Agreed. As acknowledged in the Report, the Authority has made significant progress in the last twelve months with revision of corporate planning and budgeting structures.

In the context of the comments made in response to the Key Findings, the Authority is streamlining its planning and program structures.

Following a recent restructure of the Executive Management, the Authority is moving to review its organisation structure. In this review, allocation of program responsibilities and the form of reporting will be considered to ensure that appropriate and efficient structures are in place to facilitate effective reporting to Parliament.

2.9 To accomplish this recommendation the ANAO suggests that the Authority:

- adopts a clear, simple and structured set of goals and objectives to replace the current goals and aims. The ANAO considers that the current set of goals and aims of the Authority, while containing acceptable and appropriate statements, is not structured in a useful way for management purposes;
- uses its corporate plan as the peak planning document rather than the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area 25 Year Strategic Plan. The latter relates to a much broader group of stakeholders and the Authority advises that it finds that the Plan does not entirely suit the Authority's planning and reporting systems and procedures;
- incorporates as much as possible of the 25 Year Strategic Plan (structure, objectives, strategies and performance indicators) into its corporate plan to facilitate harmonisation and to minimise translation when reporting;
- maintains the same overall structure, adopted in the corporate plan, in all other subordinate strategic planning documents (including the DDM programs) to provide continuity, simplify the strategic planning structure, avoid multiple cross referencing between planning documents and facilitate direct reporting lines;
- develops a comprehensive set of compliance obligations to achieve a comprehensive strategic planning process;
- aligns effectiveness reporting lines (including the project/program accounting) with the (above mentioned) simplified goals, objectives and issues so that a standard set of 'operational state of the reef information' will serve all reporting links and associated performance indicators;
- adopts as many of the performance indicators included in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area 25 Year Strategic Plan as appropriate for incorporation into the Authority's corporate plan. The ANAO considers that many of these performance indicators are quite useful and their adoption would facilitate the Authority's separate reporting related to the World Heritage area; and

- wherever possible, to avoid duplicative management levels, dealings with the agencies implementing DDM on the Authority's behalf should be arranged with those agencies as if they were part of the Authority; that is, in a seamless way. They should use as a starting point the frame of reference 'if the management of the GBRMP involved only one integrated agency how would the problem at hand be addressed?' These arrangements must also comply with the Commonwealth - State DDM agreements.

Improving the Authority's management control of DDM

2.10 The ANAO found the following areas of concern during the examination of the DDM systems and procedures:

- while DDM reporting (by QDoE) scrupulously complies with requirements (specified by the 1979-1988 Agreements and the Authority); it is not effectiveness oriented and it does not report risk assessments. The ANAO concludes that this is mainly because the Authority does not ask for this type of information. The phrase 'effectiveness oriented' is used to include the effectiveness of the Authority's zoning plans, management plans, permits and better practice guides;
- the Authority does not have costing information which will allow it to determine accurately if the Commonwealth is receiving value for money from its contribution (approximately \$4 million per annum) to the approximately \$8 million spent on DDM each year. In addition, it is difficult to determine the proportion of Commonwealth interest in many of the Queensland Government DDM activities because Queensland Government staff manage both the GBR Marine Park and Queensland national and marine parks. QDoE advised that only a relatively minor proportion of DDM activities could be assigned to one Government or the other; and provided the following examples:
 - a patrol vessel may encompass multiple activities such as State and Commonwealth marine park and island enforcement, transport of materials to service island facilities checking and maintenance of public moorings;
 - protection of seabirds at Micklemas Cay may require action in a Commonwealth marine park, a State marine park and an island national park; and
 - most marine park permits relate to tourism operations which cross jurisdictional boundaries, and are assessed and issued as joint State/Commonwealth documents;

- the Authority does not undertake formal quality assurance of work reported as having been undertaken by the Queensland Government on the Authority's behalf;
- there are significant differences between the Queensland Government's and the Authority's administrative and reporting systems and procedures which appear likely to continue given that two different government accounting systems are involved and the DDM function represents less than 10 percent of the entire QDoE's budget (some \$8 million against the total of more than \$100 million per year). These differences add to coordination and data translation costs; and
- recent internal DDM reviews indicate that significant improvements of DDM systems and procedures are required.

2.11 The ANAO found, however, that:

- having jointly undertaken several DDM reviews, the Authority and QDoE are aware of these issues and are jointly seeking solutions; and
- there is considerable evidence to indicate that the Authority and QDoE have sought to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of zoning plans and permit systems through harmonisation, where both GBRMP and Queensland marine park boundaries coincide.

Recommendation No.2

2.12 The ANAO recommends that in order to establish an adequate level of management control over DDM, the Authority should:

- (a) cost and separately identify in the DDM budget Great Barrier Reef Marine Park DDM activities (which can be clearly delineated) to minimise the level of uncertainty regarding achievement of value-for-money outcomes;
- (b) establish a quality assurance program examining DDM activities stated to be undertaken by QDoE to verify Departmental reports of efficiency and effectiveness (upon which part of the Authority's reports to Parliament are based);
- (c) develop better DDM planning, reporting and accountability mechanisms which are oriented to the Authority's organisational structure, reporting and accounting practices rather than those used by the QDoE; and to reduce any inefficiencies due to different systems and procedures between the Authority and QDoE; and

- (d) allocate priorities to the agreed recommendations of the various DDM reviews and arrange for their early implementation.

The Authority's response

2.13 Agreed in broad principle. The audit focussed on the difficulties which arose from a strong historic focus on inputs and the recommendations are based on a presumption of continuing input focus. The Authority and the Queensland Department of Environment agree that this focus should be moved to outcomes and outputs and so address decisions taken by the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments in relation to management roles in the Great Barrier Reef.

An output and outcome focus will clarify the already high level of accountability for the DDM program more transparently than an input based focus.

The Authority and the Queensland Department of Environment, under the guidance of the Ministerial Council, have during and since completion of the audit made significant progress towards achieving the overall recommendations. These initiatives include:

- (a) formation of a Day-to-Day Management Strategy Group comprising the Authority Executive Directors and the three QDOE Regional Directors responsible for Regional DDM services;
- (b) formation of a Day-to-Day Operations Management Group comprising the three QDoE Coastal Management Regional Managers immediately responsible for DDM services, and the Authority's Manager DDM;
- (c) feasibility evaluation of establishing a single, jointly staffed, DDM Management Unit based in Townsville; and
- (d) moving the Three Year Business Strategy to an outcomes and outputs orientation based on risk management.

These arrangements are consistent with the Queensland and Australian Public Service initiatives for public sector reforms relating to budgeting, management and reporting. Specifically, accrual accounting and accrual budgeting based on agreed outcomes and agreed outputs, coupled with evaluation of program appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency.

With a view to ensuring transparent management of the DDM program the Authority believes that proposed reforms based on the above principles will achieve these recommendations.

Previous reviews have significantly influenced the initiatives outlined above.

QDoE's response

Regarding Recommendation No.2(a): QDoE advises that there are practical difficulties in implementing this part of the recommendation which should not be underestimated. It would only be a relatively minor proportion of activities which could be clearly assigned to one Government or the other.

Regarding Recommendation No.2(b): QDoE advises that the establishment of quality assurance measures is supported. However, quality assurance systems for DDM should be implemented by the Queensland Government, not the Commonwealth.

Regarding Recommendation No.2(c): QDoE advises that this suggests that DDM agencies should be structured as if they were part of the Authority. This proposal ignores the fact that the State and Commonwealth Governments have agreed on a fundamental division of roles in respect of management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park - the Queensland Government is responsible for DDM. In the Queensland Government's view DDM should be carried out in accordance with normal Queensland Government procedures.

ANAO comment

Care had been taken in this report to direct all recommendations to the improvement of the Authority's administrative systems and procedures and not to QDoE activities or functions. The ANAO considers that this report does not, and there is certainly no intention to, make any suggestion about the structure of QDoE.

2.14 To assist in implementing this recommendation the ANAO suggests that the Authority:

- continues to develop planning and reporting systems and procedures which identify areas of discretionary and non-discretionary costs as well as fixed and variable costs; and
- uses risk assessment processes as a major means of planning, liaising and reporting. That is, formalise the acquisition of field intelligence using the risk assessment orientation which already exists. The ANAO suggests that this process use the Authority's Geographical Information System Section maps and mapping systems.

Clarifying and establishing priorities for the Authority's statutory and other obligations and commitments

2.15 During the course of the audit several perceptions emerged from the interviews which were common to all levels of staff at the Authority. The perceptions related to its over-commitment, its increasing number of obligations and commitments, and unrealistic expectations of what the Authority is in a position to do. The following summarises these perceptions:

- the Authority was generally overcommitted; i.e., there was a large gap between resources available and what was required from the Authority plus what the Authority had additionally committed itself to. Further supporting evidence was cited relating to past difficulties the Authority had in processing permits and major project applications and in revising zoning plans. In addition, the draft 1997 Liaison Strategy document (17/3/97) stated:

the budget for DDM has not increased in recent years and therefore has not matched the escalating growth patterns of users and issues. Few discretionary funds remain in the DDM or the Authority budget for activities that require extensive face-to-face interactions between Authority and regional personnel;

- additional obligations are accepted by the Authority (unilaterally) and are imposed on the Authority from 'outside' without due regard to costs and resource implications. One example of the former is the review and identification of world heritage values for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area which incorporates the GBR Marine Park. The underlying rationale for designated world heritage areas is the protection of world heritage values. The more 'values' that are identified and accepted by the Authority the higher the level of commitment of the Authority. This review does not include an analysis of the cost and resource implications; and
- there was a generally high and sometimes inaccurate expectation of what the Authority could do. A good example of this can be found in the annual report of the Authority, where it is only generally indicated that the marine park rangers for the GBR Marine Park actually work for, and are paid by, the Queensland Government's Department of Environment. In addition, it is not clear from the annual reports that commercial fisheries undertaken in the GBR Marine Park are in fact managed by the Queensland Fisheries Management Authority, the Queensland Department of Primary Industry and the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, or that the surveillance-compliance function for fisheries is routinely undertaken by the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol. It is also not clear that commercial ship navigation is under the control of the Australian Maritime

Safety Authority (Commonwealth Department of Transport). While the Act specifically states that the Authority is responsible for the management of the GBRMP, in practice there are several arrangements where other agencies have a level of responsibility. This is not clearly and unambiguously stated in the Authority's annual reports or in the majority of its publicly available literature. Furthermore, the performance of these agencies, with respect to the GBR Marine Park, is not reported in either the Authority's or the relevant agencies' annual reports.

2.16 As a consequence the ANAO finds that, in general:

- while certain management activities were undertaken by agencies other than the Authority in the GBR Marine Park, a clear statement of the responsibilities and roles of these agencies does not appear to be regularly provided by the Authority to Parliament or the public. Consequently, confusion about the extent of the Authority's powers can arise;
- some externally imposed and other internally accepted new obligations are not subject to an examination of their cost and resource implications and priorities;
- the Authority's reports to Parliament could portray more realistically the Authority's operational constraints and limitations which will facilitate decision-making; and
- these circumstances significantly raise the risk of the Authority being over-committed and being (or being perceived to be) less than effective.

Recommendation No.3

2.17 The ANAO recommends that the Authority should, for the purposes of better informing Parliament and improving annual programming:

- (a) summarise and report its statutory and other agreed obligations to Parliament;
- (b) summarise and report to Parliament the areas of GBR Marine Park Management in which other agencies play a significant role. This should include a cross reference to the respective agencies performance reports (as they relate to the GBR Marine Park) can be obtained; and
- (c) ascertain and advise its Minister on the cost and resource implications of significant current commitments and on significant new commitments.

The Authority's response

2.18 Agreed. In relation to item (c) the Authority is, in conjunction with the Government's initiatives relating to Accrual Budgeting, examining and implementing initiatives in the areas of risk management, managing for outcomes and outputs, performance management, development of business plans, and alignment of the organisation structure with the Corporate Plan.

These initiatives will facilitate communication with the Minister in a manner which clearly identifies both the reason for, and resources required to achieve, specific outcomes including new programs.

2.19 To facilitate the implementation of this recommendation the ANAO suggests that the Authority:

- develops a comprehensive set of compliance obligations to facilitate the complete strategic planning process;
- maintains close control over the acceptance of new commitments including their costing;
- reports on the cost implications of new commitments imposed on the Authority;
- be in a position, regarding its budget, to be able to cost particular projects and programs so that there is agreement on what will be undertaken following the finalisation of the Authority's budget; and
- reconsiders the necessity and practicality of reviewing the zoning plans every five years or so and, if necessary, recommend a change of policy to the GBR Ministerial Council. This requirement has not been achieved and the introduction of other processes and management tools indicate that the need for the five yearly reviews may no longer exist.

Parliamentary reporting

2.20 Following examination of the Authority's reports to Parliament, the ANAO found that, while the Authority reports the details of its work activity to Parliament, it has inadequate data to report comprehensively to Parliament on its effectiveness. The ANAO considers that the authority requires data on whether:

- it is achieving its primary objective of protecting, conserving and allowing for reasonable use of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park; and

- whether its management instruments, enabled by the Act (zoning plans, management plans and permits), and better practice guides are effective.

2.21 The ramifications of this finding can be significant because it raises such questions as:

- is the Authority in a position to form an opinion as to whether it is effective in protecting, conserving and allowing for reasonable use of the GBRMP?; and
- can the Authority efficiently and effectively manage its legislative responsibilities if appropriate effectiveness measures and assessments are not available to it?

Recommendation No.4

2.22 The ANAO recommends that the Authority annually reports its effectiveness in achieving its goals and objectives to Parliament to ensure compliance with the Commonwealth's reporting guidelines.

The Authority's response

2.23 Agreed. The report suggests that the Authority does not have adequate data to determine whether it is achieving its primary objective of protecting, conserving and allowing for reasonable use of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Clearly the assessment of the adequacy of the data is a judgement that will vary from individual to individual. The adequacy, or inadequacy, of available data is primarily a function of the relatively short time that has been available to collect trend information, the adequacy of scientific methods that are currently available to collect the desired data, and the limitations of funding. Knowledge of the Reef has improved dramatically since the Authority was established, providing a much better basis for assessing the adequacy of management but equally identifying critical data shortfalls that must be improved over time. Despite these constraints the Authority believes that the proceedings of the State of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area Workshop (November 1995) provide a sound basis for evaluation of performance. The conclusions of that report were summarised and reported to Parliament in the Authority's annual report of 1995-96. In brief the conclusions were:

- in general the situation looks quite positive, while fish and corals can fluctuate substantially from year to year, there are no indications of any large scale degradation as a result of human activity;

- a number of important pressures will need to be monitored on an ongoing basis. In particular, reef fish stocks, fish yields, as well as nutrients and sediments and their potential effects on corals and algae require continued vigilance;
- inter-reefal areas (especially some inter-lagoon areas) are subject to heavy pressure from trawling activities, and the workshop agreed that in areas where heavy trawling persists there is likely to be continued decline in plants and animals;
- in most cases fish, prawn and crustacean stocks appear to be in stable condition, but in some cases there appears to be a small decline that may be attributable to over harvesting;
- the status of some of the large animals, especially dugong, and some species of sea turtle are giving cause for concern; and
- tourism has been the major growth sector. It is now the largest industry in the area in economic terms (four times the value of commercial fishing) and is concentrated offshore from Cairns and in the Whitsundays islands.

The proposed alignment of the Corporate Plan and the organisation structure, in conjunction with the previously indicated accrual budgeting initiatives, will facilitate compliance with these recommendations.

2.24 Further examination revealed that substantial information exists which could be used to form the basis of reports to Parliament. As a consequence the ANAO examined the question: is the Authority in a position to form an opinion as to whether it is effective in protecting and conserving and allowing for reasonable use of the GBRMP? Based upon the results of this examination, the ANAO concluded that the Authority is in a position to report its effectiveness if (among other things) better use were made of risk assessments; i.e., the assessed risk to the GBR Marine Park (or parts thereof) of not being protected, conserved or allowing reasonable use and the assessed effectiveness of management instruments, enabled by the Act, and best practice guides against goals and objectives.

Recommendation No.5

2.25 The ANAO recommends that the Authority develops its risk assessment systems and procedures so that this information can be better used for management and reporting purposes.

The Authority's response

2.26 Agreed. The Authority has endorsed the development of a formal Risk Assessment and Management policy and associated system and procedures. Pilot studies will be completed in early 1998. Whilst the Authority believes that its present natural resource management practice is based on risk management principles, the Authority has started to implement the processes set out in the Guidelines for Managing Risk in the Australian Public Service which were published in 1996. This will facilitate priority determination and performance evaluation.

Fraud control plan

2.27 Associated with the ANAO's 'risk assessment' finding (see above) is the subject of fraud control. Formal risk assessments are prerequisites for the development of a fraud control plan. The ANAO found that the Authority has not developed a fraud control plan in compliance with Commonwealth requirements.

Recommendation No.6

2.28 The ANAO recommends that the Authority develops a fraud control plan based upon a formal risk assessment, to comply with the Commonwealth's requirements.

The Authority's response

2.29 Agreed. The key elements of fraud control are in place and development of a formalised plan will be achieved as part of the Risk Assessment and Management policy.

2.30 The ANAO suggests that in implementing this recommendation, emphasis be placed on the assessed risk that the Authority's management instruments, enabled by the Act (zoning plans, permits, management plans), will not be met. This emphasis will help effectiveness reporting.

Management information systems

2.31 An issue that often arose during the course of the audit was the adequacy of data for management and external reporting. In the light of the ANAO's 'complex planning systems and procedures' finding and given the QDoE advice that it can accommodate any change in planning and reporting

so long as there is certainty as to what the Authority actually wants, the ANAO considers that there is a need for greater clarity.

Recommendation No.7

2.32 The ANAO recommends that the Authority expresses clearly its information requirements and links these to its strategic planning structure, DDM reporting requirements and reports to Parliament.

The Authority's response

2.33 Agreed. Information requirements and Performance Indicators will be identified for outcomes and outputs and included in Corporate and Business Plans.

1.1

3. Planning systems and procedures

Introduction

3.1 The Authority has two types of planning, strategic planning (which relates to the activities of the Authority and Queensland DDM staff) and statutory planning (which relates to the regulation of activities in the GBRMP). This audit has focused on the strategic planning systems, procedures and the resulting planning statements and documents. The Authority's statutory planning is described in Appendixes 6, 7 and 8.

3.2 The ANAO examined the Authority's strategic planning systems and procedures, expecting to find a set of planning documents and statements which were hierarchically and logically structured, consistently linked, uncomplicated and clear, and which facilitated management of the GBRMP. In general, the ANAO found that the planning function of the Authority (both strategic and statutory) is highly developed, producing a wide range of strategic plans and planning statements (some many years old), covering numerous topics at different levels of detail, with elements of vertical overlap (mixing of different levels of detail) and horizontal overlap (i.e. across regions and subject).

3.3 So dominant is the planning function within the Townsville office of the Authority, that the ANAO is of the opinion that there are features of the strategic planning systems and procedures which indicate that the Authority is, in some areas, over-planned and, therefore, less focussed on critical business outcomes. The very existence of the wide range of strategic and statutory plans identified during the audit also indicates, however, a high level of corporate determination to identify and address critical issues. The ANAO is of the opinion that 'over-planning' features include multiple overlapping strategic planning documents and statements which result in a complex planning and effectiveness reporting structure, which could be simplified in the interests of all stakeholders, not the least of which were the Authority's staff.

3.4 In addition, the ANAO considers that, through a combination of external factors and internal strategic and statutory planning systems and procedures, there is a significant gap between what the Authority is required and promises to do and what it can and has the resources to do.

3.5 The ANAO is of the opinion that these features of the strategic planning system significantly impede achievement of effective implementation of the

Authority's decisions because the system clouds focus, internal and external communication, the lines of reporting and reporting performance information.

3.6 The ANAO notes, however, that the Authority is very much aware of these issues and is seeking solutions. In providing the background to the current set of plans and planning statements the Authority advised that:

the Authority has broken new ground in natural resource planning and management and is recognised as the world leader in coral reef management and a world leader in marine park management. Much of this recognition is attributable to the efforts of the Authority to co-ordinate and integrate the aspirations and requirements of an extremely diverse group of stake-holders which often have inherent conflicting objectives.

Planning is essentially an iterative learning process. The Authority is now in a state of transition. Having learned that the exhaustive zoning review processes was time consuming, the Authority is moving to complementary management processes focusing on issues and areas where significant risks or benefits have been identified. This process is in the context of declining real resources coupled with increasing use of the Park and associated conservation risks.

3.7 This change of approach can be seen in the Authority 'new staff' induction course literature where the following statement is made:

Over the past 20 years, knowledge of the physical and social characteristics of the World Heritage Area and adjacent catchments has increased. There is more knowledge about the complexity of the area but there is a growing understanding that, while management requirements are becoming increasingly complex, to be effective, management actions should become increasingly simple and self implementing.

3.8 There is a wide range of findings related to this ANAO opinion and these are detailed in the remainder of this chapter. Recommendations and suggestions (see Chapter 2) flowing from the findings of this chapter are closely linked to the findings in the chapters on DDM and Reporting.

Strategic planning structure

3.9 Separate from the statutory plans that the Authority has developed to regulate activities occurring in the GBRMP, the Authority's strategic direction is established by the following:

The GBRMP Act

3.10 This is described in Chapter 1 and more detail is provided later in this chapter.

Government and the Ministerial Council policies and agreements

3.11 The agreements are mainly with the State of Queensland and involve DDM and fisheries. Other agreements deal with defence and environmental impact assessment matters.

International treaties and agreements

3.12 There are fourteen international treaties and agreements. A summary is provided in Appendix 9.

Authority policies

3.13 Two thousand three hundred decisions have been made by the Authority; in early December 1996 670 were current and a some of these are policies (these are discussed later). These policies cover both broad area-topic-procedural type policies as well as policies related to particular issues, reef developments and the like.

The Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWHA) 25 Year Strategic Plan

3.14 The GBRWHA is a geographical zone encompassing all of the GBRMP as well as Queensland inshore areas and Queensland owned islands within the Great Barrier Reef Region. It is established through insertion on the Register of World Heritage sites. The Commonwealth has also passed a World Heritage Act. While the Authority initiated and coordinated the process for producing the Strategic Plan, this Plan is not the Authority's but is a plan for the GBR in general. All major stakeholders - of which the Authority is one - claim ownership (lead agencies and key players are listed in Appendix 10). In this Plan the Authority has committed itself to be responsible for numerous activities and their reporting. The 25 Year Strategic Plan contains a vision of the reef in 25 years, and details 25-year and five-year objectives and sets of strategies and performance indicators under the headings of:

- conservation
- education
- consultation and commitment
- integrated planning
- recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interests
- resource management
- communication
- research and monitoring
- management processes
- legislation

Corporate plans

3.15 The Corporate Plan for 1995-2000 was the document first available to the ANAO for examination and was found to contain a differently structured five year plan to the 25 Year Strategic Plan and a one year plan. However, it included cross references to the 25 Year Strategic Plan. The next 'edition' of the Authority's corporate plan has not been finalised although 1996-2000 and

1997-2001 drafts have been developed. Drafts have not been finalised because the Authority is still developing its issues/program structure. The draft 1997-2001 Corporate Plan starts with the 25 Year Strategic Plan's vision and identifies a set of management principles, corporate values and key issues. The key issues are:

- conservation
- world heritage status
- tourism and recreation
- fishing
- shipping and maritime pollution response
- coastal development and ports
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander relationships
- water quality

3.16 The 1997-2001 draft Corporate Plan states:

For the foreseeable future, the Authority will focus its work more directly towards these key issues. As indicated above, particular emphasis will be given during 1997–98 to priority tasks in the areas of conservation including threatened species and representative areas, and tourism use management. Additional resources, if available, will be provided to address coastal development and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander relationships. The broad directions to be taken for each issue and the targets for the forthcoming years are outlined below.

3.17 The 1997-2001 draft Corporate Plan identifies the direction, targets and action statements for:

3.18

- park management tools
- day-to-day management
- information management
- education and partnerships
- corporate resources and management
- executive leadership

3.19 The majority of these targets and action statements are work flow related.

Triennial and annual budgets

3.20 These budgets are those required annually for each Commonwealth agency. The Authority's resulting income and expenditure have been summarised in Chapter 1.

Three year rolling and annual DDM programs

3.21 These are described in Chapter 4. In general the DDM planning is undertaken by officers in the districts, regions and Central Office of the QDoE as well as by the Ministerial Council, the Authority and the Authority's DDM Liaison Unit. The programs are now issue oriented, but a differently structured set of issues is used to that used in the Authority's corporate plans and the 25 Year Strategic Plan. Again, cross references are used between the different issue lists. Following the examination of this strategic planning structure the ANAO was of the opinion that:

There was no comprehensive description of the Authority's strategic planning structure

3.22 The actual process of documenting the above list proved to be less than straightforward in that there was no comprehensive structured description in any of the Authority's planning documents and statements. The Authority regularly revises a paper which describes its statutory planning program and the various components. However, the same practice does not exist for strategic planning.

There was no clear starting point

3.23 The Authority's legislative objective (see Chapter 1) is worded in a general and all encompassing way which led the Authority to establish a more detailed goal and set of aims (see Appendix 3). While almost always being listed first in most of the Authority's documents (the draft 1997-2001 Corporate Plan is an exception) the goal and aims are never reported against. In addition to these high level strategic planning statements, there are Commonwealth Government Policies, Ministerial Council Policies, international treaties and obligations, Commonwealth-Queensland Government agreements, the 25 Year Strategic Plan and the Authority's policies and corporate plan.

There was no comprehensive listing of the Authority's compliance obligations

3.24 All of the above documents have numerous and wide ranging compliance requirements and obligations, many of which are overlapping and some of which potentially conflict. The ANAO found no exhaustive listing of the compliance requirements and other obligations either undertaken by or imposed upon the Authority. As part of this audit, the ANAO intended to establish such a list but soon came to the conclusion that the task was too large for the resources available to it. As a consequence, the ANAO concluded that due to the significantly large number of compliance obligations either imposed upon or undertaken by the Authority and the lack of a comprehensive listing of these obligations:

- the Authority's policy ranking process is incomplete;

- there is a high risk that the Authority is not complying with some its obligations; and
- there is a risk that the Authority is overcommitted with respect to what it can do and what it is expected to do.

3.25 The Authority advises that:

While these findings are generally agreed to, the Authority considers that corporate knowledge of the Authority's obligations ensures that its important compliant obligations are being met.

The need to vertically align strategic planning, corporate planning and management programs is acknowledged. However, to achieve this the Authority is concentrating on corporate planning aspects and will shortly move to review internal planning and reporting structures to achieve internal alignment. This process is not independent of the 25 Year Strategic Plan, however, it may need to be re-visited in the light of developments within the Authority. There is no doubt that the primary tenets of the Strategic Plan are being maintained, i.e. maintaining the ecology, providing for reasonable use, maintaining an efficient and effective organisation: and gaining the commitment of others. At this time, through the corporate planning process, we are focusing on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Authority and the advice provided by the ANAO will be most helpful in this regard.

3.26 As noted in Chapter 2, (including Recommendation No. 6) the ANAO has noted that the Authority has no fraud control plan. This requirement by government has been in place for more than seven years and its development, which includes a risk assessment, is especially relevant to the zoning, management plan and permit method of management of the Authority. In addition, the GBR Region is so geographically large and complex that the ANAO considers that a formal process for assessing the likelihood that the Authority's obligations under the Act will not be met is a prerequisite for efficient and effective management.

Consistency, complexity and links

3.27 Examination of the links between the Authority's various strategic planning documents revealed inconsistencies and a high level of complexity. Diagram 4 illustrates this area of concern. In general terms there are several key strategic planning statements and documents all with similar but at the same time slightly different aims, issues and foci. These have quite legitimately developed through various planning processes but require cross referencing to indicate relevant interrelationships.

3.28 On one hand, the slightly different approaches in each of the strategic planning documents is generally consistent with the overall object of the GBRMP Act, and they reflect considered decisions to have a particular short-term emphasis. On the other hand, the interconnections between these

documents are so intricate that internal consistency and continuity are effectively lost. The ANAO considers that a simplified strategic planning structure would better facilitate efficient and effective management control. The Authority advised that:

Agreed. However, there are some difficulties with the 25 Year Strategic Plan in terms of its focus, terminology and usefulness of the performance indicators determined therein. As previously indicated it was not designed for the sole use of the Authority.

Because of the nature of the Strategic Plan continued cross-referencing will probably be necessary. However, with the critical issues approach more direct linkages should be possible.

3.29 This same level of complexity was found in the organisation of the Authority. The Authority's annual reports list a plethora of programs and sub-programs, some which are listed as parts of Branches, some as Branches and some which are listed as programs within programs (See Appendix 11).

3.30 The Authority advises that:

In the 1995-96 Annual Report the Authority reported its intention to move to Program Budgeting. In this regard the accounting and financial management information systems are being overhauled to enable implementation during the 1997-98 financial year. The Authority program formats will be based on the critical issues now formulated in the Corporate Plan. Each program will have a manager appointed, and contain clearly defined sub-programs which will be the basis for budgeting and performance evaluation and reporting.

At present the Authority is using line item budgeting and financial information reporting systems. Therefore the "programs" identified in this section of the report are based on a very loose definition and will not necessarily equate to programs or sub-programs under the Program Budgeting formats.

3.31 To summarise:

- the Authority has a legislated objective, a goal and set of aims, one 25 Year Strategic Plan, two five year plans, two three year plans and a number of annual plans;
- the Authority's goal and set of aims, while not being addressed in any performance reporting (as discussed in Chapter 5) are still current;
- the 25 Year Strategic Plan provides the start of a strategic planning structure but is reinterpreted and restructured in the Corporate Plan and

the DDM programs, together with performance or activity indicators - which are not currently reported in the Authority's annual report;

- where five and one year plans are reformatted, the Authority has cross referenced these new documents with the 25 Year Strategic Plan adding to the complexity of the Authority's planning structure; and
- the use of the words 'program' and 'sub-program' is inconsistent which adds to the complexity of the Authority's planning structure.

3.32 In response the Authority advised that it agreed with this summary and that the *issue will be addressed under its Critical Issues program and in its annual reports.*

The structure of the Authority's policies

3.33 The Authority's policies exist in several areas:

- a sub-set of Ministerial Council decisions. These exist in hard copy only in the original report form written following each meeting;
- a sub-set of the Authority's decisions. These are electronically stored and used as references for discussion at later Authority meetings. The Authority's secretariat has attempted to separate those decisions which remain current and those which are regarded as policies, and have advised (as mentioned earlier) the ANAO that as at early December 1996 there had been 2 300 Authority decisions of which 670 were current. The decisions are usually based upon associated papers and these are not electronically stored. Authority decisions are usually briefly listed with the details being agreed to, or being decided upon, incorporated in the papers. Previously related decisions are amended accordingly. The Authority advised that:

There is a clear need to define "policy" in this context. Individual decisions of the Authority do not necessarily constitute policy. Therefore reference to the number of these decisions could be misleading.

The ANAO also notes that the Authority has not developed a separate 'policy paper' mechanism where Authority decisions, having wide and ongoing implications, can be promulgated.

- Other sources of policies are:
 - precedent decisions regarding permits and deeds associated with permits(permits are described in Appendix 8);
 - decisions by the Minister; and

- decisions by the Government.

3.34 The Authority policy set is extensive, essentially unstructured and not ‘user friendly’. The word ‘policy’ is used in this section in its broadest sense and could include administrative directions and guidelines as well as the other Ministerial policies and directions. These policies have not been coordinated or assembled in one documentary system, categorised and generally made readily accessible to staff for guidance in day-to-day activities. The ANAO considers that the possible number of the Authority’s policies may be an impediment in itself.

Existing and new compliance obligations

3.35 As mentioned in an earlier chapter, a common perception or theme evident in the interviews (conducted during this audit) with Authority staff, at all levels, was that the Authority was generally overcommitted. Many staff perceived that there was a large gap between resources available and what was required from the Authority in addition to what the Authority had additionally committed itself to. Further supporting evidence is available from the permit processing and major project assessment statistics (provided in the Authority’s last few annual reports), which indicated that the resources required to complete these tasks in a timely fashion were ‘stretched to the limit’. In addition, there have been significant delays in complying with the Ministerial Council’s policy of revising zoning plans every five or so years. Also, a number of documents reporting DDM reviews (discussed in Chapter 4) clearly state that there were few discretionary options left in the DDM budget. In response, the Authority has advised, and the ANAO has confirmed, that improvements have been made to the permit and project assessment systems and procedures which have resulted in significant efficiency and effectiveness gains.

3.36 The Authority has also advised that it is currently defining in greater detail the world heritage values of the Great Barrier Reef. This is a significant activity because the Commonwealth’s World Heritage Act and all the associated obligations and requirements related to a world heritage listing are based around the values for which the GBR was listed in the first instance. The greater the scope and level of detail of the world heritage values, the greater the obligations being accepted by the Authority. In examining this process, the ANAO was concerned that the costs (to the Authority) of any additional obligations were not part of this process. Further, the ANAO is concerned that cost analyses of existing obligations undertaken by, or imposed upon, the Authority through treaties and agreements must be incomplete in general if an

exhaustive list of compliance obligations has not been established. The Authority advised that:

Agreed. However, the formulation of a World Heritage Program and sub-programs will facilitate resource allocation through the identification of obligations and requirements.

1.

4.

Organisational structure and day-to-day management

Introduction

4.1 As described in Chapter 1, agreements between the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments divide the administration of the GBRMP into two. The Queensland Government has the task of implementing DDM and, as shown in the previous chapter, the Authority is responsible for policy and planning

4.2 DDM involves the implementation in the field of all of the Authority and QDoE zoning and management plans, policies and procedures to ensure the ecologically sustainable use of the GBRMP, State Marine Parks and National Parks (either whole islands or part thereof) - all of which fall within the GBR World Heritage Area (GBRWHA). The Queensland Government's involvement notwithstanding, the Authority is ultimately responsible for the management of the GBRMP under the Act. The number of activities involved in DDM is considerable and a detailed list is included in Appendix 5.

4.3 This administrative division of activity is logical because, with a few exceptions, in the form of Commonwealth owned islands, the GBRMP is under water and access to the area is, in most cases, from Queensland territory. Therefore, the land, island and marine facilities, and services based on Queensland territory are critical to people seeking access to the GBRMP. The tenure of the western border of the GBRMP is made up of a patchwork of freehold land, some Commonwealth land on the western border, lighthouse reserves, Defence lands (such as at Shoalwater Bay), Queensland Marine Parks, port and harbour areas, terrestrial parks or other forms of crown land much of which are managed and regulated by the Queensland Government. Many of the Queensland Government agencies managing these areas are regionally based national park officers and boating and fishery patrol officers. The location of these Queensland officers obviates the need for a duplicate Commonwealth regional marine park officer structure which would have to cater for virtually the same clientele.

1.1

4.4 The QDoE and to a lesser extent the QB&FP, which is part of the Queensland Department of Primary Industry and the Queensland Water Police, are the agencies most directly involved in DDM.

4.5 In examining the DDM system and procedures, the ANAO considered that in this area of inter-governmental operations, effective management is

most likely where the administrative systems and procedures are 'seamless' across the two government systems with the following features:

- cooperation;
- no duplication;
- unfettered flow of information;
- consistency/compatibility of planning processes and the resulting plans; and
- adequate quality assurance and accountability mechanisms controlling effective plan implementation.

4.6 In general, the ANAO considers that the externally imposed organisational structure has evolved into one which has:

- an excessive number of management levels between the Queensland Government field officers and the Commonwealth Government Senior Executive Officer (Planning and Environmental Management) in the Authority responsible for the DDM function;
- a range of structural, planning and management information issues which limit efficiency and effectiveness and which have already been identified in joint Authority-QDoE reviews;
- communication/liaison limitations and issues, also identified in joint Authority-QDoE reviews;
- a lack of quality assurance of DDM tasks;
- an absence of formal assessments of the risk that the Authority's obligations under the Act will not be met ; and
- no fraud control plan.

4.7 In addition, while the ANAO notes that the QDoE's DDM reports to the Authority scrupulously comply with all the reporting requirements (discussed later), the ANAO finds that there is:

- inadequate efficiency and effectiveness information regarding the implementation of the Authority's zoning plans, permits and management plans being reported to the Authority. The information provided by the Queensland Government resulting from the conduct of field operations is consolidated and devoid of most practical details, including geographical location and time/date information; and

- inadequate information by which the Authority could assess whether or not the Commonwealth is receiving value-for-money from the funds provided to the Queensland Government for the DDM function.

4.8 As a consequence of these DDM findings and as noted earlier, the ANAO is of the opinion that:

- there are significant and unnecessary impediments to the efficiency of the DDM systems and procedures;
- the Authority is not in a position to assess, with any precision, whether or not it is receiving value for money in DDM (i.e. efficiency); and
- the Authority is not in a position to assess (in a risk assessment sense) the extent to which its management instruments, enabled by the Act, are being complied with (i.e. effectiveness).

4.9 The ANAO notes, however, that the Authority and QDoE are both aware of these issues and are jointly taking steps to address these impediments.

4.10 The following sections of this chapter discuss these findings in more detail.

Organisational structure

4.11 Diagram 2 (in Chapter 1) illustrates the Authority's organisational arrangements that existed at the start of the ANAO's audit. Diagram 5 illustrates the resulting organisational structure which exists for DDM.

4.12 The Coastal Management Branch of QDoE has the main responsibility for DDM. This Branch was created in 1992 with the amalgamation of the functions of Marine Parks, Beach Protection and Coastal Processes. The Branch includes staff jointly funded by the Authority/QDoE but also includes State funded staff involved in a variety of coastal management matters such as coastal planning, coastal resource assessment, coastal development management. Diagram 6 illustrates and Table 1 documents QDoE regions.

Table 1

Queensland Department of Environment DDM regional structure and staff numbers

Office	District Offices or Operational Bases	Section(s) of GBR Marine Park	Number of DDM Staff
Brisbane (Head Office)	—	All	6
Cairns	Port Douglas	Far Northern Section and Cairns Section	26
Townsville	Cardwell, Dungeness, Ingham, Magnetic Island, Airlie Beach, Mackay	Central Section	48.6(a)
Rockhampton	Roslyn Bay, Gladstone, Heron Island	Mackay-Capricorn Section	26
Total			106.6(a)

Source: The Authority, December 1997.

(a) The decimal DDM staff numbers reflect part time work.

4.13 The Authority advises that:

In addition to DDM 50:50 funded positions Far Northern has 2 staff paid for out of special purpose funds for Low Isles/Pt Douglas plus 2 Aboriginal trainees paid for by local Community from the Community Employment Development Program and Community Employment Program for Aboriginal people in Natural and Cultural Resource Management (CEPANCRM). Northern has 2 staff paid for by DoE and Central Coast has 2 Aboriginal trainees paid out of CEPANCRM grant.

4.14 To place DDM in perspective in relation to QDoE, the total DDM budget, of some \$8 million, represents less than 10 per cent of the total QDoE operating budget.

4.15 Examination of the extended organisational structure for managing the GBRMP reveals that:

- the Authority's organisational structure is functionally structured and therefore does not mirror the regional structure for field management established by the Queensland Government. The four GBRMP sections are different from the QDoE administrative regions and districts. In addition, the Authority advises that it is moving towards a 'whole of reef' orientation, i.e., no zoning sections as shown in Diagram 1. This feature has a bearing on accountability reporting and is addressed in Chapter 5; and

- at the time of the audit, there were eight management levels between the QDoE marine park and wildlife rangers and the Senior Executive Officer in the Authority responsible for DDM. While there is no ideal number of management levels for marine park field operations, the ANAO considers that in this case eight is surprisingly large and is likely to lead to effectiveness problems and excessive handling of field operations information and inefficiencies due to excessive/duplicated activity such as management planning. The QDoE has advised that this interpretation is incorrect and that there should be no direct functional or reporting link between a Marine Park Ranger and the Senior Executive Officer in the Authority responsible for DDM:

The DDM program is a jointly funded program (QLD \$4m, GBRMPA \$4m). The Agreement sets out the role of DDM and, as noted elsewhere in the report, an annual program is approved containing the requirements of both agencies for implementation by DoE. The program contains work in the GBRMP, in State marine parks and on islands. Once approved, DoE has the responsibility for implementation and GBRMPA a monitoring and reporting role. There is no direct functional link between a Marine Park Ranger and the Senior Executive Officer in GBRMPA and neither should there be. Communication links on program delivery exist at other levels.

4.16 The Authority advises that while the Authority is ultimately responsible for the management of the GBRMP it has effectively left the administration of the GBRMP field staff to QDoE. In this respect, there are only four administrative levels within each QDoE region; each of which, QDoE advises, is effectively autonomous. GBR Marine Park planning, however, is another matter where the Authority's planners, with the Authority's DDM Liaison Unit (which undertakes DDM planning), liaise directly with QDoE Marine Parks Unit (QDoE headquarters) and the QDoE regional managers.

4.17 Further examination by the ANAO also revealed that:

- many of the agencies that can be involved in DDM activities have different regional-district structures. Advice from the Authority indicated that joint surveillance-compliance exercises can be difficult to coordinate when several regions and districts within the following agencies are involved: the Authority, Coastwatch and Australian Maritime Safety Authority (both part of the Commonwealth Department of Transport), the Australian Federal Police, the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, the QDoE, the Queensland Department of Primary Industry and its associated Boating and Fisheries Patrol and the Queensland Police; and

- because of the different organisational structures, regions and zones used by the QDoE and the Authority, the planning, reporting and accounting for both organisations are different and require translation of reports, statistics and accounts across the entities.

A number of internal Authority documents confirm these findings.

4.18 These internal Authority documents also list several areas of concern in DDM, including that:

- a higher percentage of DDM resources is now being spent on office-bound (i.e. salaried) management than in the past. The Authority and QDoE agree that:

Reduced field presence is a major concern for the DDM program. The administrative burden of processing permits, the need to deal with coastal development issues and budget constraints have all led to a decrease in field presence.

Some longer term improvements are expected as a result of the planning and permits review but little improvement is expected in the short term.

The main impact of the reprioritisation which followed the 1996/97 budget has been in the curtailment of project work and a reduction in field presence and surveillance. The Far Northern Region has been unable to fund boat charter for some offshore patrols, weekend surveillance and patrols have been cancelled in the Northern Region and Central Coast Region has been unable to undertake a complete program of dugong surveillance in Shoalwater Bay. In all Regions aerial surveillance programs were reduced by at least 50 percent.

- the QDoE regional offices have tended to develop their own approaches to administration; resulting in different operational procedures, different formats for business plans, budget allocations, assets records and inconsistent approaches to implementing agreed management practices and procedures (e.g., surveillance and enforcement) between regions. QDoE advises, that while these issues are being addressed, budgets are allocated as part of the annual programming and are consistently dealt with across regions; and
- in these documents, phrases like 'lack of feedback', 'low awareness', 'minimal knowledge', 'few opportunities', 'insufficient liaison', 'under utilisation' and 'over utilisation' are used to describe the communication between the Authority and QDoE, between the QDoE regions and between these regions and QDoE headquarters.

4.19

The 1997 draft DDM Liaison Strategy also identifies numerous limitations inherent to DDM which the ANAO agrees need to be appreciated to understand the management issues. These include:

- **physical environment:** the sheer magnitude and length of the area that makes up the GBRMP mean that DDM staff are invariably away from offices, sometimes for many days at a time, conducting 'on-park' management duties;
- **organisational structure:** the decentralised nature of QDoE means that regional and district offices are spread along a coastline of about 2000 km in length;
- **budgets:** the budget for DDM has not increased in recent years and therefore has not matched the escalating growth patterns of users and issues. Few discretionary funds remain in the DDM or the Authority's budget for activities that require extensive face-to-face interactions between Authority and regional personnel;
- **human resources:** many staff positions within both QDoE and the Authority are either filled temporarily or are vacant. The ANAO notes that the QDoE response to the 1996 DDM Review document (provided to the Authority in 1997) states that this situation (in relation to QDoE) has been rectified;
- **workload increase:** the DDM workload of the Authority and QDoE has grown significantly in recent years. The increasing workload has not been matched by an increase in resources to deliver programs. This has led to less time being available for DDM and the Authority staff to communicate. The ANAO notes that neither the Authority or QDoE are in a position to quantify this claim; and
- **DDM accountability:** because of QDoE's regional organisation, internal structures and lines of responsibility are complex and difficult for Authority staff to appreciate. Authority staff are required to liaise with a variety of QDoE sources in relation to the one departmental issue.

Queensland Government - reporting and planning

4.20 The DDM reporting and planning requirements (to which the QDoE is subject) are prescribed in the agreements between the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments, the guidelines to the agreement, and in several Authority decisions. These documents required six-monthly reports (now quarterly), a three year rolling program and an annual program. The planning process is based upon the Queensland Government initially developing a

proposed three year rolling and annual program which is then considered through a joint Authority-QDoE review process before being approved.

4.21 The ANAO examined the DDM reporting and planning documents for the period 1994-95 to 1996-97 and found that:

- in general the documents conformed to the requirements mentioned above; and in instances where this had not occurred there was usually an explanation covering the non-conformance;
- the documents provided an adequate basis upon which DDM operations could be undertaken;
- from the listing of planning activity actually planned for and claimed to have been undertaken, the ANAO generally formed the opinion that considerable resources were allocated to planning and that there was a significant level of liaison between Authority planning staff and the QDoE DDM staff. In addition (also described in Chapter 3), the level of planning appeared to be detailed and the cross referencing to the WHA 25 Year Strategy and the Authority's Corporate Plan indicated that considerable work and thought has been put into the DDM planning documents; and
- from the listing of other activities planned and claimed to have been undertaken (for example, shore, sea and aerial patrols, permit investigations, extension work, compliance and legal work and facility installation) the ANAO is of the opinion that DDM work was very busy.

4.22 The ANAO identified several matters of concern including:

- the documentation illustrates differences in approach between QDoE regions, for example, some regions identified performance indicators, some did not;
- the documentation does not indicate the following division of activity:
 - DDM obligations which must be met ; i.e. the activities for which there is no discretion to undertake;
 - activities which must be undertaken to alleviate areas considered to be at unacceptable risk; e.g. sensitive reef areas or particular wildlife habitats. The identification of such activities would imply that a risk assessment had been carried out;
 - discretionary activity to either address areas considered at a lower level of risk or which presented an opportunity to enhance or develop; and
 - fixed and variable costs related to permanent and casual staff, the servicing and maintenance of buildings, vehicles and vessels;

- lacking this type of categorisation, the ANAO was unable to determine what proportion of the program was discretionary. If the proportion of discretionary activity were high, then it was possible that the compliance part of the DDM program could have cost significantly less. Also, without this type of categorisation the ANAO considers that there can be no basis for the draft 1997 DDM Liaison Strategy claim that *few discretionary funds remain in the DDM or the Authority's budget...*; and
- without this type of categorisation, the planning documents give the impression that the overall annual budget was a 'given' and discretionary activities were included up to the point where all the budget could be expected to be used.

4.23 Based on these findings, the ANAO is of the opinion that the Authority would have been unable to determine if the Commonwealth was obtaining value for money. The QDoE advises that:

It is worth noting that QDoE supplies a substantial level of support to DDM which is not costed to the program Salaries for the Director Coastal Management. Managers of Marine Parks and all Regional Directors and Managers are fully State funded despite these officers spending a substantial portion of their time on DDM. Office, administrative logistical and infrastructure support is also provided and not costed to DDM.

QDoE believes it is providing very good value for money.

4.24 Additional areas of concern to the ANAO are:

- performance measures were not provided in any of the DDM planning documents which were directly linked with the Authority aims and objectives. While Authority decisions required that such measures be included, the planning documents were nevertheless approved by the Authority without effectiveness performance measures;
- there was no reporting which indicated the effectiveness and/or level of compliance with such management instruments, enabled by the Act, as the zoning plans, permit conditions, management plans and best practice guides;
- there was no information reported which indicated:
 - area coverage or lack of coverage in map form. Coverage refers to such things as plans, surveillance, extension activities and the like;
 - areas considered at unacceptable risk or other levels of risk; and
 - areas of opportunity for such activities as additional facilities and educational programs;

- no comparative reporting was provided by which DDM activity over time in the same area, or the same activity in different areas could be assessed;
- while some review activity was identified, there was no indication of regular and formal quality assurance work being undertaken by the Authority to confirm the QDoE's claims in its six-monthly reports;
- there was no information given of 'time mixing' of staff; that is, how many QDoE DDM staff do QDoE specific tasks and Authority specific tasks. This type of information, at least at the district or regional level, rather than individual staff level, would provide a much more accurate measure of the role of the Queensland DDM staff; and
- there was no indication of how other Queensland agencies were 'contracted' by QDoE to undertake DDM activities, where they were located and how quality assurance and accountability were managed.

4.25 The ANAO acknowledges that there are significant difficulties in determining where the Commonwealth's interests end and Queensland's interests begin given that:

- the users of the GBRMP are, in many instances, identical to users of Queensland mainland, coastal, island and marine parks; and
- the World Heritage Area (for which the Authority is the lead management agency) includes the entire GBRMP as well as most Queensland marine parks and estuaries.

4.26 The ANAO considers that categorising DDM activities, including at least an 'essential Commonwealth compliance' category together with a corresponding distinct DDM budget item, would reduce the amount of funds not identified for a particular use and therefore assist the Authority in determining if it were receiving value for money. The QDoE advised that:

although DDM activities were not conveniently categorised in this way, it was of the opinion that the Commonwealth contribution to the DDM function could not support the scope and number of DDM activities undertaken by the QDoE given the QDoE infrastructure that is used to support DDM. Consequently, QDoE believes that the Authority is getting value for its DDM money from the QDoE.

4.27 In general, the ANAO considers that the information supplied by the Queensland Government, while complying with the current requirements, does not facilitate the Authority's efficient and effective planning or permit an assessment of value for money. The Authority advised that it is, in conjunction with QDoE, undertaking the following initiatives:

- *gaining greater control over the DDM planning process by being more involved in the development of the three year rolling and annual programs;*
- *developing DDM programs which are more directly based on the issues facing management of the Great Barrier Reef;*
- *developing DDM programs which derive directly from the long term corporate planning processes of the Authority and QDoE; and*
- *establishing costing and reporting practices which more effectively identify and track DDM effort.*

4.28 QDoE advised that it can accommodate any change in planning and reporting so long as there is certainty as to what the Authority actually wants and a reasonable time period is allowed for significant changes.

4.29 The ANAO considers that this QDoE comment highlights a critical issue, that is, one of clarity and leadership. The Authority and QDoE have undertaken and/or participated in numerous reviews in the 1990s and several initiatives are being taken in the areas of the planning process, the permit system, changing to a program-issue orientation (which includes the accounting system), information technology and a DDM Liaison Strategy. The most recent reviews of DDM have many other findings and recommendations for which a response remains to be developed; including management planning, field presence, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues, asset replacement and revenue earning. The ANAO is of the opinion that a clearer and more direct Authority planning structure, discussed in Chapter 3, needs to be established and reflected right down to the DDM annual programs. In addition, all the DDM reviews need to be rationalised so that it is clear what improvements are to be made, by which agency, and when. Finally, this QDoE comment suggests that it is looking for clear leadership from the Authority.

Critical management controls and tools

4.30 The ANAO examined DDM seeking to find evidence of the use of critical management controls and tools (specifically risk assessments and quality assurance) and generally found an inadequate use of these tools.

Risk assessment

4.31 Not only does good management require formal risk assessments, but Australian Public Service Guidelines put forward a process where formal risk assessment is undertaken before a risk management or fraud control plan (covering both internal and external fraud) is drafted.

4.32 The ANAO found that the Authority has not developed a fraud control plan (including consideration of the misuse of Authority funds as well as breaches of zoning plan provisions, or breaches of permit conditions) in compliance with the Commonwealth Government policy. Nor had it undertaken the required formal risk assessment. In response to the ANAO request for risk assessments, the Authority advised that it is a risk assessment oriented organisation evidenced by:

- the scheduling of the preparation or revision of plans, which are based upon a risk assessment under different titles like the identification of key issues;
- zoning plans, while being compromises in that many interests are involved in deciding the zoning, reflect decisions regarding what areas need protection;
- specific site plans, action plans to combat oil spills, management plans addressing common activities throughout the GBR all reflect a perceived unacceptable risk;
- the level of examination and decisions related to the granting of permits and the imposition of permit conditions are based on risk assessments;
- the monitoring program which plans and implements quite technical and costly scientific monitoring of the GBRMP is directed towards the areas and subjects considered to be at the greatest risk;
- the issues based approach reflected in the 25 Year Strategic Plan, the corporate plans and the DDM programs are based upon risk assessments;
- QDoE in conjunction with its Regional Offices developed a vessel patrol zones based on three categories of risk; and
- the QDoE DDM staff develop their issue based orientation, surveillance-compliance and other work schedules based upon assessments of risk.

4.33 The Authority also advised that it was unaware of any formal risk assessment activity, related to DDM, being undertaken by the Queensland Government.

4.34 Apart from formally developing a fraud control plan, in compliance with the Commonwealth's Government's requirements, the ANAO considers that greater and more formal use of risk assessments could result in useful performance information by which the Authority could assess its responsibilities regarding DDM and report to Parliament. Chapter 5 will discuss this topic in more detail.

Quality assurance

4.35 The ANAO considers that in situations where there is a significant level of delegation (in this case the DDM function to the Queensland Government) there is a corresponding requirement for a significant level of accountability and verification (called quality assurance in this audit). Without some form of formal quality assurance work of DDM activities, the Authority is not in a position to appreciate the accuracy and veracity of DDM reports or methodology used, or to include information from DDM performance reports in the Authority's annual report to Parliament.

4.36 In response to the ANAO request for information regarding quality assurance activity being undertaken by the Authority or the Queensland Government in relation to the DDM annual program, the Authority advised that it undertook no formal quality assurance activity and it was unaware of any such activity being undertaken by the Queensland Government. The Authority also advised, however, that its staff frequently visited QDoE regional and district offices and accompanied QDoE officers on field trips. One of the purposes of these visits and trips is to observe and informally assess the quality of the DDM activities being undertaken. The QDoE advised that they facilitate and encourage Authority officers' direct involvement in DDM activities.

1.

5.

Performance reporting to Parliament and external accountability

Introduction

5.1 The primary means by which the Authority reports its performance to Parliament is through its annual reports. Several documents currently provide guidance to the Authority regarding the reporting of performance; the primary one being the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's, *Revised Annual Report Requirements for Departments*. These requirements also apply to statutory authorities (such as the Authority) which receive a significant proportion of their operating budgets from consolidated revenue. This document encourages agencies to report their program effectiveness and overall agency performance to Parliament.

5.2 New legislation relating to statutory authorities has been passed by the Commonwealth Parliament. This legislation includes the Financial Management and Accountability Act and the Commonwealth Authorities and Corporations Act. This legislation addresses the subject of accountability and reporting to Parliament and encourages agencies to give even more attention to reporting their effectiveness.

5.3 The ANAO examined the Authority's systems and procedures, and the resulting documents related to performance reporting and external accountability, and found that:

- while the Authority reports the details of its work activity to Parliament, it does not report its effectiveness in achieving its legislative objective and/or its goal and associated aims. This is not in accordance with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's reporting guidelines;
- the latest set of Authority performance measures (in the draft 1997-2001 Corporate Plan) is predominantly activity related rather than effectiveness related; and
- substantial information has been, and continues to be, available to the Authority which could be used by it to report whether or not it is achieving its main aims of protecting, conserving and allowing for reasonable use of the GBR Marine Park.

5.4 The ramifications of not reporting effectiveness can be significant, considering that it raises such questions as:

- is the Government and the Parliament being adequately informed? and
- how is the Authority efficiently and effectively managing its legislated responsibilities if appropriate effectiveness measures and assessments are not available to it?

5.5 This chapter discusses these findings in more detail focusing on annual reports, the Authority's current performance indicators and measures, and reporting the level of compliance with regulatory instruments.

Annual reports

5.6 The current annual report instructions, issued by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C), require agencies *to minimise descriptions of activities and outputs in favour of providing information related to impact or effectiveness*.

5.7 The ANAO examined the Authority's annual reports and found that, in general, the Authority reports did not conform to the PM&C guidelines, in that they predominantly reported work activity rather than effectiveness. For example, the first listed aim of the Authority is *to protect the natural qualities of the Great Barrier Reef, while providing for reasonable use of the Reef Region*. Nowhere in any of the Authority's annual reports are there performance outcomes showing the extent to which the natural qualities of the Great Barrier Reef are being protected or reasonable use is being permitted.

5.8 The Authority advised that:

These findings are generally accepted. However, it might be appropriate to acknowledge that in many instances it is very difficult to determine appropriate long term measures of efficiency and effectiveness relating directly to the dilemma inherent in the responsibility to "protect the natural qualities of the Great Barrier Reef, while providing for reasonable use of the Reef Region".

5.9 Following this finding, the ANAO identified and examined the information being acquired by the Authority and the various Queensland agencies involved in DDM. The ANAO formed the opinion that, while the Authority may not be adequately reporting effectiveness, substantial information exists which could be used to report on whether the Authority was protecting and conserving the GBR, and allowing for reasonable use of the GBR.

5.10 This information was found to be generated:

- from the Authority's monitoring program including the papers written for the State of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area Workshop (November 1995);
- during planning projects, such as the review of the Far Northern Section Zoning Plan and the numerous more focused management plans;
- in the course of managing the Authority's permit system and EMC;
- in the course of investigating the effects of proposed major coastal developments;
- from various public involvement programs; and
- from the rangers involved in DDM.

5.11 In the light of the opinion in Paragraph 5.7, the ANAO sought to determine why the Authority was not reporting effectiveness against its object, goal and aims when a substantial data base, upon which the Authority could form an opinion and make assertions, exists. The ANAO found numerous reasons for this non-conformance with the PM&C guidelines:

- there is no clear starting point. There are several higher level strategic planning statements; many of which, while being generally compatible, have slightly different foci. Chapters 1 and 3 provide a description of the legislative objects; the goals and associated aims; the 25 Year Strategic Plan for the GBRWHA; the Three Year Rolling and Annual DDM Program; the compliance obligations; and the potentially large number of Authority policies;
- as a consequence, there are several different types of reporting and these are not all served by a common management information system:
 - the goal and aims are listed at the front of the Authority's annual report but are not specifically addressed or reported against in the document;
 - the 25 Year Strategic Plan contains numerous performance indicators but reporting against these is regarded more as a separate project rather than part of an integrated management information system;
 - the corporate plan (1994-95) contained appropriate performance indicators which were based upon the 25 Year plan. But because the Authority was attempting to move to a different 'issues' orientation, these were not reported against. Later corporate plans also have not been reported against; and

- while the DDM program now has an issues orientation the reporting against these is work activity oriented. The Authority has not asked for reporting which directly addresses its goal and aims or performance indicators in the 25 Year Strategic Plan or its Corporate Plan;
- a number of key planning documents and administrative systems and procedures are under review and remain to be finalised; these include the corporate plan, the DDM planning and reporting requirements and the financial reporting system;
- the Authority's regions and accounting system differ from the administrative regions and accounting systems used by the Queensland Government agencies involved in DDM. This was discussed in Chapter 4;
- there is no senior operational officer/s in the Authority or in the QDoE who has been made responsible for reporting on the effectiveness of the Authority's management instruments, enabled by the Act (zoning plans, management plans, permits), as a whole or by region;
- the Authority has developed extensive systems and procedures for involving, educating and reporting to its clients - the very existence of which could have led to the Authority placing less emphasis on annual reporting to Parliament. The systems and procedures include:
 - public involvement programs for the development and review of zoning and other plans;
 - better practice guides;
 - scientific papers and texts;
 - information newsletters, pamphlets and videos; and
 - maintenance of a high profile in numerous workshops, committees, councils and meetings; and
- the Authority reports to and briefs its Minister and the Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Council. The latter includes two Commonwealth Government Ministers (Ministers for the Environment, Sport and Territories, and for Tourism). This reporting, quite obviously, provides a certain level of accountability to Parliament.

5.12 These findings as to the possible causes of the Authority not reporting its effectiveness adequately, draw upon the findings in Chapters 3 and 4 dealing with planning and DDM systems and procedures. They lead to the ANAO conclusion that while the Authority has clearly gone to some length to establish its goals, objectives and strategies, the resulting plans and planning

structure (from the legislation right through to DDM operational plans) do not facilitate effectiveness reporting for accountability purposes.

The Authority's performance indicators and measures

5.13 The ANAO asked the Authority whether it is in a position to form an opinion as to whether it is effective in protecting and conserving and allowing for reasonable use of the GBRMP. From one point of view, it could be argued that attempting to form such an opinion is not possible due to the lack of a base line inventory of the condition of the GBR Region before the Authority was established. If this argument were accepted, then the Commonwealth Government would have an agency (funded substantially from the Commonwealth Budget) which could not justify its existence in terms of its effectiveness in achieving its legislated objects. This is clearly not realistic or acceptable.

5.14 ANAO examined the Authority's systems and procedures in order to determine if the question of whether or not the Authority was effective was being asked, answered and acted upon. The ANAO concluded that the answer primarily lay in the Authority's risk assessment orientation. As outlined in the risk assessment section of Chapter 4, the Authority is clearly a risk assessment oriented manager and regulator of the GBRMP, and is therefore in a position to form an opinion, on at least parts of the GBRMP, as to whether the Authority is effective or not. Therefore, the ANAO considers that on a day-to-day basis the Authority and its staff, including the Queensland Government DDM staff, are making decisions about what parts of the GBRMP are at risk, the level of risk and the necessity for action. Such decisions directly reflect on:

- whether the GBRMP or parts thereof are protected and conserved or whether reasonable use is being allowed; and
- the effectiveness of the Authority's management instruments, enabled by the Act (zoning plans, permits, management plans), and its best practice guides.

5.15 This type of information can be summarised as assessed risk to the GBRMP (or parts thereof) of not being protected or conserved, and the assessed effectiveness of management instruments, enabled by the Act, and best practice guides against goals and objectives.

5.16 The ANAO is of the opinion that it is this type of information which should be used by the Authority to assess and report its effectiveness. The reporting of activity to identify and address perceived risks, while relevant in that it indicates action taken by the Authority, should be regarded as a means to an end and not the ideal focus of a report to Parliament.

5.17 The ANAO examined the WHA 25 Year Strategic Plan, the various versions of the Authority's corporate plan and the DDM Annual Program dealing with the performance indicators and measures for the 1994-95 and the 1995-96 reporting period.

The WHA 25 Year Strategic Plan

5.18 This plan has both a 25 year vision and a set of five year objectives, strategies and performance indicators - all of which have been formally adopted by the Authority. The performance indicators are, appropriately, effectiveness and efficiency oriented and would be adequate if used by the Authority to report against. The ANAO found that the five year performance indicators have not been oriented to annual reporting for accountability purposes and have not been reported against in the annual report. The Authority advised that:

As stated in the Strategic Plan "This plan is a statement of what the participating organisations want the future of the Area to be (a vision) and how this can be achieved (objectives and strategies). It provides direction and guidance for those many organisations, agencies and individuals whose actions will determine whether the vision is reached. This includes users, the general community, the educators, the researchers, people traditionally affiliated with the Area and the decision makers." Therefore whilst formally adopted by the Authority the 25 Year Strategic Plan is essentially a guide for the Authority.

Corporate plans

5.19 The report *Managing Multiple Use in the Coastal Zone - A Review of the Authority* (tabled in Parliament on 17 December 1993) found that the Authority's 1991 Corporate Plan had the following limitations:

- the program structure was designed around the administrative structure of the Authority rather than being directed at outcomes and emphasising what it was that the Authority was seeking to achieve for its stakeholders and customers;
- targets were neither precise enough nor clearly achievable;
- program evaluation and performance measurement were not clearly integrated into the document; and
- priorities were not clearly stated to assist in the budget allocation of human and financial resources.

5.20 The ANAO found that the Authority's 1995-2000 Corporate Plan included a wide range of performance indicators for both the five-year and annual objectives; all within a program and issue orientation. However, the clear identification of priorities and related resource implications are excluded.

While the ANAO considers that the Authority's 1995-2000 Corporate Plan contains several meaningful performance indicators, the ANAO found that the annual performance indicators were not reported internally or in the 1995-96 Annual Report.

5.21 The targets and action statements incorporated in the draft 1997-2001 Corporate Plan are predominantly activity rather than effectiveness oriented.

5.22 Regarding these performance indicators and measures findings, the Authority advised that

These findings are generally accepted. Through the passage of time the Corporate Plan of the Authority has undergone significant change in structure and presentation. It is acknowledged that the present Corporate Plan is not aligned directly with the 25 Year Strategic Plan or the five year objectives, strategies and performance indicators set out therein. However, these issues are being seriously addressed during a period of considerable change in the Authority. Following the fundamental changes in the Corporate Plan which has moved to a Critical Issues program approach, the need to "align" the planning, performance and reporting processes is strongly acknowledged. Equally the need to report to stake-holders of the 25 Year Strategic Plan is acknowledged.

Administrative jurisdiction

5.23 The Act states that the Authority is responsible for the management of the marine park. Through several interviews during the course of the audit, the ANAO identified that other agencies had management responsibilities in GBRMP. The Authority's annual reports, however, did not clearly indicate any such arrangements. The Authority advised that:

It is a requirement of the Act (which is also clearly reflected in one of the Authority's aims) "To achieve integrated management of the Great Barrier Reef through active leadership and through constantly seeking improvements in coordinated management."

5.24 As a consequence, the ANAO sought to answer the question: if the provisions and requirements of the zoning plans, permit conditions, management plans and regulations (i.e. the instruments of the Authority) were all complied with, would the reef be protected, conserved, and would reasonable use be occurring?

5.25 Authority officers of the Education Branch advised that this would be so were there also compliance with the Authority's better practice guides. The Authority's officers of the Planning Branch advised that this would be so were there compliance with all the other pieces of legislation and related agencies which controlled human activity in the reef area.

5.26

Further examination of this administrative jurisdictional issue reveals that in the GBRMP region:

- the Queensland Government and the Australian Fisheries Management Authority separately have direct responsibility for the regulation of commercial fishing activities for fisheries specified in the Offshore Constitutional Settlement, so long as these activities occur in compliance with the various GBRMP zoning plans and other instruments;
- the Australian Maritime Safety Authority has direct responsibility for such areas as navigation and marine rescue in Commonwealth waters; and
- the Department of Defence has direct responsibility for certain activities within specified areas including gunnery ranges.

5.27 The Authority's annual reports do not report on fishing or navigation activity, in relation to the Authority's achievement or otherwise of its object, goal or aims; nor do its annual reports refer to reporting by other agencies where this information can be easily obtained.

Reporting level of compliance with regulatory instruments

5.28 As described in Chapter 4, the Authority has and uses a wide range of regulatory instruments to achieve its legislative responsibilities. In addition, the Authority has produced several best practice guides. The ANAO examined the Authority's latest annual report and found little evidence of reporting of the level of compliance with regulatory instruments (such as zoning plans, management plans, or permit conditions) or best practice guides.

5.29 The Authority's 1995-96 Annual Report included an abundance of information regarding the development (meetings and surveys) and approval of regulatory instruments and the best practice guides, but little information about whether the zoning and management plans were being complied with; whether reef users were obeying the provisions of their permits; or whether tourists were observing the best practice guides.

5.30 Sources of this sort of compliance information include the Queensland Government, which undertakes the day-to-day management of the GBRMP (see Chapter 4), and some sections of the Authority which deal with reef users on a day-to-day basis in the areas of permits, environmental impact assessment of projects and with the processing of the EMC received from commercial tourist operators (see Chapter 1).

5.31

The Authority is also under an obligation to make available fraud statistics to the Commonwealth Law Enforcement Board. This would include breaches of permit conditions, breaches of the zoning plans (i.e., conducting an activity not permitted under a zoning plan), This type of data is compliance information. The ANAO examined the Authority's related systems and procedures and found that while a fraud control plan did not exist (Chapter 4) a database (developed by the QDoE) was accessible which provided details of legal action taken using the Act.

Canberra ACT
23 February 1998

P. J. Barrett
Auditor-General

Part Three

Appendices

Appendix 1

Introduction to the Great Barrier Reef

Introduction

The ANAO considers that any examination of the Authority's systems and procedures related to the management of such a region requires an appreciation of the physical dimensions and activities occurring within the region. The Authority publishes numerous documents about the GBR and its management, which are recommended reading. However, this chapter provides a brief description of the Great Barrier Reef to place this audit in context. The material contained in this chapter has been drawn from:

- the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's annual reports;
- the material used in the Authority's May 1996 staff training course;
- several papers included in the document *State of The Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area Workshop*, November 1995 including papers by Z Dinesen and J Oliver, J Robertson, D Benzaken, G Smith, R Williams; and
- *Managing for Ecologically Sustainable Tourism use of the GBR WHA*, M.Vanderzee, The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, June 1996.

The Great Barrier Reef is a significant economic region which is subject to a constant increase in users undertaking a wide range of activities. The value of direct economic activity in the area is estimated at more than one billion dollars annually through commercial tourism, commercial fishing and recreational fishing and boating. The indirect economic value has been estimated to be an additional one billion dollars through the transport, retail and food industries.

Tourism is the major and most rapidly growing economic activity in the region. Fishing, shipping, ports and associated activities in the region are also economically important.. The other major commercial activity is mariculture. Major recreational activities are fishing, diving, coral viewing and island camping. Adjacent to the region, cane growing, grazing and horticulture are the major land-based activities.

The dimensions

The GBR Region's total area is approximately 349 000 square kilometres, of which about 344 000 square kilometres is contained within the GBR Marine Park (GBRMP) boundaries (illustrated in Diagram A). The reef extends for more than 2 000 kilometres from just south of the Tropic of Capricorn northwards into the Torres Strait.

An area within the GBR Region (which is defined in the Act) becomes a part of the GBRMP when it is subject to a declaration by the Governor-General that the area is to constitute part of the GBRMP pursuant to s.31 of the Act. The declaration is then gazetted. The only parts of the GBR Region not declared as being part of the GBRMP are inshore areas which are scattered along the Queensland coastline.

For administrative convenience and based upon the history of declaration, the GBRMP is divided into several sections. These sections currently are:

- Far Northern Section (about 83 000 square kilometres);
- Cairns Section (about 35 000 square kilometres);
- Central Section (about 77 000 square kilometres); and
- Mackay/Capricorn Section (about 149 000 square kilometres).
- The GBRMP has:
- 2 900 reefs, all of which have been allocated reference numbers for management purposes;
- 618 continental islands, 300 cays, and 44 wooded islands; and
- the major portion of the total area (called the GBR lagoon) being the waters inshore of the outer reef.

For the purposes of comparison the GBRMP's area is:

- about 1.4 times larger than the United Kingdom;
- about 1.5 times larger than Victoria; and
- about 40 per cent of the size of NSW.

Boundaries

The jurisdictional boundaries influencing the GBRMP are numerous and include:

- high water mark;
- low water mark (the starting line of Commonwealth jurisdiction);
- the baseline (a legally established boundary based upon the low water mark or an outer sea boundary around enclosed waters);
- the three nautical mile line (State waters [for certain purposes] measured from the baseline);
- the twelve nautical mile line (territorial sea line measured from the baseline);
- the 200 nautical mile line delineating Australia's area of economic interest;
- the GBR region (defined in the GBRMP Act). Diagram B illustrates these boundaries;
- the GBRMP (the boundaries having been subject to formal declaration);
- Queensland marine parks (these are established by the Queensland Department of Environment and often have been defined in such a way that they overlap the GBRMP);
- Queensland crown land in the form of islands in the GBRMP which include national parks; and

- numerous administrative and other boundaries including local government areas, QDoE districts, Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol (QB&FP) districts, Queensland Police districts, navigation lanes, and commercial fisheries.

The Authority advises that most of these boundaries are determined by:

- the Commonwealth's power under the Constitution;
- the boundaries of the States;
- the Commonwealth's Seas and Submerged Lands Act;
- the High Court decision in *NSW vs the Commonwealth* (Seas and Submerged Lands Act);
- the Offshore Constitutional Settlement between the Commonwealth and the States and Northern Territory (these have recently been renegotiated);
- the Commonwealth's Coastal Waters (States Titles) Act;
- Baselines developed for territorial sea (Inter-nation) used in the Offshore Constitutional Settlement;
- title to seabed given by the Commonwealth to the Australian States (between the Baseline and three nautical miles seaward);
- the Great Barrier Reef in the register of the World Heritage sites; and
- Proclamations under the GBRMP Act.

The Authority advises that there is considerable potential for legal disputes regarding jurisdiction between the State of Queensland and the Commonwealth should an issue arise in 'inshore' waters. The Authority also advises that the majority of disputes (generated by non-government interests) are avoided by arranging overlapping and harmonised marine zoning and other plans. This means that for whatever jurisdictional issue, similar planning regimes are in place. This requires a significant level of accord between the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments.

The management of the GBRMP is based upon zoning plans which are the spatial partitioning and categorisation of the GBRMP. This results in another set of boundaries. Each category or zone permits or disallows several activities. The activities include a general use zone permitting a range of recreational and commercial activities, and a national park zone which disallows and restricts many recreational and commercial activities. Diagram C illustrates this type of zoning for the Green Island area offshore from Cairns.

Use

The GBR Region has four main categories of direct users:

- the commercial tourist;
- the commercial fishing industry;

- the recreational boating and fishing users mainly from the residential population along the coast; and
- the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

The tourist industry and the recreational boating and fishing industries are associated with strong growth and changes in use patterns.

Tourism

Reef tourism covers a range of activities and results in a number of different types of effects; these are illustrated in Table A;

Table A
Tourism activities and effects

Typical tourism activities occurring on/in the GBR Region <ul style="list-style-type: none">• snorkelling;• SCUBA diving;• reef walking;• scenic cruises and flights;• viewing marine life from glass bottom boats, semi-submersibles, underwater observatories;• whale watching;• sailing and windsurfing;• motorised water-sports such as water skiing and paraflaying;• other activities such as boom-netting and sausage-riding; and• visits to adjacent islands for viewing wildlife or for recreation.
Different types of tourism effects <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ecological - effects on features and processes of the natural environment (primarily biophysical). Actual and potential effects relate to use of vessels and structures, and direct effects of visitors, and include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- anchor damage to coral from vessels;- localised damage to coral from intensive diving, snorkelling and reef walking;- effects of fixed and moored structures on corals, fish communities;- effects of recreational fishing and collecting;- effects of fish feeding on fish communities;- reduced water quality and aesthetic effects from waste discharge and littering by vessels;- interference with nesting seabirds and turtles on coral cays which are significant rookeries;- damage to littoral vegetation on islands; Social and cultural effects;• social - particularly in relation to amenity or historical use of other user groups; and• cultural - issues affecting cultural values associated with the Great Barrier Reef region.

Tourism is the principal and most rapidly growing industry in the GBR Region, and its management is a major task for the Authority and other agencies, such as the QDoE. The Authority is not responsible for managing commercial aspects of the tourism industry outside the GBR Region, but any management of the GBRMP may have economic implications for industry and other stake-holders and any commercial activity in the GBR Region requires a permit from the Authority. Permits will be discussed in Chapter 2.

Tourism in the GBR Region is worth approximately \$1 billion per annum. In the last ten years there has been a steady increase, by an order of magnitude, in the number of permitted tourist operations in the GBRMP. Most tourist operations visiting the GBRMP also visit or pass through Queensland tidal lands and waters (including Queensland Marine Parks) and islands. At this stage, the most comprehensive information on tourism use of the Great Barrier Reef comes from GBRMP logbook data returns submitted by permittees in connection with the EMC.

Although GBRMP tourist program permits are now generally issued for six year periods, the number of permits issued annually continues to rise. Another indicator of tourism growth is the four fold increase in the number of permitted tourist vessels within the GBRMP over the last decade. A total of 864 tourist program permits allowed for the carriage of up to ten million tourists in 1994-95, although much of this permitted capacity is, at present, unused. These operations are primarily vessel-based and include:

- 751 separate tourism operators;
- 1 348 tourist vessels;
- 36 aircraft operations;
- 23 structures and facilities such as pontoons; and
- miscellaneous activities such as glass-bottom boats, semi-submersibles and kayaks.

Marine Park tourist operations may be broadly divided into two categories; these are site specific operations running to particular sites usually with moorings or a tourist pontoon installed, and roving operations which are permitted to visit a wide range of locations throughout much of the Marine Park.

Most of the tourism activity in the Great Barrier Reef is concentrated in two areas - Cairns (north Queensland) and the Whitsunday Islands (north of Mackay) - which represent less than 5 per cent of the total area of the GBRMP. According to log book returns from operators, almost half (47 per cent) of permitted vessels did not operate at all in 1994-95. However, some 75 per cent of tourists are carried by only a handful of large operators generally running with vessels filled to near capacity. 'Latent' or unused permit capacity has been identified as a significant potential problem inherent in the current permitting arrangements for tourism. This is a genuine management concern to the Authority given that permits are now transferable, that most tourism activities are focused in prime, accessible areas, and that permit assessment procedures may not take adequate account of the cumulative effects of use.

Advances in vessel design and technology mean that reefs that were once inaccessible because of their distance from the mainland are now visited on a day trip basis by vessels carrying hundreds of passengers. In 1985 boats were capable of travelling at ten knots and could reach 20 nautical miles in two hours, in 1990 they could travel 50 nautical miles at 25 knots and in 1995 they could travel to 70 nautical miles at 35 knots. It is projected that in 2001 they will be able to travel to 100 nautical miles at 50 knots. What this means is that the extent of the GBR Region that has become accessible over the period to the day trip tourist industry has increased from 4 per cent to a projected 81 per cent. This is illustrated in Diagram D.

The Authority considers that the greatest threat to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and World Heritage Area the use and development of adjacent mainland areas. Coastal development, loss of mangroves and seagrass areas, and increasing effluent associated with urban expansion including tourism infrastructure, may result in equal or greater damage to the Great Barrier Reef area than the effects of tourism infrastructure and activities located within the Marine Park.

Commercial fishing

Commercial fishing is the major extractive activity in the GBR Region. The commercial fishery consists of about 3 700 professional fishers and 1 400 vessels involved in a wide range of activities, including about 800 prawn trawlers, 200-300 reef line fishing operations and about 300 inshore (net and crab) operations. The direct economic value of the commercial fishery in the Great Barrier Reef region is in the order of \$150 to \$200 million annually.

Under the Offshore Constitutional Settlement (OCS) between the Australian States and the Australian Government, the management of fisheries within GBRMP is the responsibility of the Queensland Government through the Queensland Fisheries Management Authority and the Queensland Department of Primary Industry. The latter includes the Queensland Boating and Fishing Patrol. The Authority, however, does have control over fishing by virtue of the zoning plans which restrict certain fishing activities in specific areas.

The three major fisheries are:

- trawl: this occurs predominantly within the GBR lagoon, the area between the Queensland coastline and the western margin of the mid-shelf reef complex. The fishery has two main components: the inshore and offshore prawn fisheries. Moreton Bay Bugs also make up valuable by-catch in some areas. Under the GBRMP zoning plan the area of the GBR lagoon that is protected from trawling is approximately 10 per cent of which 40 per cent is in the Far Northern Section of the GBRMP. Apart from near-shore areas, much of the GBR lagoon south of Princess Charlotte Bay is not protected from trawling;
- reef fish line: the major target species is coral trout. Under the GBRMP zoning plan no distinction is made between commercial and recreational operations. The reef area that is protected is 12 per cent of the total reef area, yet approximately 65 per cent of this protected area is in the Far Northern Section of the GBRMP, leaving little protection in the other sections. Some reefs have been nominated as replenishment areas, which enables suspected over-fished reefs to be closed for several years until fish stocks recover; and
- inshore gill net: two types of netting are associated with this fishery: beach seining and mesh netting (targeting mullet, whiting, flathead, bream and tailor) and set net fisheries (targeting fish which do not travel so much in schools such as barramundi, salmon and grunter). Both components of the fishery are generally undertaken in coastal rivers and creeks, estuaries and foreshores extending to less than 0.5 km from low water mark which are areas generally outside the GBRMP.

The Authority considers that the principal commercial fisheries issues include:

- declining catch or a decreased average size of fish caught in some areas;
- increased fishing effort or a large excessive capacity in the fishery (termed 'latent effort');
- potential environmental effects of fishing activities on incidentally caught species some of which are endangered, such as turtle and dugong;
- the potential for changing bio-diversity;
- the effects of fishing on the marine habitat; and
- conflicts with recreational fishery and indigenous use and rights to the resource; and issues associated with compliance of fisheries and marine park management.

Recreational boating and fishing

Urban development and residential population have increased dramatically in the catchment of the GBR Region in response to the increasing tourism use in North Queensland. Associated with this is a proportional increase in recreational fishing and boating use, and this is expected to continue.

The Authority manages recreational fishing in a broad sense through the zoning plans. In addition, the general recreational user is managed through best practice guides, management plans and DDM activities (e.g. boat patrols). It should be noted, however, that the majority of recreational fishing is conducted in inshore waters (i.e. outside the GBRMP but often within Queensland marine parks).

Private boat registrations have increased from 37 000 in 1986 to 50 300 in 1995. More importantly, the number of vessels in the 8-15 metre category, which are the main users of the reef and offshore areas have increased by 68 per cent over the same period. Private boat users are increasingly coming into conflict with commercial users and are pressing for management solutions to use issues. At the same time commercial operators are pressing for more regulation and control of private users.

Diagram E illustrates the density of privately registered boats (over 5 metres) in Queensland.

Traditional

Coastal Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders have significant cultural, historical and economic associations and interests in the GBR Region. 1991 Australian Bureau of Statistics data and estimates based on 1994 community census counts indicate that approximately 12 000 Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders live in major cities and towns bordering the GBR Region and approximately a further 11 000 live in relatively small Cape York Peninsula communities.

Several Aboriginal language groups are traditionally associated with coastal areas adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef. Language groups may comprise several clans with recognised clan estates, including both land and sea.

Places of cultural importance to Aboriginal people, within and adjacent to the Marine Park, include ceremonial sites, burial grounds, and story places. These have special significance for Aboriginal people, and codes of behaviour must be observed to maintain harmonious relationships between people and country.

Coastal Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders hunt, fish and forage widely over estuarine and marine areas for subsistence living. Green turtle and dugong are important species for dietary and spiritual purposes. Hunting and fishing takes place using traditional and improved technologies including motorised boats and fishing tackle.

Torres Strait Islander commercial fishers access the waters of the Far Northern Section to harvest trochus shell, beche-de-mer, crayfish and pearl shell. The Islanders also hunt traditionally, occasionally making long sea journeys to hunt turtle or collect eggs.

Under the existing zoning pPlan, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can, with permission from the managing agencies, traditionally hunt, fish and gather in all zones except 'Preservation Zones', and areas set aside for replenishment, seasonal closure or reef research. However, section 211 of the Commonwealth Native Title Act waives the permit requirement where people are hunting and collecting in areas successfully claimed for Native Title. Where Native Title is successfully claimed, the Authority hopes there will be Aboriginal support for continuing a permit system, in order to help manage marine resources effectively. There are seven native title claims over areas of the Cairns and Far Northern Sections of the Marine Park. These claims are in various stages of mediation through the National Native Title Tribunal.

Steps taken with regards to Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders interests and involvement in management of the Authority include:

- an Aboriginal person was appointed to the Great Barrier Reef Consultative Committee (1988);
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interests were acknowledged in a special section of the 25 Year Strategic Plan for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWhA). The GBRWhA was explained in Chapter 2;

- a community ranger program was developed and funded jointly with the Australian Nature Conservation Agency for three years (1992);
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities were involved in the preparation of a dugong and turtle strategy and permit arrangements for management of traditional hunting by Councils of Elders;
- an employment strategy was developed and an Aboriginal liaison staff member was appointed (1992);
- assessment criteria for permit applications under zoning provisions in the Cairns, Central and Mackay Capricorn Sections were changed in April 1992 to read 'the need to protect the cultural and heritage values held in relation to the Marine Park by traditional inhabitants and other people' (Sub-regulation I 3AC(4)(b));
- the review of the Far Northern Section included negotiation of appropriate consultation mechanisms with relevant communities including a proposal for establishing a specialist indigenous advisory group; and
- special attention is given to the implications of commitments of the 25 Year Strategic Plan at a corporate level.

Appendix 2

Independent Review 1996-97 of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority terms of reference

The terms of reference of this review were as follows:

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority was established by the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* and is the Commonwealth Government's principal adviser on the care and development of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Management of the Park is effected conjointly with Queensland under formal day-to-day management arrangements.

The Marine Park is both a major world heritage site, and an asset for industries, particularly tourism. The Government has decided that the tourist users of the Park should, as is the case in other Commonwealth and State Parks, pay a more significant contribution to the costs of maintaining the conservation values of the Park. Against this background the Government wishes to ensure that the contributions are wisely and efficiently spent.

The Government asks you to examine and report, by the second week in March 1997, on:

1. the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority in meeting its responsibilities to protect and conserve the values of the marine park whilst allowing multiple use of the park;
2. the management of these commercial uses of the park, particularly tourism, in a way that is consistent with the protection of these values and, in this regard, the appropriateness of the relative allocation of resources to management (including planning policies, zoning and plans of management), ranger services (including surveillance and enforcement), research and public awareness activities;
3. the services provided by the Queensland Government under the Day-to-Day Management arrangements specified in the Basis of Agreement, Main Agreement and Deed of Agreement signed by parties on 10 May 1988, and the extent to which those agreements and arrangements provide the basis for ensuring these services are cost effective, directed to high priority activities and specified in a manner which is conducive to accountability for performance by both parties;
4. the efficiency from an industry viewpoint and effectiveness from a conservation viewpoint of permitting and licensing systems managed by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, including their relationship with assessments and approvals required from the Queensland Government; and
5. the Great Barrier Reef Aquarium and associated public education activities, their contribution to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's mission, and any means by which the Authority's mission in these fields could be met in a more cost effective way.

The report has been released but, as at January 1998, the Government has not yet responded. The ANAO, however, has taken the report into consideration in drafting this audit report. Information regarding the commissioned report is available from the Authority.

Appendix 3

The Authority's goal and aims

These are endorsed by the Authority and are in addition to the objectives listed in the Act.

Goal: It is the Authority's goal to provide for the protection, wise use, understanding and enjoyment of the Great Barrier Reef in perpetuity through the care and development of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

Aims: The aims are subordinate to the primary goal and must be read in conjunction with it and with each other.

- To protect the natural qualities of the Great Barrier Reef, while providing for reasonable use of the Reef Region.
- To involve the community meaningfully in the care and development of the Marine Park.
- To achieve competence and fairness in the care and development of the Marine Park through the conduct of research, and the deliberate acquisition, use and dissemination of relevant information from research and other sources.
- To provide for economic development consistent with meeting the goal and other aims of the Authority.
- To achieve integrated management of the Great Barrier Reef through active leadership and through constantly seeking improvements in coordinated management.
- To achieve management of the Marine Park primarily through the community's commitment to the protection of the Great Barrier Reef and its understanding and acceptance of the provisions of zoning, regulations and management practices.
- To provide recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional affiliations and rights in management of the Marine Park.
- To minimise costs of caring for and developing the Marine Park consistent with meeting the goal and other aims of the Authority.
- To minimise regulation of, and interference in, human activities, consistent with meeting the goal and other aims of the Authority.
- To achieve its goal and other aims by employing people of high calibre, assisting them to reach their full potential, providing a rewarding, useful and caring work environment, and encouraging them to pursue relevant training and development opportunities.
- To make the Authority's expertise available nationally and internationally.
- To adapt actively the Marine Park and the operations of the Authority to changing circumstances.

Appendix 4

Action following the 1992-93 review

In 1992-93, as part of the former Portfolio of the Arts, Sport, Tourism and Territories Portfolio Evaluation Plan, a consultant was commissioned to review the role, operations and management program of the Authority. The resulting report *Managing Multiple Use in the Coastal Zone - A Review of the Authority* was tabled in Parliament on 17 December 1993. While there has been no response from the Government to the report, there has been a response by the Authority and the Department of the Environment, Sport and Territories (DEST). Several changes have been made as a result. These include:

- a review of the regulations (specifically the permit system) to provide (among other things) a greater level of consistency and efficiency. Permits are required for specified activities in particular zones of the GBR Marine Park (GBRMP). This subject will be described in more detail in Chapter 2;
- more emphasis on socio-economic research including the recreational and cultural significance of the GBR Region;
- promotion of the Authority's expertise, on a consultancy basis, to other Commonwealth agencies and to State and Territory authorities;
- orienting the Authority's corporate plans to issues and programs with identifiable targets and performance indicators;
- using the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area 25 Year Strategic Plan (which was being developed at the time of the review, 1992-93) to provide the broad strategic framework on which the future operations of the Authority should be conducted;
- maintenance of the Canberra based liaison unit;
- moving the location of the Authority's Chief Executive Officer from Canberra to Townsville;
- restructuring of the Authority's organisational arrangements and reporting lines;
- development of a viable External Advisory Service;
- permitting short term secondments between the Authority and QDoE;
- setting targets for self-generated revenue;
- expanding the internal audit process to include performance audits as well as financial audits;
- placing emphasis on the development of management plans and area statements;
- focusing DDM programs more on specific outputs and products and giving greater attention to effective liaison between QDoE and Authority staff, and to the training and skill of DDM staff;
- substantial investment in establishing communication with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities including the development of a program aimed at training and recruiting staff for DDM; and
- working with other coastal management agencies to develop joint and coordinated planning and management plans.

Appendix 5

DDM and related activities

The following is a listing of DDM activities undertaken by QDoE staff for marine parks and island national parks:

Administrative support and program/project coordination

- program coordination;
 - 3 years;
 - annual programs;
 - contribute to business plans/corporate plans/strategic plans;
- project management and supervision (incl. external projects with QDoE involvement);
- budgets and financial management;
- reporting/external relationships;
 - forward alerts;
 - six month and annual reports;
- personnel recruiting and management;
- plant and equipment purchasing and management;
- transport management;
 - vessels;
 - vehicles;
- training/staff development;

User liaison and management;

- user information and orientation;
 - signs ;
 - information outlets/display boards;
 - information/orientation brochures; park guides;
 - counter and phone inquires;
- interpretation and education;
- interpretive brochures;
 - talks (educational and interpretive);
 - audio visuals;
 - guided walks, activities etc.;

- liaison with educational institutions;
 - visitor centre displays;
- extension and liaison;
 - liaison with commercial users;
 - training of tourist operators' staff;
 - public participation for planning;
 - liaison with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- permits;
 - permit assessments (MP permits and commercial activity permits);
 - permit issue (relates to issue of all types of permits including camping permits);
 - permit compliance monitoring;
 - permit policy;
 - site supervision for major development projects);
 - management of traditional hunting (dugong/turtle);
- surveillance and patrols;
 - aerial surveillance;
 - surface (vessel) patrols;
 - emergency response;
- law enforcement;
 - infringement detection/investigation;
 - interviews;
 - collection/storage of evidence;
 - infringement reports;
 - court appearances/follow-up;

Resource protection and management;

- natural resource management;
 - site hardening;
 - site stabilisation/rehabilitation;
 - fire management (for hazard reduction or habitat manipulation);
 - implementation of special management areas: e.g. replenishment areas, seasonal closure areas;

- special species management;
 - problem species management e.g. cats, kangaroos at resorts;
 - endangered species management e.g. whales, dugong (inc. stranding);
 - commercial species management e.g. coral trout counts;
- feral animal control e.g. trapping, shooting, poisoning;
- weed control/revegetation;
- natural resource research and monitoring;
 - natural resource surveys e.g. vegetation mapping, photo monitoring;
 - species monitoring e.g. seabirds, Torres imperial pigeons, reef fish;
 - key site monitoring;
- cultural resource management;
 - cultural resource surveys;
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural resources conservation/preservation;
 - maritime relics (conservation/preservation) e.g. lighthouse, grave sites;
 - historic shipwrecks conservation;
- user management research and monitoring;
 - systematic recording;
 - user surveys;
 - attitude surveys;

Planning and information management;

- management information systems;
 - maintain files;
 - develop and maintain data bases/inventories: natural resources, cultural resources, recreational resources/user inventory;
 - procure and use maps, air photos, library references, etc.;
- planning;
 - management planning (incl. complementary MP management plans);
 - resource and user management strategies e.g. Cairns offshore strategy;
 - statements of interim management intent and conservation plans (legislative plans for geographical areas, biological resources);
 - site, mooring and signage plans;
 - zoning;

- action plans, e.g. interpretive plans, fire management plans;
- contingency planning, e.g. oil spills, wrecks, wildfire control;
- public participation (formal and informal);
- planning of infrastructure and staffing needs for maritime estate management;
- review of legislation (State and Commonwealth);

Infrastructure development and maintenance;

- visitor infrastructure development;
 - walking tracks/underwater trails;
 - signs ;
 - public facilities e.g. toilets/camp ground/picnic areas;
 - information centres / interpretive centres;
 - moorings - installation and maintenance;
 - zone demarcation;
- visitor infrastructure maintenance and servicing (all the visitor infrastructure listed above requires maintenance and periodic updating);
- departmental infrastructure development (construction, leasing);
 - offices;
 - barracks/staff accommodation;
 - workshops;
 - moorings/jetties;
 - workshops/storage sheds; and
- departmental infrastructure maintenance.

Appendix 6

Management instruments, enabled by the Act, and other GBR management tools

The strategic planning documents focused on the best way that the Authority can achieve its legislated object through its management instruments enabled by the Act and other powers and duties. Examination of the Authority's GBRMP management activities shows that it seeks to achieve its legislated objective in four main ways:

- development and implementation of management instruments enabled by the Act. These includes zoning plans, management plans and the associated permit system for specific activities in areas delineated in these plans;
- educating the public through extensive public involvement programs, the promulgation of better practice guides and other educational material;
- through DDM, educating users of the GBRMP and undertaking surveillance-compliance activities; and
- influencing decisions taken by other Commonwealth and State agencies if they are considered to affect the GBRMP. The Act specifically requires the Authority to do this.

Only the management instruments enabled by the Act will be discussed in some detail in this report because the compliance with, and effectiveness of, these instruments has a direct bearing on the effectiveness of the Authority in achieving its object, goal and aims and associated reporting.

Tables A and B list the current zoning and management plans. See Appendix 7 for more details.

Table A
GBRMP section declarations, proclamations and zoning plans

Section	Declaration Date	Proclamation: Date Gazetted	Date Of Zoning Plan
1. Far Northern	25 8.83	31 8.83	1.2.86
2. Cairns	29.8.89	13.9.89	3.4.92
3. Central	11.10.84	15.10.84	1.10.87
4. Mackay/ Capricorn	13.9.87	24.9.87	1.8.88

Note: A number of these zoning plans are amalgamations of eight now defunct zoning plans proclaimed between 1979 and 1984.

Table B
Current GBRMP management plans

Michaelmas Management Plan Lady Musgrave Reef and Island Management Plan Low Isles Management Plan Whitsundays National and Marine Parks Management Plan (in preparation) Offshore Cairns (in preparation) Shoalwater Bay
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Other types of plans exist under the titles of: special management areas, replenishment areas and a turtle and dugong strategy. Some management arrangements also exist; eg. cooperative management arrangements (with preservation societies, etc.) and moorings managed by organisations, associations, etc..

In addition, an integral part of the zoning and management plans is a permit system, i.e. permits are required for different kinds of activities in different parts of the GBRMP. The permit types include: tourist programs, research programs, education programs, moorings, collecting, traditional hunting, farming of marine resources, sea dumping, offshore structures, removal of dangerous animals, waste discharge, tourist facilities, and other activities.

Historically the Authority started with the establishment of zoning plans. In simplified terms, these establish several different zone types ranging from areas where very few activities are permitted to areas where a wide range of activities will be permitted. An Authority decision to zone particular reefs or geographical areas in a particular way is based upon:

- an inventory of the region;
- an assessment of use, impact, state of the environment and other similar factors; and
- a decision (using criteria and negotiation) as to what activities would be allowed without a permit, what would be allowed with a permit and what would not be allowed.

The first zoning plan was established for the Capricornia section of the GBR Region in the early 1980s. Since that time, the majority of GBR Region has been declared a Marine Park and zoning plans exist for the entire park area. As the GBRMP management developed it became apparent that there was a need for a different category of plan to effectively manage the Marine Park; i.e.:

- this type of marine park management is not pro-active, for example in developing permanent moorings to protect the reef from anchors and chains; and
- the zoning plan (and associated permit system) does not readily lend itself to the consideration of the collective and accumulative effects of several separately permitted activities.

As a consequence, other plans, strategies and best practice guides have been established. As with strategic planning, a comprehensive list and geographical illustration of all the different types of plans, strategies and guides was not available, and the ANAO had to resort to identifying these from a number of the Authority's annual reports and other internal papers. The Authority advised that:

The desirability of having consolidated information of this type is acknowledged.

The permit system

While most visitors to the GBRMP do not require a permit for recreational activities, the following activities do:

- most commercial activities including tourist operations;
- installation and operation of structures, such as jetties, marinas, pontoons and mariculture facilities;
- any works, such as repairs to structures, dredging and dumping;
- placement and operation of moorings;
- anchoring or mooring for an extended period;
- waste discharge from a fixed structure;
- research;
- educational programs; and
- traditional hunting.

Appendix 8 provides more details about the Authority's permit system.

The current permit system, which has been in place since 1981, has been the subject of much criticism, especially from commercial operators. The criticism has been along the lines that the system is complex, bureaucratic, inconsistent and inefficient. Several reviews have been undertaken and have reached similar conclusions. The underlying reason for these criticisms is that the number of permit applications has risen beyond what the resources, system and procedures were designed for.

While the Authority has already made significant improvements to the permit system, on 3 December 1996 the Authority agreed to introduce a new permitting system with the objective of standardising the application and assessment process to allow the delivery of an over-the-counter licence to operators.

Inherent in the current permit system is:

- pre-established and agreed zone and management plans;
- a use decision;
- allocation decisions - location and access;

- conditions of use; and
- legal liability.

In designing the new system the Authority has created two categories of permission under the zoning plans:

- permits where discretionary decisions still need to be made; and
- licences where the activity falls into a standard framework of decisions made through planning and policy.

The second category will use management plans and other similar planning documents which will contain a standard set of requirements and conditions. These permits will then be able to be issued over the counter and the permittee will be required to abide by the management plans and zoning requirements. The Authority is currently finalising eleven management plans.

Public involvement program

It has been a deliberate decision by the Authority to emphasise public-user-client support and ownership of the various zoning plans, management plans, strategies and guides to achieve its objectives rather than emphasise surveillance and compliance activities. To this end, the Authority undertakes extensive public involvement programs in the establishment and revision of plans and strategies and has established a network of advisory committees. These committees include ten Regional Marine Resources Advisory Committees (for tourist operators, marine park and fisheries interests, conservation interests, local government, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and residents), several research advisory committees and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Councils of Elders. Officers of the Authority also are members of, or participate in, many other committees, working groups and panels, with 31 being listed in the 1994-95 Annual Report.

The ANAO sought information from the Authority regarding the proportion of resources allocated to this type of activity but actual figures or even an estimate was unavailable. There was general agreement, however, that significant resources of the Authority are allocated to planning and associated activities.

Regarding this section the Authority advised that:

This section gives an indication of the extensive work being undertaken by the Authority. Obviously, whilst being based on long term objectives such as those set out in the 25 Year Strategic Plan, much of the general activity is directed towards current, often unforeseeable, demands and events generated by external sources for example - Queensland Government decisions and policies.

The resources allocated by the Authority to consultative processes and planning could not be costed. Given the present accounting and financial management information structures which are based on line item and section structures, this would have required a special costing process based on estimates. Separate estimates are being prepared as part of current program budgeting.

Appendix 7

Summary of zoning plans, management and other plans

This material has been extracted from a paper provided by the Authority (in May 1997) specifically for explaining the various management instruments enabled by the Act provided for under the Act. It was written by P. McGinnity who is a senior Authority staff member.

Zoning plans

Zoning is the spatial partitioning of an area into a variety of uses to meet the overall objectives of conservation with reasonable use.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act sets out the objects which are to be considered in developing a zoning plan. They are:

- (a) conservation of the Great Barrier Reef;
- (b) regulation of the use of the Great Barrier Reef so as to protect the Reef while allowing for the reasonable use of the Great Barrier Reef Region;
- (c) regulation of activities that exploit the resources of the Great Barrier Reef Region so as to minimise the effect of those activities on the Great Barrier Reef;
- (d) reservation of some areas of the Great Barrier Reef for its appreciation and enjoyment by the public; and
- (e) preservation of some areas of the Great Barrier Reef in its natural state undisturbed by humans except for the purposes of scientific research.

Policy guidance is also given in drawing up the plan. For example:

- (a) the zoning plan should be as practicable as possible;
- (b) the plan should minimise regulation of and interference in human activities, consistent with the goal of the Marine Park Authority; and
- (c) as far as practicable the following policy guidelines should be applied:
 - single zoning should surround areas with a consistent geographic description;
 - samples of areas representative the various habitats and biological communities found in the Park should be kept free from extractive activity;
 - plans drawn up under Commonwealth and State Queensland Marine Parks legislation should complement each other; and

- the pattern of zones should avoid a sudden transition from highly protected areas to areas of relatively little protection.
- Some of the features of zoning currently in place include:
- establishment of 'representative areas' of protected habitats as flora and fauna refuges and scientific reference areas;
- protection of sensitive habitats from activities that threaten them (e.g. trawl fishing is precluded from coral reef and seagrass communities);
- separation of conflicting uses (eg., scientific research zones exclude commercial and recreational fishing);
- maintenance of areas of the Reef as marine national parks, free from fishing and collecting, for appreciation and enjoyment by the public; and
- permit provision for individual activities that may have significant environmental effects.

Zoning of all existing sections was completed in 1988. The Authority currently has a policy of reviewing each zoning plan every five years or so. Reviews have been completed for the Capricornia, Cairns and Cormorant Pass Sections and a review is currently underway for the Far Northern Section.

Management plans

Management plans establish strategies for management of individual reefs and islands, or for groups of islands and reefs. Management plans complement zoning plans by addressing issues specific to the area in greater detail than can be accommodated in the broader-reaching zoning provisions. Management plan provisions may be more but not less restrictive than the relevant zoning plan.

Management plans drafted to date have addressed:

- the conflicts between nature conservation and tourism use at Michaelmas Reef, Green Island and Lady Musgrave Island; and
- appropriate levels and types of use at Low Isles, a site of significance for conservation of the heritage-listed lighthouse, a very long history of intensive research and high demand as a tourism destination.

Management plans are currently in preparation addressing conservation issues including anchor damage and protection of bird rookeries, cultural heritage protection, and tourism and coastal development effects in the Whitsunday Islands and reefs offshore from Cairns. Management planning is also being undertaken in Shoalwater Bay to ensure long-term protection of the very important conservation and Defence training area.

Special management areas

Special Management Areas (SMAs) may be prepared for a bay or part of a reef to implement controls that may be necessary specifically at a site. Currently, emphasis is being given to

introducing mooring and anchoring strategies for heavily used sites. Previously SMAs have also been used at high profile tourism sites to protect fish stocks.

Future directions

By the end of 1996 the Authority should have completed the current management planning projects and the review of the Far Northern Section Zoning Plan. It is also anticipated that work will have been completed to amend the existing zoning plans as necessary to introduce a major experiment investigating the effects of line fishing. Over the next few years it is anticipated that the 'establishment phase' will have been fine tuned and completed. This will involve reviews to:

- achieve consistency of provisions between all zoning plans; and
- incorporate and zone coastal waters of the Region that are not currently part of the Park.

Significant changes to the historic planning approach are presently being considered. The aim is to move away from the section by section zoning approach, which, while essential in the establishment phase of the Park, is now constraining the ability to deal with Park-wide issues in a more strategic manner. Future activity is likely to include:

- a need to more adequately address management needs associated with indigenous peoples' contemporary use and traditional association with the Park;
- a continuing need for tactical planning to address issues as they develop in high use areas such as Cairns and the Whitsundays;
- plans that address major issues such as dugong and turtle conservation, effects of fishing, maintenance of water quality, growth in recreational and tourism use with zoning plans and regulations amended as required most probably on a Park-wide basis; and
- increased emphasis on integrated planning with other agencies to address in-Park issues such as fishing and tourism, and off-Park issues such as coastal development and downstream effects of agriculture.

Appendix 8

General description of the Authority's permit system

The following information is provided to the public, by the Authority, on request and is included in this report as background material.

When do you need a Marine Parks permit?

Before you undertake any activity in the Marine Park, you should check the Zoning Plan for that area to see if that activity is allowed, and whether the activity requires a Marine Parks permit. The introductory zoning maps for each Section of the Marine Park are included in this Info-pack and the complete Zoning Plans are available from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and Queensland Department of Environment regional offices.

As a general guide, the following activities require a Marine Parks permit:

- most commercial activities including tourist operations;
- installation and operation of structures, such as jetties, marinas, pontoons and mariculture facilities;
- any works, such as repairs to structures, dredging and dumping;
- placement and operation of moorings;
- anchoring or mooring for an extended period;
- waste discharge from a fixed structure;
- research;
- educational programs; and
- traditional hunting.

Most visitors to the Marine Park will not require a permit for recreational activities.

Steps in the permitting process

In order to be granted permission to undertake an activity, you must first apply. Your application should provide enough information for us to clearly understand what you wish to do and where you want to do it, and to adequately assess the impact of your proposal. Furnishing false or misleading information in a permit application is an offence.

An application for a Marine Parks permit to conduct commercial activities requires the payment of a Permit Application Assessment Fee. The fee varies depending on the type of operation.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority is required to assess all valid permit applications. In assessing an application, the Authority must consider criteria which include the following:

- the objective of the zone;
- the need to protect the cultural and heritage values held in relation to the Marine Park by traditional inhabitants and other people;
- the likely effect of granting permission on future options for the Marine Park;
- the conservation of the natural resources of the Marine Park;
- the nature and scale of the proposed use in relation to the existing use and amenity, and the future or desirable use and amenity, of the relevant area and of nearby areas;
- the likely effects of the proposed use on adjoining and adjacent areas and any possible effects of the proposed use on the environment and the adequacy of safeguards for the environment;
- the means of transport for entry into, use within or departure from the zone or designated area and the adequacy of provisions for aircraft or vessel mooring, landing, taking off, parking, loading and unloading;
- in relation to any structure, landing area, farming facility, vessel or work to which the proposed use relates:
 - the health and safety aspects involved, including the adequacy of construction; and
 - the arrangements for removal upon the expiration of the permission of the structure, landing area, farming facility or vessel or any other thing that is to be built, assembled, constructed or fixed in position as a result of that use;
- the arrangements for making good any damage caused to the Marine Park by the proposed activity;
- any other requirements for ensuring the orderly and proper management of the Marine Park;
- any charge payable by the applicant in relation to a chargeable permission (whether or not in force) that is overdue for payment; and
- if the application relates to an undeveloped project, the cost of which will be large - the capacity of the applicant to satisfactorily develop the project.

As the Great Barrier Reef region is also a World Heritage Area and an area listed on the Register of the National Estate, the Authority must consider the effect that the proposal is likely to have on the World Heritage values of the area and whether the proposal is likely to cause significant damage and, if so, consider whether there are any prudent or feasible alternatives to the proposal.

If it is likely that the proposal will affect the environment to a significant extent then the proponent will be designated under the Commonwealth Environment Protection (Impact of Proposals) Act and an Environmental Impact Statement may be required.

If it is considered that your proposal may restrict the reasonable use by the public of a part of the Marine Park, then the Authority can require you to publicly advertise the proposal and invite public comments. These comments will then be considered in assessing your application.

With all applications for Marine Parks permits, the onus is on the applicant to establish that the environmental impacts of the proposed operation are acceptable.

Structure of a permit

Marine Parks permits are usually two permits in the one document. They grant permission for activities in both State Marine Parks (under the Queensland Marine Parks Act) and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (under the Commonwealth Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act).

A permit can be granted to a nominated company or person/s and is for a specified length of time. It specifies the activities which are permitted, the locations where they may be conducted and any conditions which apply. The conditions are imposed to help ensure the protection of the values of the Marine Park and other users. They vary depending on what you wish to do and where you wish to go.

If you are a new applicant, your permit will normally be granted for one year. This allows you time to establish your operation and it provides both you and the Marine Park managers an opportunity to review your operation.

Existing permittees are normally granted a permit for six years, depending on the activities to be conducted.

Deeds of agreement

All permits for commercial operations include a requirement to enter into a Deed of Agreement. This deed binds the permit holder to certain obligations such as indemnifying the Authority; maintaining adequate insurance; removal and clean-up of such things as vessels, moorings and structures; and the payment of a bond for structures other than vessel moorings.

Please note the insurance requirement under the deed is a minimum requirement and does not necessarily reflect the overall insurance needs of your business. You should make your own enquiries in respect of your insurance needs.

Variations to permits

If you want to change your permitted operation in any way, you must apply to vary the conditions of your permit or seek a new permit. This may be because you wish to add or change a vessel, undertake different activities, operate in different locations or change a name on the permit.

You should apply for a permit variation or new permit well before you wish to make the change.

If the changes are significant and further assessment is required, you will be charged an assessment fee.

Transfer of permits

Most Marine Parks permits for commercial activities are transferable, but the transfer must be approved by the Authority. An application form is available from the Authority or the Department of Environment and should be submitted at least 28 days prior to the proposed transfer.

Suspension and revocation

A Marine Parks permit can be suspended or revoked. This may happen, for example, when the permitted activity causes unforeseen damage or the threat of such damage to the Marine Park, the Permittee fails to comply with a permit condition, or any Environmental Management Charges which are outstanding have not been paid.

The maximum penalties which apply for failing to comply with a Marine Parks permit are \$20 000 for a person and \$100 000 for a body corporate. Vessels and other equipment (including catch) may also be seized.

Review rights

You have the right to request the Authority to reconsider any decision made concerning your permit application. Such a request must be made within 21 days of the date of gazettal of the decision.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the subsequent reconsideration, you have the further right to apply to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for a review of the reconsidered decision.

Commonwealth Freedom of Information provisions also apply.

Appendix 9

Summary of international treaties and conventions affecting the GBRMP

This list is summary from the material the Authority provides on its world wide web site

<p><u>1958 Convention on the Continental Shelf</u>: This convention concerns the continental shelf, the seabed and subsoil and the taking of sedentary organisms. The following Acts are involved: <i>Seas and Submerged Lands Act</i> and the <i>Continental Shelf (Living Natural Resources) Act</i> 1968.</p>
<p><u>Law of the Sea - United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)</u>: Australia is a signatory (1982) to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This involves a 12 nautical mile territorial sea, a 200 nautical mile exclusive Fishing Zone and a 200 nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone.</p>
<p><u>Torres Strait Treaty</u>: This Treaty was ratified in February 1985 and it requires each Party to take legislative and other measures necessary to protect and preserve the marine environment in and in the vicinity of the Protected Zone (an area between Australia and Papua New Guinea). A Torres Strait Environment Management Committee has been established and is dealing with a range of marine environmental matters.</p>
<p><u>Marine Pollution - London Dumping Convention</u>: Australia is signatory to this Convention, which seeks to prevent or control the dumping by vessel of land-derived wastes at sea. This is implemented through the <i>Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act</i> which is administered by the Department of Environment, Sport and Territories.</p>
<p><u>Marine Pollution - International Convention on Prevention of Pollution of Seas by Ships (known as MARPOL)</u>. Australia became signatory to this Convention in 1987 and implements it through the <i>Navigation Act</i> and the <i>Protection of Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act</i>, administered by the Department of Transport. The Convention requires ships to discharge a certain distance from the "nearest land" - the nearest land is defined as seawards of the Great Barrier Reef for the purposes of this convention, and therefore no discharge is permitted within the Great Barrier Reef. In November 1987 the International Maritime Organisation's Assembly adopted a resolution recommending that masters of ships over 100 metres in length, and all loaded oil tankers, chemical carriers or liquefied gas carriers, carry a pilot of the Queensland Coast and Torres Strait Pilot Service when navigating in the Torres Strait, the inner route north of Cairns and the Great North East Channel of Hydrographers Passage.</p>
<p><u>Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)</u>. Australia is party to this Convention which seeks to regulate the import and export of certain listed species that are considered to be endangered. Australia implements CITES through the <i>Wildlife Protection (Regulation of Exports and Imports) Act</i>, which is administered by the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service.</p>

The Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals: This Convention provides a framework for enhancing the conservation status of rare and threatened migratory species both within Australia and in other parts of their range. This Convention applies to all migratory species, including whales, turtles and birds that are found to inhabit the Marine Park. There are agreements between the Australian and Japanese Governments (ratified in 1981) and the Australian and Chinese Governments (ratified 1988) to protect migratory birds and their environment. They list species to be protected. Australia has not yet acceded to this convention.

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (known as Ramsar Convention): This Convention aims to promote the conservation of wetlands and waterfowl, to establish nature reserves on wetlands, to provide adequately for their protection and to train personnel competent in the fields of wetlands research and management. This Convention is implemented through existing State/Territory nature conservation legislation and the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service has a coordinating role. The Queensland Government is investigating the nomination of its first two sites.

International Convention for Regulation of Whaling: Australia ratified the International Convention for Regulation of Whaling in 1947. It is now implemented through the *Whale Protection Act* 1980. The Convention aims "to provide for the proper conservation of whale stocks". Australian Government policy is to protect all cetaceans and to support a world-wide ban on whaling.

South Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP): Australia ratified the Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region and Related Protocols in 1989. The Convention promotes the protection, management and development of the marine and coastal environment of the South Pacific Region and calls on all parties to take all appropriate measures to prevent, reduce and control pollution caused by discharges or dumping, from vessels or aircraft, emanating from land-based sources, from exploration and exploitation of the seabed and its subsoil, from storage of toxic and hazardous wastes, from the testing of nuclear devices and from mining and coastal erosion.

Convention on Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific (known as Apia Convention): This Convention aims to establish a broad framework for nature conservation in the South Pacific Region. Australia ratified this Convention in March 1990 but no decisions have been made as to how it will apply in Australia.

Convention for the Prohibition of Fishing with Long Driftnets in the South Pacific: Australia signed in February 1990 the Convention for the Prohibition of Fishing with Long Driftnets in the South Pacific. It aims to ensure sustainable harvesting of albacore tuna and protection for non-target species such as mammal and bird species.

World Heritage Convention (International Convention for the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage): This convention was adopted by UNESCO in 1972. Parties to the Convention have a responsibility to nominate places of exceptional heritage value to the World Heritage List and are required to adopt policies and undertake specific actions to protect, conserve and present to the public areas of natural and cultural heritage. The Great Barrier Reef (including islands) was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1981. Effect is given to this Convention through the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act*, the *Australian Heritage Commission Act*, the *World Heritage Properties Conservation Act*, the *Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Act* and the *Queensland Fisheries Act*.

1972 International Convention for the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage

Perhaps of greatest concern to the Authority, this convention was adopted by UNESCO in 1972. Parties to the Convention have a responsibility to nominate places of exceptional heritage value to the World Heritage List and are required to adopt policies and undertake specific actions to protect, conserve and present to the public areas of natural and cultural heritage.

The Great Barrier Reef (including islands) was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1981.

Effect is given to this Convention through the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act*, the *Australian Heritage Commission Act*, the *World Heritage Properties Conservation Act*, the *Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Act* and the *Queensland Fisheries Act*.

The Wet Tropics rainforests in North Queensland are now also listed and they include some of the catchments that feed rivers entering the Marine Park. The listing is likely to benefit management and conservation of the Marine Park in the long term.

Appendix 10

GBRWhA 25 Year Strategic Plan lead agencies and key players

The following is a list extracted from the GBRWhA 25 Year Strategic Plan of the lead agencies and key-players. Some of the names may now be out of date.

- Australian Heritage Commission;
- Australian Fisheries Management Authority;
- Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators;
- Australian Maritime Safety Authority;
- Australian Nature Conservation Agency;
- Australian Quarantine Inspection Service;
- Australian Tourism Industry Association;
- Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders, both organisations and communities;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission;
- Several conservation groups;
- Commonwealth Environmental Protection Agency;
- Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs;
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority;
- Queensland Department of the Premier, Economic and Trade Development;
- Queensland Commercial Fishermen's Organisation;
- Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage;
- Queensland Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning;
- Queensland Department of Minerals and Energy;
- Queensland Department of Transport;
- Queensland Department of Primary Industry;
- Queensland Fish Management Authority;
- Queensland Museum;
- Queensland Sport and Recreational Fishing Council; and
- Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation.

Appendix 11

The Authority's program structure

The Authority's annual reports list a plethora of programs and sub-programs, some which are listed as parts of Branches, some as Branches and some which are listed as programs within programs, e.g.:

- The Planning and Environmental Management Branch:
 - planning Program;
 - Park Management Program;
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Liaison Program;
 - Community Ranger Program;
 - Computing and Information Technology Services Program;
 - Environmental Impact Management Program;
 - Aerial Surveillance Program;
 - Public Mooring Program;
 - Major Projects Program;
 - Effects of Shipping and Ports Program;
 - REEFPLAN (Oil Spills Plan);
- the Education and Aquarium Branch:
 - Education, Information and Media Program;
 - Aquarium Schools Program;
 - After Dark Program;
 - Community Outreach Program;
 - Aquarium Research Program;
- the Research and Monitoring Program:
 - Water Quality Sub-Program;
 - Crown-of-Thorns Starfish Sub-Program;
 - Effects of Fishing Sub-Program;
 - Cultural and Economic Sub-Program;
- the External Services Program; and
- the Corporate Management and Services Program.