

Great Barrier Reef Indigenous Tourism Translating Policy Into Practice

Kirsty Galloway McLean, Adrian Marrie and Henrietta Marrie



Great Barrier Reef Indigenous Tourism

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Kirsty Galloway McLean¹, Adrian Marrie² and Henrietta Marrie AM²

¹ BioChimera Pty Ltd

² First Peoples Think Tank, Office of Indigenous Engagement, CQUniversity



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FOREWORD

The year 2020 has been jointly dedicated by the Queensland Premier and the Minister for Tourism as the Year of Indigenous Tourism. Tourism and Events Queensland is already on the record in wanting to make the State the nation's number one destination for Indigenous tourism experiences, and the Queensland Tourism Industry Council has developed a First Nations Tourism Potential Plan to facilitate the future sustainable growth of Queensland's First Nations tourism. Meanwhile, the outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020 presents the tourism sector with major challenges. With these initiatives and impacts in mind, this report, although focusing on the Great Barrier Reef, could not be more timely.

However, the report identifies that deep structural changes are necessary if Indigenous tourism is to go forward in a sustainable manner. First Nations peoples in Queensland, as far back as the 1990s, have looked to the tourism industry for job creation, business development, and as a way of promoting “two-way learning”, bringing visitors “on country” to show them a proud and unique way of life and to make them feel “connected to country”. To this end, there have been no lack of studies, visitor surveys, business guides, consultant reports, government policies and support programs. Yet Indigenous tourism in Queensland has floundered, as it has nationally, because of a failure of governments to create a role for Indigenous governance in the industry – a voice. We have seen, for example, the role of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board of the Australia Council since 1973 in creating and promoting the spectacular success of First Nations artists in all creative disciplines with the flow on effects over the years in employment and the development of Indigenous administrative and management skills dispersed throughout the sector. Many of our artists have won national mainstream awards in music, film, theatre, literature, visual arts and dance, and are an integral part of Australia's overseas marketing campaigns. Indeed, they are the nation's cultural ambassadors who in turn draw many arts tourists to Australia. The question one has to ask is: why hasn't Indigenous leadership been supported to the same extent in such a nationally important industry as tourism?

All tourism and events in Queensland take place on the traditional estates of our First Nations peoples. But where is our voice in this industry? There have been a number of attempts by Indigenous people in the industry over the last three decades to create this leadership, but none have been sustainable. It is therefore time for the Queensland Government to permanently embed our voice in the governance structures of the industry. We need a statutory body to create, promote and market our brand, to advocate, to set industry standards for our businesses to aspire to, and to oversee appropriate management training for our participation in the industry and to navigate the new realities of social media driven tourism. We need a Queensland First Nations Tourism Board to drive initiatives to achieve employment parity by 2030.

In our report, we recognise that tourism is a “tough gig” – we do not want to raise false expectations for those First Nations businesses and entrepreneurs who want to participate in the industry. The standards that we have put forward are those by which the Best of Queensland Experiences are judged. In the highly competitive global tourism market, where personal visitor choices are more and more driven by social media rather than travel agents and tour brochures, Indigenous tourism businesses must learn to negotiate this world and learn

to compete with the best, whether Traditional Owner operated, Indigenous community driven, or individual artists wanting to attract more visitor buyers. We have to be the best we can be to honour and protect our brand. We have also made a number of recommendations principally directed at improving the overall tourism environment to better enable Indigenous tourism businesses to flourish.

I would like to thank the many people who have contributed to this report: Chief Investigator Kirsty Galloway McLean and Research Fellow Adrian Marrie – both of whom have gone way beyond their funded commitments – and Professor Bruce Prideaux for his oversight. I would also like to thank Dr Michelle Thompson, Dr Marjo Vierros and Dr Julie Carmody for their contributions and advice. Julie, together with Sheriden Morris of the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre Ltd, deserve additional thanks for their support and project oversight. I would also like to thank the funding body, the Tropical Water Quality Hub of the Australian Government's National Environmental Science Program and Hub Leader Professor Damien Burrows. And of course, all those who have participated in this project by responding to our questionnaires – the Traditional Owner representatives, and staff of the Great Barrier Reef Regional Tourism Organisations, Local Tourism Organisations, Indigenous business operators, and those who have contributed to the case studies. We hope that we have honoured your contribution by accurately and fairly presenting your views. And we hope that our recommendations will be the harbingers of change.

Associate Professor Henrietta Marrie AM

Gimuy Walubara Yidinji Elder and Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner
Indigenous Coral Reef Tourism Project Leader
Director, First Peoples Think Tank
CQUniversity, Cairns

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LANGUAGE POLICY

The words ‘Indigenous’ and ‘First Nations’ are used throughout this report to describe both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as groups of organisations and initiatives, unless a request has been identified to identify a specific people/nation or language group. However, the use of this umbrella term is not intended to oversimplify the hundreds of nations that exist within Australia, who have a right to determine their own individual cultures and identities.

ACRONYMS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIANTA	American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association [US]
AIMS	Australian Institute of Marine Science
AITC	Australian Indigenous Tourism Conference
AMSA	Australian Marine Sciences Association
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ATDW	Australian Tourism Data Warehouse
ATAC	Aboriginal Tourism Advisory Council (of NT)
ATIC	Australian Tourism Industry Council
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
Austrade	Australian Trade and Investment Commission
CaPTA	Cairns and Port Trips & Attractions
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CIAF	Cairns Indigenous Art Fair
CRC	Cooperative Research Centre [also Cairns Regional Council where indicated]
CoA	Commonwealth of Australia
COE	Community Owned Enterprise
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
CTRO	Centre for Tourism and Regional Opportunities (CQUniversity)
CYLC	Cape York Land Council
CYP	Cape York Peninsula
DATSIP	Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (Qld)
DCA	Department of Communications and the Arts (Cwth)
DESSFB	Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business (Cwth)
DET	Department of Education (Cwth)
DITID	Department of Innovation and Tourism Industry Development (Qld)
DOGIT	Deeds of Grant in Trust
DPMC	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Cwth)
DTP	Destination Tourism Plan
GBR	Great Barrier Reef
GBRF	Great Barrier Reef Foundation
GBRMPA	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
GBRR	Great Barrier Reef Region (i.e. the GBR, its coastal regions and catchments)
GBRWHA	Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area
GCET	Global Code of Ethics for Tourism
HRSCIA	House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs
HVASC	Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council
HVT	High Value Traveller

IACA	Indigenous Art Centres Alliance
IBA	Indigenous Business Australia
ILO	International Labour Organization [UN]
ILSC	Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation
ILUA	Indigenous Land Use Agreement
IPA	Indigenous Protected Area
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [UN]
IRAC	Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee [a GBRMPA committee]
ITCP	Indigenous Tourism Champions Program
ITG	2020 Working Group on Indigenous Tourism [an Austrade group]
JSCNA	Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia
LTO	Local Tourism Organisation
NAILSMA	Northern Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance
NATIVE Act ..	<i>Native American Tourism Improving Visitor Experience</i> (NATIVE) Act 2016 [USA]
NATOC	NSW Aboriginal Tourism Operators Council
NESP	National Environmental Science Program
NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency
NGO	Non-government Organisation
NOO	National Oceans Office
NP	National Park
NPARC	Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council
NQLC	North Queensland Land Council
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NSW	New South Wales (Australia)
NT	Northern Territory (Australia)
NTRB	Native Title Representative Bodies
ORIC	Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations
PAITC	Pacific Asia Indigenous Tourism Conference
PATA	Pacific Asia Travel Association
PBC	Prescribed Body Corporate
QPWS	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
QSNTS	Queensland South Native Title Services
QTIC	Queensland Tourism Industry Council
QuEST	Queensland Eco and Sustainable Tourism
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
RNTBC	Registered Native Title Body Corporate
ROC	Respecting Our Culture [accreditation]
RRRC	Reef and Rainforest Research Centre Ltd
RTO	Regional Tourism Organisation

SA	South Australia
SCBD	Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
SGBR	Southern Great Barrier Reef
TA	Tourism Australia
TEQ	Tourism and Events Queensland
TNGTH	Tropical North Global Tourism Hub
TNQ	Tropical North Queensland
TRA	Tourism Research Australia
TRAC	Tourism Reef Advisory Committee [a GBRMPA committee]
TSRA	Torres Strait Regional Authority
TTNQ	Tourism Tropical North Queensland
TUMRA	Traditional Use Marine Resources Agreement
UN	United Nations
UNDRIP	UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNPFII	United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organisation
WA	Western Australia
WAITOC	Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council
WHA	World Heritage Area
WINTA	World Indigenous Tourism Alliance
WITS	World Indigenous Tourism Summit
WTWHA	Wet Tropics World Heritage Area
YACP	Yarrabah Arts and Cultural Precinct
YASC	Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council
YEDA	Yarrabah Economic Development Association

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DISCLOSURES

A/Professor Henrietta Marrie and Research Fellow Adrian Marrie have a familial relationship with individuals working in some of the organisations mentioned in this report, namely: Minjil Cultural Services and the Cairns Indigenous Tourism Hub.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The outcomes of this project indicate a high level of interest amongst Traditional Owners and Indigenous businesses in participating in the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) tourism industry; however, despite the wide range of opportunities, there are a number of obstacles that discourage such participation.

Many issues relating to foundational capacities are being addressed through the *Reef 2050 Plan* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b) to help support Traditional Owner aspirations for protection and management of the GBR. Several of the actions identified in the *Reef 2050 Plan*, complemented by the recommendations of *Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: The next generation of Reef 2050 Actions Report* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018d), will support development of Indigenous tourism in the GBR region, as will the newly announced Indigenous Tourism Development Service that started operating in January 2020. This report delves deeper into the policy environment, issues of supply and demand, and relationships between different stakeholders, and proposes a way forward to address the issues identified by the research.

This report is presented in five parts. Section 1 provides the background to the project and outlines its objectives. Section 2 gives context by comparing the current state of Indigenous reef tourism in the GBR with best practices and recent trends in Indigenous reef tourism around the world. Section 3 explores the national and regional policy environment, as well as the structure of the tourism industry, and how this affects Indigenous tourism in the GBR. Section 4 reports on the outcomes of new research undertaken as part of the project in order to assess Indigenous tourism engagement and experiences along the Reef, including survey outcomes and case studies. Section 5 analyses the opportunities and barriers for Indigenous tourism in the GBR region, resulting in nine recommendations relevant to Traditional Owner groups interested in GBR tourism, mainstream tourism stakeholders and enterprises, industry bodies and regulatory and management authorities.

The first recommendation reflects the need for these activities to continue to shore up essential foundations that will bring Traditional Owners together with government, industry, researchers and the community to share responsibility for the Reef.

Recommendation 1: Continue foundational capacity building

Provide continued support to the actions identified in the Reef 2050 Plan and the recommendations outlined in the Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: The next generation of Reef 2050 Actions Report in order to build foundational capacities that will bolster Indigenous economic participation in the Reef tourism industry.

To support improved supply of Indigenous tourism experiences, it is essential that Government agencies continue to develop and support a more enabling business environment for Indigenous tourism businesses along the Reef through regulatory and policy reform. The following recommendations are aimed at improving the business environment for Indigenous tourism initiatives.

Recommendation 2: Support Indigenous tourism advocacy

Establish an Indigenous tourism advocacy body for Queensland. Such a body could focus on raising the profile of authentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism experiences at state, national and international level; as well as having a role in educating government and industry on how to grow the Indigenous tourism sector. A regional working group dedicated to Reef tourism could address unique challenges for the area, such as supporting businesses in remote regions, negotiating reduced insurance premiums, and coordinating efforts to link Indigenous tourism ventures along the Reef.

Recommendation 3: Facilitate networking and business clustering amongst Indigenous Reef tourism businesses

Facilitate networking between Indigenous tourism businesses on the Reef to form tourism clusters that, for example, share resources and experience, monitor tourism impacts on the Reef environment, and support the development of common contracts and other such arrangements that would assist small/remote businesses to provide consistent product delivery and access to expanded source markets.

Strengthening demand for Indigenous tourism experiences in the GBR will better enable GBR Indigenous tourism businesses to sustainably enter the tourism market, and the following recommendations are intended to improve awareness and demand for tourism offerings on the Reef.

Recommendation 4: Improve heritage visibility

Encourage relevant authorities to work with Traditional Owners to develop appropriate signage for culturally significant locations, including travel guides, place names and clan boundaries, to improve tourist awareness of Indigenous heritage.

Recommendation 5: Identify authentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourist experiences available on the Reef through accreditation

Develop a supportive Indigenous accreditation system and consistent logo for Indigenous businesses that provide tourism services on the Reef (and in Queensland more generally) to aid in identifying authentic and high quality Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences. This could be used for branding and marketing, as well as in tourism publications to indicate and promote the availability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander attractions.

Supporting meaningful partnerships and strengthening engagement between Reef tourism stakeholders and Indigenous businesses will offer greater opportunities to understand and address needs and concerns, as well as take advantage of new opportunities as they arise. The following recommendations identify current issues of concern and propose mechanisms to address them.

Recommendation 6: Support locally produced Reef tourism products

Hold a forum in 2020 to bring together Indigenous artists and souvenir makers with mainstream souvenir and gift traders to discuss mutual concerns about the selling of fake Indigenous items, and to develop mechanisms that support greater representation of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and craft makers in the souvenir trade.

Recommendation 7: Traditional hunting and tourism

Assist in resolving conflicts between hunting rights and tourism perceptions through a joint meeting of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) Tourism Reef Advisory Committee (TRAC) and Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee (IRAC).

Recommendation 8: Cross-cultural awareness

Encourage Regional and Local Tourism Organisations to work (or continue to work) with Traditional Owners to provide cross-cultural awareness training to all mainstream local tourism business operators.

Recommendation 9: Facilitate networking between Traditional Owners, RTOs/LTOs and mainstream tourism operators

Encourage Regional and Local Tourism Organisations in areas with low levels of Indigenous tourism (or that have not yet established strong working relationships with Indigenous tourism businesses) to approach local Traditional Owners with a view to building trust via on-ground exchange of ideas and aspirations towards building Indigenous tourism offerings in the region, including facilitating networking and partnerships with mainstream tourism businesses.

The outbreak of novel coronavirus COVID-19 has been particularly catastrophic for the tourism industry. Although virus recovery is not the primary focus of this report, a special update regarding its expected impacts on the Indigenous Reef tourism industry, and how recovery relates to the recommendations of this report, is included overleaf.

UPDATE: IMPACTS OF COVID-19

At the time of taking this report to press, the outbreak of COVID-19 (the novel coronavirus) has presented the global tourism sector with an incredibly significant challenge, particularly following the introduction of travel restrictions and physical distancing measures. This, combined with a weaker world economy and trade tensions, is likely to result in the tourism sector being one of those hit hardest, suffering impacts on both supply and demand. Small and medium enterprises make up the majority of the Indigenous tourism businesses in the Great Barrier Reef region and impacts on these businesses will affect the livelihoods of many vulnerable communities in the region.

It is too early to estimate the full impact of COVID-19 on Indigenous tourism on the Reef, as the nature and extent of the challenges is constantly evolving at this time. However, based on the information gathered for this report (which was prepared prior to the virus outbreak), the authors would like to include some preliminary observations in response to the outbreak for consideration by policy-makers, Indigenous tourism operators, and other relevant stakeholders.

1. International and domestic tourism:

- a. Indigenous tourism is particularly dependent on international tourism, as domestic tourists make up only a small proportion of their visitor market. It is therefore imperative that recovery measures and incentives targeting international tourists prioritise marketing of Indigenous tourism offerings on the world stage.
- b. The pandemic has temporarily stopped problems associated with 'over-tourism' (i.e. a level of visitors that negatively impacts the local population and environment). It is possible that pandemic recovery could focus tourists more towards 'slow tourism' and exploring local travel opportunities, which the Indigenous tourism industry is well placed to take advantage of.

2. Emergency economic support:

- a. The Australian Government's Economic Response includes, among other measures, a dedicated fund to support sectors, regions, and communities disproportionately affected by the economic impacts of the coronavirus, including tourism. Support from this fund will include the waiver of fees and charges for tourism businesses that operate in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.
- b. The remote location of most Indigenous tourism operators on the Reef is likely to magnify the economic impacts of COVID-19 on business opportunities, particularly the limited market size and high cost of living in remote and regional centres. Impacts on remote service providers, e.g. regional airlines that service Cape York, will also have flow-on effects to Indigenous tourism in the region.
- c. In addition, many Indigenous communities suffer from poor health outcomes, and so particularly stringent efforts are being made to protect these communities from the increased risks posed by coronavirus entering these

communities. This has resulted in greatly restricted travel, particularly limiting the entry of non-community members, which may significantly impact the ability of such groups to complete tourism projects in accordance with previously agreed deadlines.

3. Indigenous tourism preparation for recovery:

- a. Indigenous tourism businesses on the Reef should capitalise on opportunities during 2020-2021 to prepare for future tourism seasons by focussing on the business areas identified in this report for further development, particularly designing sustainable business growth strategies. The majority of the recommendations identified in this report can easily be carried out during the recovery phase and should greatly strengthen the ability of Indigenous tourism businesses to take advantage of future tourism seasons.
- b. Indigenous entrepreneurs may wish to take advantage of forced downtime to improve financial literacy and business management skills to improve their strategic outlook.
- c. Digitisation has revolutionised many industries, and the 'lockdowns' that resulted from pandemic responses in many countries has resulted in even more rapid growth of web-mobile technologies. The importance of having a social and mobile web presence in order to continue to market Indigenous arts, crafts, foods and virtual experiences has never been more apparent than during periods of extensive travel restriction. Developing cooperative ventures to take advantage of this need is vital.

4. Indigenous tourism opportunities:

- a. The cultural nature of most Indigenous tourism businesses on the Reef should also be seen as a point of strength in surviving the impacts of COVID-19 on the industry. While meeting traditional cultural obligations to family and community may reduce business efficiency in times of plenty, it does mean that strong community support is available to maintain Indigenous enterprises during times of uncertainty.
- b. Reef tourism depends on the advantages of its natural location. Indigenous tourism businesses on the Reef generally also rely on a competitive advantage that is based on the uniqueness of their product, rather than price or other measures. These competitive advantages remain unaffected.
- c. Reduced requirements for access to capital that are being made through the COVID-19 response may help to overcome key financing barriers for small businesses.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Overall objective:

To create the optimal environment for Indigenous tourism businesses to flourish along the Great Barrier Reef

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Scope

Tourism Australia (2018) identifies “Aboriginal Australia” as one of seven signature Australian Experience Themes, while Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) has the intention of making Queensland the country’s number one destination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences, a sentiment recently reiterated by the Queensland Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development (2019). The Great Barrier Reef (GBR) is Queensland’s greatest natural asset, and the major destination for both domestic and overseas tourists.

Indigenous tourism can be examined from a number of different perspectives, including in the context of cultural tourism (OECD, 2009; Smith, 2003), nature-based and ecotourism (Buultjens et al, 2010), and/or community-based tourism (Carr et al, 2016), in addition to considering businesses that are majority owned, operated and/or controlled by First Peoples (ATN, 2017). Tourist experiences may be designed to include Indigenous culture as part of their core operation, or Indigenous interpretation may form only a small component of a larger experience. Indigenous involvement in the experiences may range from solely Indigenous owned and operated ventures, to partnerships, to Indigenous Peoples employed as cultural ambassadors as part of mainstream tourism businesses. This project primarily considers Indigenous coral reef tourism through the lens of Indigenous-owned cultural tourism activities (i.e. tourism businesses that are at least majority-owned by Indigenous Peoples that include elements of their unique cultures and ways of interacting with people and the environment, cultural events run by Indigenous communities, etc), but it is not intended to exclude other ventures.

Reef tourism as defined by Prideaux & Coghlan (2014, p.3) includes the following categories: (i) day trips on large catamarans to reef pontoons; (ii) a range of day trips to reef sites on a variety of different types of boats; (iii) day trips to islands; (iv) island resorts; (v) island camping; (vi) one day dive trips; (vii) live-aboard dive trips; (viii) longer cruises; (ix) live-aboard sailing trips (Whitsundays); (x) bareboat charters; (xi) independent, non-commercial yacht trips and tag-alongs; and (xii) charter fishing. Indigenous tourism in the context of the Great Barrier Reef is defined rather more broadly by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) to include (i) tourism specifically to interpret Indigenous cultures and stories; (ii) Indigenous people directly operating or investing in tourism operations; (iii) business partnerships between Indigenous organisations and tourism operators; (iv) Indigenous people employed in tourism operations; (v) mainstream tourism incorporating Indigenous culture and stories to enhance their programs; and (vi) Indigenous input into the way tourism is managed. In addition, GBRMPA’s Reef Guardian program includes those communities who “use and rely on the

Reef, or its catchment, for recreation or business”¹. The integral interaction between the land and the Reef is recognised by both Indigenous communities and the Marine Park Authority, and so it is this broader definition, incorporating both land and sea activities, that has been used to define the scope of this report.

The GBR also forms part of the traditional estates of over 70 Indigenous Traditional Owner groups with continuing relationships with the GBR and interest in or rights to “sea country”, from the eastern Torres Strait south to Bundaberg (NESP Tropical Water Quality Hub, 2015, p. 11-13). In the *Reef 2050 Plan*, both the Australian and Queensland governments recognise that “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef area and have a continuing connection to their land and sea country” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b, p. ii).

1.1.2 Research Objectives

This project was inspired by desk-top research carried out in 2016 through CQUniversity’s Centre for Tourism and Regional Opportunities (CTRO) which revealed that, despite the seemingly abundant opportunities, Traditional Owner clan groups of the Great Barrier Reef appeared to show little interest in participating in the lucrative coral reef tourism industry (Marrie 2018, p. 237-8). This project follows up the initial research with qualitative and quantitative studies to gain an understanding of why this is so and how it can be rectified.

To achieve its overall objectives of (i) providing an improved understanding of Traditional Owner aspirations for sustainable economic use of the Reef’s natural resources, specifically in relation to the tourism industry, and (ii) determining how to create the optimal environment for Indigenous coral reef tourism businesses to flourish along the GBR, this project:

- Considers the international standards and experiences with Indigenous coral reef tourism around the world and compares this to the state of Indigenous tourism in the GBR (**Section 1.2**)
- Reviews the current national and regional policy environment that impacts on Indigenous tourism in the GBR (**Section 2.0**),
- Assesses Indigenous tourism experiences along the Reef from both a Traditional Owner and Regional Tourism Organisation point of view, using a survey and consultation process, complemented with a literature review and several case studies of Indigenous tourism business experiences (**Section 3.0**), and
- Analyses the opportunities and barriers for Indigenous tourism in the GBR, resulting in nine recommendations relevant to Traditional Owner groups interested in GBR tourism, mainstream tourism stakeholders and enterprises, industry bodies and regulatory and management authorities (**Section 4.0**).

The review of international models and the domestic policy environment for Indigenous reef tourism aims to assist in policy development, target-setting and directing on-ground action associated with the implementation of the broader strategies for Indigenous economic participation identified in the *Reef 2050 Plan*. The project additionally aims to support other

¹ GBRMPA Reef Guardians Program: <http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/our-work/our-programs-and-projects/reef-guardians>

agencies and businesses involved in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism experiences, including TEQ, QTIC and Indigenous businesses.

The assessment of the current status of Indigenous involvement and experiences in the GBR tourism industry includes three main parts: a survey and analysis of Regional and Local Tourism Organisation experiences (**Section 3.2**); a survey and analysis of Traditional Owner experiences (**Section 3.3**); and a number of case studies of Indigenous Reef tourism, including Indigenous cultural festivals, cultural centres, and tourism businesses (**Section 3.4**).

While the Traditional Owners, and the exercise of their rights and interests in the GBR region, are the primary subject of this report in accordance with the *Reef 2050 Indigenous Implementation Plan*, the report adopts a more inclusive approach with regard to the GBR Indigenous tourism sector where appropriate. It recognises the role of the Indigenous Local Governments (and other local governance arrangements) in providing essential services and infrastructure that support Indigenous tourism businesses, and the many Indigenous people who may no longer have a physical connection to sea country along the GBR, but nevertheless participate in the GBR tourism industry in many different ways, particularly as arts practitioners.

Consistent with international tourism industry standards² and the aspirations expressed in the *Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: The next generation of Reef 2050 actions* report (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018d) Traditional Owners are recognised as rights holders over their traditional estates, rather than being seen as stakeholders. Some of the fundamental principles on which this report is based include that all tourism and associated activities and events in Queensland take place on the traditional estates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Nations peoples, and that Traditional Owners of their estates have a right to receive a fair return for tourism activities and events taking place on their country.

1.1.3 Key Lines of Inquiry

Contrary to the initial desktop research undertaken in 2016, both the literature review and surveys undertaken for this project indicated a high level of interest amongst Traditional Owners and Indigenous businesses in participating in the GBR tourism industry. Rather, despite interest in participating in the tourism industry and the presence of a wide range of opportunities, a number of obstacles that discourage Indigenous participation in the tourism industry were identified that have led to lower levels of participation, such as difficulties in applying for funding opportunities, or meeting contemporary industry standards to achieve “business readiness”.

Consequently, key research questions that were considered in the analysis of opportunities and barriers for Indigenous tourism include:

- ‘How can we help address the underlying capacity issues that face Traditional Owner groups undertaking tourism activities in the Reef?’ **Section 4.1** identifies activities that

² As expressed, for example, in Articles 2.2, 3.5, 4.4, 5.1 and 5.3 of the *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism* (UNWTO, 1999); Articles 10, 11, 13, 18, 20, 21, 25 and 31 of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*; and the Convention on Biological Diversity’s *Tourism Supporting Biodiversity: A Manual on applying CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development* (SCBD, 2015).

are already addressing broad issues of foundational capacity, and explores which actions are likely to have the most impact in supporting development of Indigenous tourism in the GBRR.

- ‘How can we help create an enabling environment for Indigenous tourism businesses along the Reef; and how, if at all, might this differ from regulatory or policy reform to facilitate the tourism business in general?’ **Section 4.2** aims to inform and enhance programming decisions, and to stimulate nuanced and evidence-based high-level policy discussions that will facilitate Indigenous tourism activities on the Reef.
- ‘How can we improve the demand for Indigenous tourism on the Reef?’ **Section 4.3** identifies actions that could strengthen interest and demand for GBR Indigenous tourism, in order to better enable Indigenous businesses to sustainably enter the tourism market.
- ‘How can we support the supply of Indigenous tourism experiences on the Reef through building stronger partnerships with other stakeholders?’ **Section 4.4** identifies actions that could increase Traditional Owner interest in participating in the tourism industry through identifying current issues of concern and proposing mechanisms to address them.

1.2 International Indigenous Tourism

1.2.1 International standards

1.2.1.1 International legal instruments

Indigenous peoples make a significant contribution to preserving and enhancing global sustainability and diversity through their traditional knowledge, cultural practices, and maintenance of natural resources. These benefits are not only available for Indigenous peoples, but also for peoples in all areas of society through differentiation and enrichment of authentic Indigenous tourism experiences.

However, although “tourism provides the strongest driver to restore, protect and promote Indigenous cultures, it has the potential to diminish and destroy those cultures when improperly developed” (WINTA, 2012). It is therefore critical that the rights of Indigenous peoples are recognised, respected and maintained in order to ensure equitable benefits are achieved from tourism while enhancing tourist experiences and contributing to community and economic growth (PATA, 2015).

Legal resources for protecting Indigenous peoples’ rights have increased steadily over recent decades. At an international level, there are a number of key instruments relating to human rights in general, that are also relevant to their application in tourism. These include *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), *The UN Global Compact* (2000) and *The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* (2011). Instruments have also been developed that more specifically protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples, including *The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention* (‘ILO 169’) (1989), *APEC/PATA Code for Sustainable Tourism* (2002), *The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003), and *The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) (2007).

The *UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* (2011) and *The Business Reference Guide to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2013) also provide valuable direction regarding the application of the international human rights instruments to Indigenous tourism activities. In addition, a number of UN bodies are mandated to deal specifically with Indigenous issues that may be relevant to Indigenous tourism, including the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous peoples.

1.2.1.2 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

Many of the rights outlined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) are directly relevant to issues surrounding Indigenous tourism, such as the rights to lands, territories, and natural and cultural resources (Articles 10, 11 and 25), use and revitalisation of histories, languages and place names (Article 13), involvement in decision-making (Article 18), involvement in development and employment opportunities (Articles 20 and 21), and support for cultural heritage traditions and revitalisation (Article 31), among others (UN 2007).

1.2.1.3 United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)

The *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism* (GCET) is a set of principles adopted by the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) in 1999 to guide stakeholders in tourism development, aimed particularly at central and local governments, local communities, the tourism industry and its professionals, as well as visitors, both international and domestic. In particular, Article 2.2 provides that “tourism activities should respect the equality of men and women; they should promote human rights and, more particularly, the individual rights of ... indigenous peoples”, and Article 5.1 provides that “local populations should be associated with tourism activities and share equitably in the economic, social and cultural benefits they generate, and particularly in the creation of direct and indirect jobs resulting from them”.

1.2.1.4 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

The Convention on Biological Diversity has created a platform that is relevant for the regulation of Indigenous tourism through several sets of guidelines, including its *Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development* (2004), and the *Akwé:Kon Voluntary Guidelines for the Conduct of Cultural, Environmental and Social Impact Assessment regarding Developments Proposed to Take Place on, or which are Likely to Impact on, Sacred Sites and on Lands and Waters Traditionally Occupied or Used by Indigenous and Local Communities* (2004). A manual to support the application of the tourism guidelines was also released in 2015, called *Tourism Supporting Biodiversity: A Manual on applying the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development*.

1.2.2 International studies in Indigenous tourism

Studies in Indigenous tourism are usually underpinned by the principles of sustainable development that not only facilitate economic welfare, but also ensure conservation of Indigenous landscapes and cultural identity (e.g. Bunten & Graburn, 2009; Ryan & Aicken, 2005; Smith & Richards, 2013; Zeppel, 2006). Challenges that are commonly identified include the importance of ensuring that local communities feel empowered to undertake appropriate tourism development (Chan et al, 2016), and developing opportunities that also support family

or other community groups, improve health outcomes, and provide education and leisure opportunities for members of the local community (Carr et al, 2016). Specific aspects of Indigenous tourism that have garnered particular attention include identifying the characteristics of tourists interested in Indigenous tourism activities (e.g. Ruhanan et al, 2013); describing and analysing types of Indigenous tourism activities such as cultural tours, guided treks and festivals (e.g. Ham & Weiler, 2012; Zeppel & Higginbottom, 2001); and discussing factors that contribute to successful ventures (e.g. Fletcher et al, 2016; Whitford & Ruhanen, 2009) as well as capacity-building needs (e.g. Whitford et al, 2017).

Globally, Indigenous tourism is commonly viewed as a means of facilitating socio-economic benefits to Indigenous individuals, communities and host regions (Carr et al, 2016). Indigenous communities living in tourist destinations can leverage tourism development to enhance their livelihoods and maintain their traditions, identity and values (Anggraini, 2017). The Indigenous tourism sector is often viewed as an opportunity to facilitate distribution of socio-economic benefits to Indigenous individuals and communities (Ruhanen & Whitford, 2017). This includes business tourism and the meetings industry (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions), as well as cultural activities (Kessy, 2017).

Carr et al, (2016) discussed numerous positive outcomes from Indigenous tourism, including the capacity of Indigenous tourism to nurture cultural arts, language revitalisation and traditions (countering and enabling an escape from a “victim” narrative), create employment, often in non-urban locations where other employment opportunities are limited, and the links between the value of Indigenous knowledge and cultural traditions (empowerment), governance and planning (implementation), and product development which touches on facets of cultural revitalisation, heritage interpretation and authenticity (innovation).

1.2.2.1 International Indigenous tourism governance

Morton (2019) recently investigated the Australian approach to Indigenous tourism and compared it to countries with much higher levels of international tourist participation in Indigenous experiences (New Zealand, Canada and the US), concluding that the structure of the Indigenous tourism industry, and how it supports Indigenous entrepreneurs, is a limiting factor in Australia (Morton 2019). A comparative review of Australian, Namibian and North American international case studies of Indigenous tourism ventures concludes that “best practice” approaches to sustainable development are dependent on the local context (Whitford & Ruhanen, 2016); however, conditions for successful Indigenous tourism business development typically include broad, governing enablers (i.e. policy and land tenure), opportunities for collaboration that empower Indigenous stakeholders, and diversity within Indigenous tourism product development.

Current economic research on Canada’s Indigenous tourism sector suggests that the Indigenous tourism sector is growing substantially, and that key drivers of GDP growth in the region include travel services, retail, gaming and accommodation, with the lead driver of employment continuing to be recreation and outdoor activities (Fiser, 2018). Culturally appropriate tourism development is a priority for Indigenous operators in the region, with many driven by a mission to promote local culture and protect heritage. Financial and human resource capacity constraints present significant obstacles to growth. The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) is a consortium of Aboriginal tourism industry organisations and

government representatives from across Canada. It focuses on creating partnerships between associations, organisations, government departments and industry leaders to support the growth of Indigenous tourism (ITAC, 2019). ITAC also maintains a Product Development Fund³ to guide and support Indigenous tourism businesses to reach a market-ready state and develop sustainable growth for economic success.

In New Zealand, the number, variety and quality of Māori tourism businesses has increased dramatically over the past few years and the Indigenous tourism sector makes an important contribution to New Zealand's regional economies (Tourism New Zealand 2019). Most Māori tourism organisations are small enterprises, with about three quarters having between 1-5 employees, and only three businesses (<1%) employing more than 100 staff. Māori elements are incorporated in a wide range of tourism products, ranging from *kapa haka* (performing arts) and cultural tours to hiking and white water rafting.

Tourism New Zealand's work in Māori development focuses on building the organisation's own internal capacity and understanding of Māori culture; helping build the capability of Māori tourism businesses; and working with international travel sellers to raise awareness and understanding of Māori tourism products and to support them in selling these experiences to their customers (Tourism New Zealand, 2019). New Zealand Māori Tourism is an independent incorporated society that promotes, helps and leads the Māori tourism sector, including building commercial and cultural skills and leadership among Māori tourism operators (NZMT, 2019). NZMT works with the Māori tourism sector to provide compelling visitor experiences, and to build a strong commercial and cultural leadership. In addition, the New Zealand Māori Arts and Crafts Institute promotes and encourages Māori art, crafts, performance and culture (Te Puia, 2019).

In the United States, the *Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience (NATIVE) Act* of 2016 mandates that federal agencies with travel or tourism functions update their management plans and tourism initiatives to include Indian Tribes and tribal organisations as well as Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian organisations. Generally, the NATIVE Act mandates and encourages:

- Enhancement and integration of Native American tourism into federal management planning
- Increased coordination and collaboration between tribes and Federal agencies' tourism assets
- Expanded heritage and cultural tourism opportunities in the U.S.
- Federal agencies providing funding and technical assistance to Indian tribes, tribal organisations, and Native Hawaiian organisations to spur important infrastructure development, increase tourism capacity, and elevate living standards in Native American communities (AIANTA, n.d.).

Furthermore, the NATIVE Act called for the departments of Commerce and the Interior to name a tribal tourism non-profit agency to facilitate implementation of the law, known as American

³ Indigenous tourism businesses can apply for grants of up to a maximum of \$10,000 CAD. Eligibility is restricted to businesses with at least 51% Indigenous ownership or control, and operating within Canada.

Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA). AIANTA is dedicated to advancing Indian Country tourism across the United States, and it serves as the voice and resource for tribes and tribal organisations engaged in cultural tourism. The organisation provides technical assistance, training and educational resources for tribes to support tourism development, while working to ensure tribal tourism is represented in planning and decision-making nation-wide. In partnership with George Washington University, AIANTA also offers a Professional Certificate Program in Cultural Heritage Tourism to assist participants in exploring different avenues to develop Indigenous tourism programs.

Looking at international success stories, strong, independent and united Indigenous tourism advocacy organisations are more effective at driving outcomes for Indigenous businesses and communities than mainstream tourism organisations. Typically, external investment is required to establish these Indigenous tourism organisations. Additionally, the presence of Indigenous tourism legislation appears to assist in ensuring long-term commitment from governments, while a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and partnership agreements between stakeholders in Indigenous tourism businesses ensure the longevity of these initiatives by creating mutual trust and enabling focus on their own key activities (Morton 2019).

The Larrakia Declaration, a key outcome of the Pacific Asia Tourism Conference (2012), provides six principles to guide the development of Indigenous tourism (WINTA, 2012). These include that:

- Respect for customary law and lore, land and water, traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions, cultural heritage will underpin all tourism decisions.
- Indigenous culture and the land and waters on which it is based will be protected and promoted through well managed tourism practices and appropriate interpretation.
- Indigenous peoples will determine the extent and nature and organisational arrangements for their participation in tourism and that governments and multilateral agencies will support the empowerment of Indigenous people.
- That governments have a duty to consult and accommodate Indigenous peoples before undertaking decisions on public policy and programs designed to foster the development of Indigenous tourism.
- The tourism industry will respect Indigenous intellectual property rights, cultures and traditional practices, the need for sustainable and equitable business partnerships and the proper care of the environment and communities that support them.
- That equitable partnerships between the tourism industry and Indigenous people will include the sharing of cultural awareness and skills development which support the well-being of communities and enable enhancement of individual livelihoods (WINTA 2012, Recommendations).

The key outcomes from the 2018 World Indigenous Tourism Summit (WITS) in 2018 (Waitangi, New Zealand) included: identifying a need for wider international Indigenous networking; the commencement of discussions on a process for defining protocols for research into Indigenous tourism; and conference concerns expressed at the relative absence of Indigenous youth and a lack of international government engagement (Edmond, 2018).

The *Indigenous People and the Travel Industry: Global Good Practice Guidelines* (G Adventures et al, 2017) provides guidance for travel companies (tour operators, hotels, travel

agencies and cruise lines) on how to develop, contract, operate and market Indigenous tourism experiences.

1.2.3 Traditional values associated with coral reefs

Over many generations, Indigenous communities associated with coral reefs have developed sets of beliefs and customs associated with their marine estates in which particular species and places have special meaning. There is a considerable body of literature describing the complexity of the cultural, spiritual, ceremonial and territorial relationship between Indigenous peoples and their sea country, similar to their relationship with the land (NOO, 2004).

It is commonly known that reefs and coral cays support Indigenous communities through providing a wide range of foods such as fish, crustaceans, turtle meat and eggs, dugong, and sea-birds and their eggs. Various types of shell are used for trade, gifts, utensils, weapons, and for personal adornment or indicators of status. But as outlined in Marrie (2018), the relationship of Indigenous communities to their reefs may also be expressed in particular cultural and spiritual values that have evolved over time, including in art and ceremony. Ceremonies frequently focussed on particular totemic species (turtle, dugong, whale-shark, dolphin, tuna), important natural phenomena such as the winds, moon and the stars (e.g. as navigational aids), and celebrations of seafaring prowess. Many coastal and island communities developed considerable sea-faring skills, which saw them sail vast distances to gather resources and exchange goods with other communities, as well as enabling them to travel as tourists.

In contemporary times these values are also portrayed in Indigenous visual arts, ceremonies and cultural performances of island and coastal communities; for example, the tradition-focussed prints, head-dresses and masks of the Torres Strait Islanders have generated exhibitions such as *Ilan Pasin: This is Our Way* (Mosby, 1998). For the Yolngu of northeast Arnhem Land, traditional bark paintings of “sea country” also serve a political purpose to assert their rights over their marine estates, as in the exhibition *Saltwater: Yirrkala Bark Paintings of Sea Country* (Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre, 1999), while other bodies of Oceanic art work also provide social, cultural and political commentaries.

Indigenous coral reef communities in many parts of the world also traditionally set aside and restrict access to certain areas, for example, for religious, ceremonial and conservation purposes, in effect creating their own systems of protected areas important to the preservation of both nature and culture. A central feature of traditional marine resource management and tenure systems was the ability to control, restrict and regulate access to marine resources and habitats, and implement the rotational use of marine resources for sustainability. Areas of particular traditional significance would normally be under the authority of traditional institutions or spiritual leaders vested with “statutory” powers, and a body of customary regulations and norms would usually be defined and enforced to ensure compliance with rules governing traditional access to and use of the resources of such areas (Marrie, 2018).

The estimated global value of coral reef tourism has an annual value of \$36 billion USD (Spalding et al, 2017). However, coral reef tourism is highly vulnerable to natural disasters and economic or political shocks, and Indigenous salt water peoples share common global concerns regarding factors that impact the coral reefs on which they depend, wholly or partly,

for their livelihoods (such as global warming, ocean acidification, coral bleaching, and marine pollution).

Other issues often of particular concern to Indigenous salt water peoples include: insecure tenure of their marine estates and inability to control access to and use of traditionally-used marine resources; disregard for cultural practices and lack of respect for traditional knowledge such as their own sustainable use practices regarding coral reef marine resources; marginalisation by the industry itself; and inequitable sharing of the financial, economic and social benefits that the industry might bring to the community (Marrie, 2018).

Despite these vulnerabilities, Indigenous reef tourism ventures can still have the potential to be more resilient than other tourism enterprises. Analysis of reef tourism in Thailand revealed that informal enterprises (i.e. locally managed and without foreign ownership) reported better financial conditions and higher levels of social capital than formal enterprises following the 2004 tsunami and the 2008 political crisis (Biggs et al, 2012). In addition, a number of reef ecotourism ventures are designed to combine protection of small areas of the reef with preserving the livelihoods of local communities, such as dive tourism in the Philippines (Fabinyi, 2008), the Dugong, Seagrass and Coastal Communities Initiative (CSM, n.d.), or shark diving in Fiji (Brunnschweiler, 2010) and Palau (Vianna et al, 2012). Conversely, reef tourism can have negative social and environmental impacts if not practiced sustainably (Huang & Coelho, 2017).

Involvement of Indigenous coral reef communities in tourism activities can take place both *in situ* (at coral reef sites) and *ex situ* locations. A review of relevant activities provided in Marrie (2018) includes the following examples:

- *In situ* activities: fishing (including sport-fishing); diving; whale-watching; under-water photography; swimming with iconic species such as whale-sharks, dolphins and manta-rays; collecting (corals, sea-shells, aquarium species); and activities which may include cultural experiences via an Indigenous guide or interpreter (for example, on tourist boats).
- *Ex situ* activities: cultural performances at the local resort or cultural centre; enjoyment of local cuisine at restaurants and local markets; and annual festivals.

Marrie (2018) also notes the important role of local traditional ecological knowledge in enhancing the coral reef tourism experience. Detailed knowledge regarding the distribution and abundance of marine animals, which can vary from year to year with types of habitat, season, lunar phase and other factors; and knowledge of spawning locations and migratory behaviours of marine animals, etc., can prove invaluable to visitors keen to dive the reefs, photograph marine activity, or fish for prized food species.

However, in general, targeted research regarding the relationship between Indigenous coral reef communities and the potential mutual benefits that could be realised through coral reef tourism has to date been significantly limited, and more work in this space would be welcomed.

1.3 Indigenous Tourism in Australia

1.3.1 Indigenous tourism trends

Tourism is Australia's largest services export industry, accounting for around 10 per cent of total exports, and Australia's Indigenous culture is considered a key point of differentiation in the international tourism market. In 2018, there were 9 million international visitors to Australia, with a tourism spend of over AUD \$42 billion (DFAT, 2019).

Studies on the levels of Indigenous tourism in Australia are conflicting. On one hand, several recent studies have indicated that Indigenous tourism in Australia is declining despite global marketing efforts (e.g. Holder & Ruhanen, 2018). Findings from a gap analysis (Ruhanen et al, 2013) suggested that across Australia, Indigenous tourism operators overestimate international visitor demand for Indigenous experiences; visitors have low spontaneous awareness of Indigenous tourism experiences; and domestic visitors have little interest in Indigenous tourism. Additionally, barriers to Indigenous tourism success include limited opportunities in forming partnerships with other tour operators, limited training, and unfamiliarity with the tourism distribution system (Pabel et al, 2017).

On the other hand, the latest data from Tourism Research Australia (TRA) shows that interest in Indigenous tourism is steadily increasing. The number of tourists visiting Australia that have participated in at least one Indigenous tourism activity during their trip has risen by an average of 9 per cent per year since 2013, reaching 963,000 visitors in 2018. Expenditure by visitors who participate in Indigenous tourism is also rising, increasing by 8 per cent per year between 2013 and 2018. Much of the surge in popularity of Indigenous tourism interest is driven by increasing numbers of Asian tourists, particularly Thailand, India and Indonesia. The United States and Scandinavia have also grown as source markets. A quarter of the tourists participating in Indigenous tourism arrived on a package tour, an increase of over 10% on the previous year (DFAT, 2019).

According to TRA, the most popular Indigenous tourism experience in Australia is experiencing an Aboriginal art or craft or cultural display (experienced by 47% of participants), followed by 29% attending a dance or theatre performance, 27% visiting a cultural centre, 25% a gallery, and 21% a site or community (DFAT, 2019). Fourteen per cent purchased Indigenous craft or souvenirs to take home. Furthermore, reviews of Indigenous tourism experiences are overwhelmingly positive (Holder & Ruhanen, 2018).

The highest proportion of international Indigenous tourism visitor stays were recorded in the Northern Territory (NT), including the Lasseter tourism region (88%), MacDonnell Ranges (86%), Litchfield, Kakadu, Arnhem land (75%), Katherine, Daly (66%) and Alice Springs (57%). Outside of NT, regions that recorded a high proportion of tourism visitor nights were the Barossa (64%), outback NSW (55%), Flinders Ranges and outback South Australia (48%) (DFAT, 2019).

1.3.2 Indigenous tourism in Tropical North Queensland

TRA reports that the proportion of international Indigenous tourism visitor nights recorded in the Great Barrier Reef region for the year ending 2018 is 28 per cent (DFAT, 2019). Although the number of international visitors to Tropical North Queensland (TNQ) participating in

Indigenous tourism product offerings appears to be relatively high compared to the country as a whole, it is far lower than in other regions promoting Indigenous tourism in the NT, New South Wales and South Australia (DFAT, 2019).

A recent analysis of Indigenous tourism experiences in the Wet Tropics region reported that first-time visitors (87.5%) were significantly more likely to have participated in an Indigenous tourism activity than repeat visitors to the Wet Tropics. Findings also showed that respondents who were looking to take part in Indigenous tourism experiences had a high interest in experiencing other nature-based activities (Pabel et al, 2017).

Surveys undertaken by TRA reveal significant discrepancies regarding which visitors are participating in Indigenous tourism activities. While on average, about 38% of international visitors to Australia during a four-year period (2014-2017) elected to experience Indigenous activities during their trip in Australia, over the same time period only 2% of national visitors to the region experienced Indigenous activities during their trip (C. Palmeri, *pers. comm*).⁴ The low level of domestic tourist participation in Indigenous tourism has been associated with holiday expectations of relaxation and indulgence, and the perception that these requirements were not able to be met by an Indigenous tourism experience (TRA, 2009). In addition, researchers have suggested that issues of racism and prejudice that have arisen from the long history of marginalisation of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples could also be related to lowered domestic participation in Indigenous tourism activities (Ruhanen & Whitford, 2016).

Much is also made of the contribution of cruise ships to the GBR tourism economy. As Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) reports: "In 2018/19, Cairns welcomed 193 cruise visit days, with 97,174 passengers and nearly 16,000 crew contributing more than \$50 million direct expenditure into the region, while the total economic benefit reached nearly \$102 million." Port Douglas received 15 ship calls with 20,500 passengers contributing \$4.78 million in direct expenditure to the local economy. Cooktown welcomed one ship and Thursday Island six (TTNQ, 2019c, p. 24). However, local Indigenous artists and shops in Cairns report via interview that they are rarely beneficiaries of this expenditure, as cruise ships docking at the Cairns Cruise Liner Terminal actually spend very little time in port, and much of their time has been pre-booked for a trip to the GBR and/or the rainforest (Munganbana Norman Miller, *pers.com*). For example, the average total time spent in port by three cruise ships arriving on 22-23 October 2019, with an estimated total of 8,000 passengers and crew, was about nine and a half hours (Ports North, 2019). However, local Cairns Indigenous business-woman Charmaine Saunders, owner of the Mainie Aboriginal Art Gallery, from time-to-time takes advantage of the cruise-liner industry by running a pop-up art shop in the Cruise Liner Terminal, but admits that the fees are high (Saunders, *pers. comm*).

The growing Chinese market is currently the largest source market of international visitors to the Great Barrier Reef (Cairns/Cooktown management area), with research by TTNQ forecasting more than 600,000 visitors to Cairns and the GBR by 2022 given direct air access,

⁴ For the visitor surveys, information is not collected for holiday location for international visitors, so the activities could have taken place anywhere in Australia, not just the GBR region. However, location data is collected for domestic visitors, and for comparison purposes, 1.7% of Australian visitors experiencing Indigenous activities specifically in the Wet Tropics and GBR regions, versus 2.4% of Australian visitors experiencing Indigenous activities during their trip across Australia.

up from 216,000 visitors in 2017 (TTNQ, 2018). The greatest barriers to selection of Indigenous tourism activities are low levels of awareness within China, and marketing that fails to highlight unique elements of local culture.

1.3.3 State and Territory Indigenous tourism councils

Indigenous tourism operators in several States and Territories in Australia have developed advocacy bodies to educate and inform government and industry on the needs of local Indigenous tourism businesses and their markets. For example, the Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council (WAITOC)⁵ was established in 2002 to support Aboriginal tourism enterprises in Western Australia (WA). In addition to advocacy and marketing, they play a role in improving business and product development, assisting businesses to become ready for the international market⁶. The NT Aboriginal Tourism Advisory Council (ATAC) contributes to developing Aboriginal tourism enterprises across the Northern Territory⁷. The NSW Aboriginal Tourism Operators Council (NATOC) provides advice and information to industry stakeholders, and promotes and mentors Aboriginal tourism products in NSW⁸. There is not yet an equivalent Indigenous tourism advocacy body in Queensland.

1.4 Indigenous Tourism on the GBR

1.4.1 Traditional Owner interests in the GBR

There are at least 70 Traditional Owner groups with rights and interests in sea country along the length of the GBR. There has been significant progress in Traditional Owners securing formal recognition of their rights by governments over the past decade, and more than half of the GBR catchment is subject to formal Indigenous ownership, interests, or co-management arrangements (Figure 1, AIMS, 2018d).

⁵ WAITOC website: <http://www.waitoc.com/>

⁶ AITC website: <https://www.aitc.org.au/>

⁷ ATAC website: <https://www.tourismnt.com.au/en/about-us/who-we-work-with/aboriginal-tourism-advisory-council>

⁸ NATOC website: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/natocaboriginaltourism/about/>

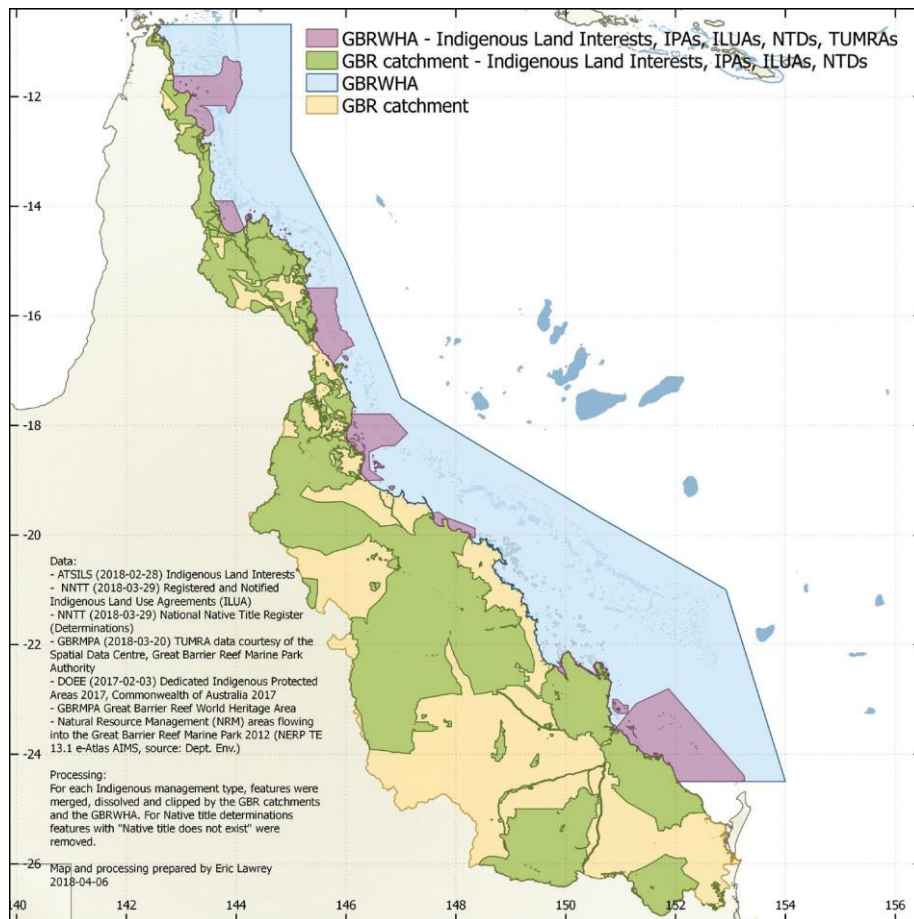


Figure 1: Traditional Owner land and sea interests in the GBR and catchments (AIMS, 2018d)

Table 1 identifies some of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owner groups and nations of the Great Barrier Reef. The regions indicate the broad area where these Traditional Owner groups assert their rights and interests.

Table 1: Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef (GBRMPA, 2018a)

Name	Region
Torres Strait Regional Sea Claim	Torres Strait region and Cape York region
Darnley Island (Erub) groups	Eastern Torres Strait Islands and Northern Great Barrier Reef region including Raine Island
Murray Island (Mer) groups	Eastern Torres Strait Islands and Northern Great Barrier Reef region including Raine Island
Stephen Island (Ugar) groups	Eastern Torres Strait Islands and Northern Great Barrier Reef region including Raine Island
Gudang	Newcastle Bay region
Yadhaigana	Captain Billy Landing region
Wuthathi	Cape Grenville region
Kuuku Ya'u	Portland Roads region
Kanthanumpun	Claude River region

Name	Region
Uutaalgnunu (Night Island) group	Night Island region
Umpila	Cape Sidmouth South region
Angkum	Cape Sidmouth region
Lama Lama	Princess Charlotte Bay region
PaalPaal	Cape Sidmouth region
Guugu Yimithirr Warra Nation	Lizard Island to Hopevale region
Ngulan people	Starke River region
Yuku-Baja-Muliku	Walker Bay to Walsh Bay region
Eastern Kuku Yalanji	Cedar Bay to Port Douglas region
Wanyurr Majay	Fishery Falls, Babinda, Miriwinni, Mt Bellenden Kerr region
Yirrganydji people	Cairns to Port Douglas region
Gimuy Yidinji	Cairns/Trinity Inlet region
Gunggandji	Kings Beach/Fitzroy Island region
Guru Gulu Gunggandji	Yarrabah/Green Island region
Mandingalbay Yidinji - Gunggandji	Cooper Point region
Lower Coastal Yidinji	Russell River region
Mamu people	Innisfail region
Djiru	Mission Beach region
Gulnay	Tully region
Girramay	Cardwell to Murray Upper area
Bandjin	Hinchinbrook region
Warrgamay	Lucinda region
Nywaigi	Halifax Bay region
Manbarra	Palm Island region
Wulgurukaba	Magnetic Island/Townsville region
Bindal	Townsville region
Juru	Home Hill/Bowen area/Whitsunday region
Gia	Whitsunday region (Mainland)
Ngaro	Whitsunday region (Islands)
Yuwibara	Mackay region
Darumbal	Broad Sound to Rockhampton region
Woppaburra	Keppel Islands region
Taribelang Bunda	Gladstone/Bundaberg region
Bailai	Gladstone/Bundaberg region
Gooreng Gooreng	Gladstone/Bundaberg region
Gurang	Gladstone/Bundaberg region

1.4.2 Tourism activities in the GBR region

Tourism has emerged as a major industry in the GBR region and the GBR is widely promoted as a unique attraction in Queensland and Australia. Tourism activity on the Reef has been estimated to contribute \$5.7 billion annually to the Australian economy, while supporting over 58,000 full time equivalent jobs in the tourism industry (Deloitte Access Economics, 2017). Tourism activities in the GBR take place in a variety of environments, ranging from coastal, estuarine and island habitats, to inshore, mid-shelf and outer coral reefs. In addition to cultural experiences, Reef-related direct use tourism and recreation activities can include snorkelling, scuba diving, fishing, swimming, sailing, boating, water sports, watching wildlife, sightseeing/exploration, photography, viewing coral/reef and coastal habitats, visiting islands/sand cays and beaches, camping/hiking, scenic flights, eating local seafood, socialising, and studying/learning (Deloitte Access Economics, 2017).

1.4.2.1 Location of infrastructure and activities

The most common commercial marine programs on the Reef include vessel-based day trips to reefs, islands, cays and pontoons, with about 2,240,000 visitor days⁹ in 2018 (GBRMPA, 2019b). The Wet Tropics (including Cairns) and Burnett Mary (Bundaberg, Fraser Island and surrounds) NRM regions are particularly important to the regional tourism industry, with more than half of the visitor nights spent in the GBR region occurring in these two regions alone (Deloitte Access Economics, 2017). Regional tourism organisations (RTOs) such as TTNQ based in Cairns, and Tourism Whitsundays located in the Whitsundays heavily promote Reef tourism (Prideaux & Pabel, 2018). Around 80% of the tourism activity occurs within seven per cent of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMP) (TEQ, 2019b, p. 2, 8), with most coral reef focused tourism activity located in Port Douglas, Cairns and the Whitsundays. The majority of tourism visitor days (66%) were spent by visitors doing activities that were run by the 25 most active operators (GBRMPA 2019b).

Tourism economic and infrastructure hubs are primarily located in the central region of the Reef, particularly in Cairns, Townsville and Whitsundays, where reef resourcing is already high (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018d). The southern region of the reef has a medium level of reef resourcing with economic hubs in Mackay, Rockhampton and Gladstone, while the far northern region of the Reef is remote, lacks infrastructure, and has restricted economic opportunities. In particular, lack of reef transport infrastructure and equipment limits Indigenous peoples' participation in the tourism industry, which is consequently restricted to shore-based cultural activities such as dancing, art and storytelling; and employment servicing tourists in the hospitality sector (Marrie, 2017).

1.4.2.2 Tourist demographics

According to 2017 census data (Curnock & Marshall, 2019), the largest proportion of domestic visitors to the GBR came from within Queensland (37%), followed by visitors from New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory (28%), and then Victoria (24%). Around a quarter of domestic tourists were first time visitors to the GBR region, and more than half visited the GBR during their stay in the region. A quarter of domestic visitors had participated in a commercial tourism trip to the GBR during their stay when surveyed. English-speaking

⁹ One visitor day = one visit by one tourist for one day

international tourists were typically younger than domestic tourists (mean age 27.4 vs 43.5), with the largest proportion of international respondents coming from Europe and North America. The majority of international tourists were first time visitors to the GBR region (86%), and more than half had taken a commercial tour to the GBR during their stay.

1.4.2.3 Indigenous tourism activities

There is no standard definition that moderates 'Indigenous coral reef tourism' activities in the GBR region, and consequently there are many different interpretations of the term. Activities that typically benefit both Indigenous communities and the tourism industry include:

- Indigenous people directly operating or investing in tourism operations
- Business partnerships between Indigenous organisations and tourism operators
- Indigenous people employed in tourism operations
- Tourism specifically to interpret Indigenous cultures and stories
- Indigenous input into the way tourism is managed.

Of less direct benefit to the Traditional Owners, mainstream tourism organisations incorporating Indigenous culture and stories to enhance their programs may also be considered to be Indigenous tourism. A brief survey of the wealth of grey literature on Indigenous tourism in the Reef area (including travel guides, brochures) suggests that a wide variety of different tourism experiences are marketed as including 'Indigenous' elements, but few acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the area in these promotional materials¹⁰. These range from activities that merely incorporate 'traditional stories' that are being told by non-Indigenous operators, to more in-depth authentic Indigenous experiences being run by Indigenous businesses, and advertising in this area requires close scrutiny on a case-by-case basis.

A number of major GBR tourism companies operating from Cairns and Port Douglas, such as the Quicksilver Group, CaPTA Group, Sunlover Reef Cruises and ExperienceCo, offer tour packages which include Indigenous experiences.¹¹ Typically they offer one and two day "reef and rainforest packages": with one day offering a cruise to specific GBR locations; and the other involving a number of package options generally associated with the wet tropics rainforest (e.g. well-known tours, such as the Kuranda Scenic Railway, Skyrail Rainforest Cableway, a Daintree River cruise or a visit to an iconic location such as Cape Tribulation and Mossman Gorge). In some cases the package options include a visit to the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park, Mossman Gorge Centre or the Pamagirri Aboriginal Experience at the Rainforestation Nature Park¹², and in the case of tours out of Port Douglas, can also involve smaller Indigenous-owned businesses offering an Indigenous experience package (e.g. guided walk, bush-tucker, smoking ceremony, and visit to local Indigenous art gallery). Similarly, LARC! Tours, operating out of the Town of 1770 and Agnes Water in the SGBR region, advertise Goolimil Walkabout as an option in their tour package.¹³

¹⁰ This information is based on sales/advertising brochures and pamphlets that were readily available in local tourism/travel information/booking shops. Over 50 different brochures were gathered in the Cairns CBD and analysed on 4 September 2019. Approximately 10% of the activities included Indigenous experiences, and only two mentioned the Traditional Owners.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² See: <https://www.rainforest.com.au/experiences/pamagirri-aboriginal-experience/>

¹³ See: <https://1770larctours.com.au/goolimil-walkabout/>

1.4.2.4 Regional variations in tourism along the Reef

As noted above, over 80 per cent of tourism activity occurs within seven per cent of the GBR Marine Park, and most of that is focused in the Cairns-Port Douglas area and the Whitsundays. As the only GBR regional city to benefit from having an international airport, the Cairns–Port Douglas area also enjoys a considerable advantage over the other GBR regional cities in terms of international visitor numbers. With the benefit of direct domestic flight connections with the nation's capital cities, it also hosts a considerable number of inter-state domestic tourists. The GBR regions north and south of Cairns and Port Douglas rely extensively on the drive tourism market (Cape York Sustainable Futures, 2016). This has been promoted through TEQ's earlier *Queensland Drive Tourism Strategy 2013- 2015*, and more recently, Capricorn Enterprise (on behalf of the Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Ltd and Bundaberg North Burnett RTOs) and Townsville Enterprise Ltd (on behalf of the seven GBR RTOs) have produced drive tourism guides for the GBR – the *Southern Great Barrier Reef: Where Great Begins* (2017) and *The Ultimate Guide to Driving the Great Barrier Reef: Nature's greatest gift to the world* (2017) respectively.

The opportunities for Indigenous tourism businesses in terms of the experiences, products and services they offer will also need to reflect these contrasting markets. Not surprisingly, at present most of the Indigenous tourism products and experiences offered along the GBR occur in the Cairns-Port Douglas area (that is, within the GBRMP Cairns / Cooktown management area) and are largely dominated by the larger companies: Tjapukai Cultural Park (see case study in s3.4.2.3), RainForestation Pamagirri Aboriginal Experience and Mossman Gorge Visitor Centre (s3.4.2.2), with smaller Indigenous-owned businesses operating out of Cooya Beach and the Daintree. There are also a number of Indigenous owned art gallery/shops in the Cairns-Port Douglas area, including in Cairns UMI Arts (celebrating its fifteenth year), Mainie Aboriginal Art Gallery (s3.4.3.4), Reef & Rainforest Aboriginal Art Gallery, Kgari 3 Sisters Art Gallery and Gift Shop, Ancient Journeys Aboriginal Art, Gifts and Tours, and the Janbal Aboriginal Art Gallery in Mossman. The area is also witnessing the emergence of new ventures, for example, the major international tourism company ExperienceCo is partnering with local Traditional Owner groups with its new cruise venture Dreamtime Dive and Snorkel which has received considerable acclaim (Dragun, 2019; Carruthers, 2019a, 2019b; see also case study in s3.4.3.1). New Indigenous-owned enterprises are also being established, such as the Mandingalbay Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation's Mandingalbay Ancient Indigenous Tours which operate in the East Trinity area across the inlet from the Cairns city centre (s3.4.2.5), Minjil Yidinji Cultural Services (s3.4.3.3), both of which offer very different and customised experiences for small group bookings in contrast with the larger tour groups accommodated by Tjapukai, Pamagirri and Mossman Gorge. Operating from Yarrabah is the Yuluu Cultural Dance & Tour Guide to Fitzroy Island, a Gunggandji family-owned business. Recently, the Cairns Indigenous Tourism Hub opened in Cairns in January 2020 (s3.4.3.5). The hub supports a number of Gimuy Walubara Yidinji tourism focussed businesses including operating an Indigenous tours desk (with an on-line platform AppOriginee – an Indigenous Experience booking app), the GumbuGumbu café, which offers a menu based on locally sourced bush foods, and the Kgari 3 Sisters Art Gallery and Gift Shop which partners with a local Gimuy Walubara Yidinji artist (Cluff, 2020).

Two important tourism infrastructure projects are under way in the Cairns-Port Douglas region, one a local Traditional Owner-led project, and the other a State-sponsored project which will

provide opportunities for Traditional Owner generated cultural experiences. The first is the Mandingalbay Indigenous Cultural Tourism Precinct in East Trinity, with construction scheduled to start in 2020 (Mundraby & Tait, 2019). The second is the Wangetti Trail, a 94km dual-use walking and biking trail which extends from Palm Cove to Port Douglas and will provide opportunities for the Yirrganydji and Kuku Yalanji Traditional Owners of the land over which the trail passes (Douglas Shire Council, 2019).

Further possibilities are opening up in the realm of adventure or expedition tourism, particularly for the Cape York and Torres Strait regions with the home-porting in Cairns of Coral Expeditions' 120-passenger ship *Coral Adventurer*, with its sister ship *Coral Geographer* due to join the Far North Queensland based tour company's fleet of four in December 2020 (Bateman, 2019a). Emulating the expedition cruises taking place along the Kimberley coast between Darwin and Broome, these ships are capable of calling into remote communities and locations and are less restricted by wet season conditions which frequently see the Cape communities shut off to road access, offering some prospect of year-round tourist visitation.

Fishing tourism is also being touted as an attraction between Cairns and Rockhampton following the declaration of net-free zones in November 2015 off the coast of Cairns, Mackay and Rockhampton, banning commercial fishing boats using nets (Bateman, 2019b). A "barramundi highway" linking the three regional cities could present strong possibilities for Traditional Owner groups to establish charter businesses to cater for tourists wanting to fish local estuaries.

If Marcia Langton's book *Welcome to Country* (Langton, 2018) and TEQ's *Connect With Culture: 50 ways to experience Indigenous culture* (TEQ, 2017a) are taken as indicators, save for the afore-mentioned Indigenous tourism attractions available in the Cairns-Port Douglas area, there is very little else mentioned with regard to the rest of the GBR. While Langton (2018) makes specific mention of the GBRMP, including reference to its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners and significant cultural sites being located on many of its islands, she does not identify any specific Indigenous tourism attractions associated with the GBR, save for the Torres Strait (Langton, 2018). In *Connect with Culture*, the only GBR Indigenous cultural attraction listed between Bundaberg at its southern-most extremity and Townsville is the Goolimbil Walkabout Tour near the Town of 1770 (TEQ, 2017a, p. 5). Similarly, the business-sponsored *Ultimate Guide to Driving the Great Barrier Reef* lists no GBR-focussed Indigenous cultural attractions for the Southern Great Barrier Reef, Mackay, Whitsundays, and Townsville North Queensland regions, although SeaLink does list Great Palm Island among one of its "iconic" locations for its adventure tours (TEL, 2017, p. 25). The *Southern Great Barrier Reef: Where Great Begins* does not identify any GBR-related Indigenous cultural attraction on its tour map of the region, however, Goolimbil Walkabout, is listed as a tour option offered by one of the tour guide's advertisers, 1770 LARC! Tours (Capricorn Enterprise, 2017, p. 6-7, 80). It is not clear whether this lack of inclusion of Indigenous tourism offerings is primarily due to a reluctance or inability from these businesses to pay for insertion into promotional brochures, or other factors.

Indigenous experiences provide an opportunity to expand visitation away from capital cities, and to boost economic spending across regional areas. Research has shown that twice as many international visitors participate in Indigenous cultural activities when they visit a regional area in Australia (11% participating in Indigenous activities on average in between 2018-2019,

compared to 22% for those visiting a regional area) (TRA, 2020). However, only 6% of international visitors actually visited an Aboriginal site or attended an Indigenous performance, thus it appears that most tourist interactions with Indigenous culture remain shallow.

1.4.3 Changing reef conditions

1.4.3.1 Climate change

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) *Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C*, released in October 2018, notes that coral reefs are indicated to be at great risk. It estimates that the reefs will decline by 70-90 per cent with global warming of 1.5°C, and virtually all (> 99 per cent) would be lost with warming of 2°C (IPCC, 2018). Additional changes to global ecosystems include changes in precipitation, changes to the number and intensity of wind storms, the propensity for more intense and extensive fire events, rising sea levels, increasing acidification of the world's oceans and significant changes in ecosystems including loss of marine species (IPCC, 2014). Collectively, these impacts have a cumulative effect with the potential to weaken the viability of the tourism industry in areas such as the GBR. According to 2017 surveys, concerns about the impact of climate change to the Reef are held by both international and domestic tourists (considered an immediate threat by 78% and 67% of tourists, respectively) as well as tourism operators (considered an immediate threat by 63%), with the proportion steadily increasing (Curnock & Marshall, 2019).

1.4.3.2 Reef surveys

The AIMS Long-Term Reef Monitoring Program has surveyed 47 mid-shore and offshore reefs across the GBR region for the past 30 years as part of its ongoing monitoring program. The report for the 2017/2018 period indicates that coral reef conditions continue to decline “due to the cumulative impacts of multiple, severe disturbances over the past four years, including coral bleaching, cyclones and crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks” (AIMS, 2019b, para 1).

The annual updates divide the GBR Marine Park into three regions (northern, central, southern), each showing considerable variation in the rates of decline and recovery of coral cover. The survey reefs in the northern region have lost about half of their coral cover, reflecting the cumulative impacts of two severe cyclones and two episodes of severe coral bleaching over the period 2014 to 2017. Reefs in the central region have sustained significant coral loss due to coral bleaching and the spread of crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks. In the southern region, some reefs recovered, but many suffered intense crown-of-thorn starfish outbreaks and coral cover declined for the first time in seven years. Trends in mean hard coral cover on reefs in all three regions now show a steep decline.

1.4.4 Marketing the GBR

1.4.4.1 “Reef grief” – Messaging the Great Barrier Reef

Natural disasters can have a devastating effect on tourism, and continued messages about the impacts of climate change and other disturbances on the Reef have the potential to decrease the numbers of tourists visiting the GBR region. An analysis of sensationalist media reporting of the 2011 Blue Mountains bushfires concluded that the media's representation or misrepresentation of the disaster contributed to an estimated loss of over \$100 million in tourism related revenue for the destination (Walters et al, 2016).

When analysing the impacts of the 2016 and 2017 mass coral bleaching events on the GBR tourism industry, Prideaux et al (2018, p. 14) note that “continuing reports of [the Reef’s] decline are very likely to result in a decline in tourism numbers and weaken the case for additional funding support”.

Ramis and Prideaux (2013) have postulated that the ability of communities to successfully adapt to changes in the Reef will depend on the communities’ levels of resilience, the rate that the ecosystem changes, the level of economic assistance given by the public sector, the willingness of the private sector to invest in new tourism experiences and associated infrastructure, and successfully overcoming business and government inertia. More generally, tourism research suggests that overall tourism community resilience is enhanced by factors that include emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing, as well as cognitive and behaviour competencies (Sheppard and Williams, 2016), controlling tourism media marketing messages (Walters et al, 2016), and establishing proactive vulnerability reduction strategies for disaster-prone regions (Gurtner, 2016).

1.4.4.2 Destination versus Experience

A few core experiences dominate tourism perceptions of Queensland. Perceptions expressed through social media suggest that Queensland overall is seen to offer experiences within the themes of beach, islands, nature and adventure. However, one of the key experiences that has been identified as limited or missing from social media is Indigenous experiences (Strategy 8 Consulting, 2014).

With the tag, “Tourism – It’s priceless”, a series of articles was published in the *Cairns Post* in the first few months of 2019 highlighting a number of points of view about how the Cairns region, in particular, should be marketed¹⁴. Essentially, the debate focussed on whether Cairns should be marketed as a destination (“Cairns: The Gateway to the Great Barrier Reef”) or whether the strategy should stick with TTNQ’s experience-based marketing strategy. The experience-based strategy aligns with TEQ’s overall strategy for promoting Queensland, as encapsulated in the notion of the RTOs identifying three or four “hero experiences” for each of the state’s thirteen tourism regions.

1.4.5 Impacts of tourism on Indigenous GBR communities

As most tourism activity occurs around the Cairns-Port Douglas area and the Whitsundays, this also means that it is the Traditional Owners of sea country in those areas who are likely to be the most impacted by tourism activities. It was also noted in the *Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2019*, that marine tourism use and associated impacts mainly occur in a few high-use areas, where the most significant threats to Traditional Owners may occur in relation to incompatible uses that may displace or affect them, such as impacts from commercial marine tourism operations (GBRMPA, 2019b, p.10).

¹⁴ For example, “Where the bloody hell are we? Is it time to ditch the marketing slogan Tropical North Queensland and change it to Cairns: The Gateway to the Great Barrier Reef? Our readers say yes.” (March 8, 2019. P. 1); “Time to rethink tourism brand?” (March 8, 2019. P. 4); “Fight for our place: Tourism icons criticise ‘dumb’ strategy hurting Far North/ ‘Dumb’ tourism focus slammed: Leaders say strategy is hitting our market share”(March 16-17, pp. 1 and 6-7).

Indigenous communities were already expressing concerns about the impacts of GBR tourism on their cultures and lifestyles and enjoyment of the Reef in the 1990s. For example, in a study commissioned by GBRMPA (Fourmile & Marrie, 1996), the feeling of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Cairns area, and particularly the residents of Yarrabah, was that “the Reef has been taken away from them by stealth.” In their experience:

The decade of the ‘80s saw a gradual increase in the number of pontoons, moorings, boats (bigger and faster) and mariculture activities with the consequent diminishment of Indigenous enjoyment of the Reef. For them the consequences of the increase in activity could be seen in the decline in turtle and dugong populations, fish were fewer and smaller and it had become no longer possible to simply enjoy the seas with the same sense of freedom as their forebears had done. For them a traditional way of life has been lost – there is nothing left of their traditional experience of the reefs to pass onto their children. ... In reference to the zoning of the marine parks, the Cairns area has become the “dead zone”: dead ecologically and the graveyard to a traditional way of life (Fourmile & Marrie, 1996, p. 1).

It was acknowledged that, with regard to the Cairns Area Marine Parks, they were also multiple use parks that, in addition to traditional uses, were also used for various forms of tourism, fishing, boating, diving, collecting, research, mariculture and shipping – these activities being regulated by zoning and permit regimes. The report’s 40 recommendations variously address matters such as: improving Indigenous management input; legislative empowerment; consultation and planning processes; traditional hunting, fishing and gathering rights; research and information management; Aboriginal community ranger services; protection of cultural sites in the marine parks; and renomination of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWHA) as a cultural landscape (Fourmile & Marrie, 1996, p. xix-xxvi). Many of these recommendations anticipate by two decades those put forward by Traditional Owners in the *Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: The Next Generation of Reef 2050 Actions* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018).

In the last decade, Traditional Owners in the Cairns Area, for example, have established their own management plans and TUMRAs. The Yirrganydji negotiated a TUMRA with GBRMPA in 2014¹⁵, the Gunggandji PBC Aboriginal Corporation published its *Gunggandji Land and Sea Country Plan* in 2013 and concluded a TUMRA in 2016 which includes sea country around Green Island and Fitzroy Island, and the Mandingalbay Yidinji have an Indigenous Protected Area over their native title lands and have established the Djunbunji Land and Sea Ranger program.¹⁶

Other Traditional Owner groups that experience high levels of tourism impacts on their sea country estates include the Woppaburra Traditional Owners of the Keppel Island group, who have implemented their third TUMRA, taking effect for ten years from June 2014. With GBRMPA they have also established *The Woppaburra Heritage Assessment Guidelines* to provide agency staff and applicants with guidance on permission applications that may impact on their heritage values within the Woppaburra TUMRA boundaries. The guidelines provide

¹⁵ See Yirrganydji TUMRA Region Schedule 1: http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/163887/120323-Yirrganydji-TUMRA-May2013-A3.pdf

¹⁶ See Djunbunji Land and Sea Programme: <http://www.djunbunji.com.au/indigenous-protected-area/djunbunji-land-and-sea-programme/>

Woppaburra Traditional Owners with a framework for informing assessments that may impact on these values (GBRMPA, 2019d).

2.0 POLICY ENVIRONMENT & STRUCTURE OF THE GBR TOURISM INDUSTRY

This section provides an analysis of the organisational structure of Queensland's tourism industry, including identifying the principal federal and state government agencies and regulatory bodies which have a role in the industry; their relationship with the private sector; and how government tourism policies are implemented via the private sector and its industry representatives.

2.1 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park

2.1.1 Reef 2050 Plan

In 2015, the Australian and Queensland governments released the *Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan (Reef 2050 Plan)* to provide an overarching framework for managing the Reef's health and resilience while allowing ecologically sustainable development (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b). The Plan was updated in July 2018 to include new actions to help the Reef recover and adapt in the face of a variable and changing climate (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018c). The revised *Reef 2050 Plan* reaffirms the importance of a strong, coordinated approach to managing the Reef; identifies priorities for immediate attention; and identifies actions to protect the values of the Reef and improve the Reef's resilience. The Plan formally recognises that "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) area and have a continuing connection to their land and sea Country" and that their continuing sea country management and custodianship helps to protect the Reef for future generations. In addition, the Plan identifies key actions to be undertaken by regional industries, including tourism, to reduce their impacts on the Reef.

The *Reef 2050 Plan* identifies several actions/commitments and management principles that specifically relate to Traditional Owners in the revised Plan, grouped into seven themes. The Plan's Investment Framework identifies six priority areas to target new investment, one of which is Traditional Owner actions. Traditional Owner aspirations and recommendations with regard to these actions in the context of the 2020 review of the *Reef 2050 Plan* are further explored below.

Table 2: Traditional Owner actions in the Reef 2050 Plan

Reef 2050 Theme	Traditional Owner Actions/Principles
Ecosystem Health	EHA1 Acknowledge Traditional Owners in new and existing policy and plans EHA2 Incorporate and prioritise Traditional Owners' planning into existing and future ecosystem policies and programs. EHA3 Support Traditional Owner stewardship activities that contribute to Reef health and resilience, including removing and, where possible, identifying sources of marine debris. EHA4 Develop further agreements with Traditional Owners addressing management of ecosystems within their traditional estates.

Reef 2050 Theme	Traditional Owner Actions/Principles
	EHA5 Develop, implement and coordinate a protocol and knowledge management systems for: recording, storing, protecting, and where appropriate, sharing of knowledge, innovation and practices; conserving and cultural use of biocultural diversity; and use in decision-making. EHA27 Implement on-ground activities to reduce the volume of debris generated in or entering the WHA, and undertake education and awareness raising activities to minimise the source and occurrence of marine debris¹⁷.
Biodiversity	BA1 Where agreed through Traditional Owner engagement frameworks, apply traditional knowledge and customary use of biological diversity, including the use of community protocols, in managing protected areas. BA2 Work with Traditional Owner groups to identify biocultural resources within their sea country and develop plans of management for conservation and use of those resources. BA3 Improve Traditional Owner engagement to strengthen participation in decision making at all levels relating to the conservation and cultural use of biodiversity. BA4 Work with Traditional Owners to build capacity to record and manage traditional ecological knowledge and prioritise research to address key Indigenous knowledge gaps.
Heritage	HA1 Build capacity for the involvement of Traditional Owners and community members in cooperative management, planning and impact assessment. HA2 Work with a support Traditional Owners to collect, store and manage their cultural heritage information. HA3 Improve engagement processes for assessment of cultural heritage values to inform decision making. HA6 Facilitate robust consideration of heritage values in planning processes, including port development and associated activities. HA11 Further identify, map, monitor and report on key Reef heritage values and sites, including comprehensive maritime surveys in priority sections of the Reef
Water Quality	WQA24 Identify and action opportunities for Traditional Owners, industry and community engagement in onground water quality improvement and monitoring programs
Community Benefits	CBA1 Review current mechanisms and processes to improve benefits to Traditional Owners engagement in sea country management CBA2 Work with Traditional Owners to identify world's best practice in agreement making, strategic planning, and management and implementation of Indigenous programs in relation to the Great Barrier Reef sea country estate. CBA3 Develop collaborative working arrangements with Traditional Owners which establish mutual trust and build Indigenous capacity
Economic Benefits	EBA1 Development and implement an Indigenous Business Development Plan including a comprehensive review of baseline data, processes and

¹⁷ Not directly specified as a Traditional Owner activity, but included in the *Reef 2050 Indigenous Implementation Plan*.

Reef 2050 Theme	Traditional Owner Actions/Principles
	systems to identify existing and potential economic benefits to Traditional Owners. EBA2 Assist Traditional Owners to be business-ready and have improved capacity to generate economic benefits from use and management of their traditional estates.
Governance	GA2 Convene a multi-sectoral Reef advisory committee to facilitate engagement with industry and the broader community regarding the implementation and review of the Plan. GA7 Support cross-cultural training in relation to Traditional Owner culture and perspectives. GA10 Work with Traditional Owners, industry, regional bodies, local governments, research institutions, and the community to inform delivery of local and regional actions. GA11 Improve Traditional Owner participation in governance arrangements for protection and management of the Reef. GA12 Prioritise and develop specific implementation plans and reporting protocols addressing the Plan's targets and actions in consultation with the community.

Actions for the tourism industry outlined in the *Reef 2050 Plan* are mostly concentrated under the 'improving sustainability' section of the economic benefits theme, as well as activities to support eco-accreditation for tourism operators.

2.1.1.1 Indigenous Implementation Plan

The *Reef 2050 Indigenous Implementation Plan* was developed to support and guide implementation of the Traditional Owner led actions in the *Reef 2050 Plan* (Gidarjil 2016). It identifies three areas to focus on as immediate implementation priorities: coordination, cultural heritage and business capacity.

Particularly relevant to Indigenous tourism are the business capacity challenges highlighted in the Plan. The Plan notes that the capacity of Traditional Owner groups across the region is highly variable, with some groups business ready while others will require ongoing support.

All Traditional Owner groups consulted expressed their desire and aspirations for increased business capacity, the ability to attract funding whether it was government, private enterprise, philanthropic or other community grants. They were quite keen on developing their organisations to take on contracts and tenders, fee for service and eager to consider joint venture possibilities, consortium arrangements or partnerships with appropriate companies/organisations to build capacity (Gidarjil, 2016, p.6).

The Plan also notes Traditional Owner aspirations to be self-sufficient and to establish businesses that are able to "attract investment in their own right". Indigenous organisations are also often able to use government funding as a catalyst to attract other investments.

The Plan proposes to foster business capacity for Traditional Owner groups through:

- Developing information resources in collaboration with universities, training providers and other stakeholders to support improvements in capacity.

- Mapping opportunities for business ventures.
- Partnering people with opportunities - Partnerships, Joint Ventures, Consortiums, Fee For Service, Tenders and Contracts, secondments.
- Facilitating Traditional Owners to develop and implement sea country agreements with partner agencies.
- Assisting groups expand their existing capacity through facilitation, mentoring and additional training.
- Supporting business management initiatives.
- Developing and delivering training.

2.1.1.2 Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner Aspirations

In 2017, the Australian Government commissioned the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre (RRRC) to lead a consortium of Indigenous and research organisations to engage with GBR Traditional Owners to better understand and reflect their aspirations for the Reef. Consequently, the Indigenous-led consortium released the 2018 report *Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: The Next Generation of Reef 2050 Actions* (the 'Traditional Owner Aspirations Report'), which provides advice from GBR Traditional Owners about their aspirations for involvement in the management, governance and protection of the GBR.

The Traditional Owner Aspirations Report highlights five traditional owner aspirations for land and sea country in the GBR, including recognition and respect for Indigenous aspirations in Sea Country management; sustainable resource use management through cooperation; education; cultural practice and regeneration; and the generation of sustained business opportunities and socio-economic benefits. Tourism activities are relevant to all of these aspirations both through managing impacts of mainstream tourism (e.g. exercising rights to co-governance of Sea Country and catchment resources at the estate level, protocols established with other resource users for dealing affecting sea country, and protection and management of places of cultural significance), as well as establishing Indigenous tourism businesses (e.g. educating the wider community about culture and sustainable resource management through tourism, and establishing Indigenous businesses to promote economic development). The Traditional Owner Aspirations Report also notes the very limited economy in Indigenous nations and high rates of unemployment, some of which could be addressed through developing an Indigenous tourism industry.

Traditional Owners interviewed for the Aspirations project reported experiencing several negative impacts from tourism, such as “significant distress against loss of or threats to specific attributes of Reef values such as the biophysical values described above from the scientific literature, as well as additional threats such as the actions of tourists and local residents to cultural values”, as well as missed opportunities to realise potential positive benefits including their right to share equitably in tourism benefits. Reef-based tourism was identified as one of the key economic engagement and opportunities for Indigenous People on the Reef (Key Component 6.7 of the Aspirations Report).

The Traditional Owner Aspirations Report produced ten emerging recommendations and initiatives regarding specific and detailed changes needed for the *Reef 2050 Plan* to meet Traditional Owner aspirations (Table 3).

Table 3: Traditional Owner Aspirations Report Recommendations

Statement/ Recommendation	Details
1. Resolve Sea Country Claims	Those responsible for the management of the Reef ensure, through collaboration between relevant Federal and State agencies, that adequate resources are available to support the longer term, fair and efficient resolution of Sea Country native title claims across the GBR estate over the coming decade.
2. Get the Foundations Right	Formalising and supporting the foundational rights and responsibilities of Traditional Owners in Sea Country by enhancing the governance capacities of families, clans, tribes, sub-regions and regions.
3. Normalise Rights-Based Agreement Making	Embed policy, procedures and ongoing participation and support to mobilise long term approaches for co-governance and co-management through agreement making, implementation and monitoring across the GBR at regional, sub-regional, and local scales.
4. Establish a GBR Traditional Owner Sea Country Alliance	Resource and support Traditional Owners to establish a GBR-wide Sea Country Alliance and engagement framework as a basis for negotiating and implementing a Tripartite Agreement.
5. Negotiate a GBR-Wide Tripartite Agreement	Australian and Queensland Governments (through Intergovernmental Agreement) to meet obligations for Free, Prior and Informed Consent (in accordance with UNDRIP) through the negotiation of a whole of GBR Tripartite Agreement with Traditional Owners.
6. Establish a GBR Traditional Owner's Funding Facility:	To underpin long term and sustainable support for achieving Traditional Owner aspirations (from local to regional scales), establish a GBR funding facility and support partnership arrangements to enable program delivery and investment leverage.
7. Immediate Traditional Owner Co-design in Programs and Procurement	Urgent interim action is required to ensure equitable and effective Traditional Owner involvement and influence in the co-design, procurement and delivery of all current programs and tenders of relevance to their Reef-related aspirations (e.g. Great Barrier Foundation (GBRF), Indigenous Advancement Strategy, Closing the Gap, etc.).
8. Ensure Fit-For-Purpose Delivery Programs	Through leveraging the Traditional Owner Funding Facility, establish stable delivery programs that particularly support social, cultural, environmental and economic aspirations (e.g. country-based planning, meaningful jobs, infrastructure, and business development).
9. Towards Research Partnerships	The GBR's leading research institutions jointly collaborate with Traditional Owners to plan and negotiate a long-term strategy for supporting their knowledge and research needs (e.g. data sharing agreements, etc.).
10. Traditional Owners Embedded in GBR Monitoring	Embed Traditional Owners and cultural heritage in all aspects (e.g. turtle and dugong) and scales (from GBR-wide to local) of GBR monitoring and evaluation, using culturally appropriate approaches (e.g. Strong Country – Strong People Framework).

2.1.2 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA)

Tourism makes a significant contribution to the management and economic values of the GBR. The GBRMPA is responsible for management tools and processes that allow tourism to occur with minimal impact on the marine environment.

GBRMPA considers environmental, economic and social benefits, as well as impacts, in managing the Marine Park. The GBRMPA *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park* (2019) sets out their collaborative approach for working with Indigenous peoples to protect Indigenous heritage in the GBRMP and acknowledges that Reef tourism may directly impact on heritage. Objective 1.3.4 of the strategy recommends finalizing and implementing modules to increase cultural awareness of tourism operators to be incorporated into their Reef Discovery Course and Master Reef Guide certification. GBRMPA also works with various government, industry, scientific and community groups to manage the Reef. Programs that support economic, traditional and economic uses of the Reef include the intergovernmental Joint Field Management Program and the Reef Guardian program (GBRMPA, n.d.-b).

The GBRMPA 2005 *Position Statement on Indigenous Participation in Tourism* outlines a long-term vision of Indigenous people owning, operating and being involved in tourism operations in the Marine Park and Indigenous participation in the way tourism is managed. GBRMPA's role in achieving this vision includes ensuring that Marine Park regulatory and other arrangements are appropriate for any emerging initiatives in Indigenous tourism. These include the allocation of specific Indigenous permits; working with Traditional Owners and Land Councils to improve Indigenous input into Marine Parks permitting and management; encouraging marine tourism operators to be involved in fostering Indigenous participation in marine tourism; and working with key stakeholders to coordinate and facilitate a better understanding of Indigenous community and tourism industry perspectives and aspirations regarding Indigenous participation in marine tourism. Indigenous engagement is fostered through membership on the GBRMPA Board¹⁸, the Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee (IRAC), and other reef advisory committees, along with science and management workshops for Traditional Owners, compliance training, monitoring, and traditional ecological knowledge projects.

2.1.3 Advisory Committees

The Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee (IRAC) established in 2015 provides strategic-level advice to the GBRMPA Board to build a greater understanding of Traditional Owner issues within Marine Park management; and to address the risks to the Marine Park identified in the Great Barrier Reef Outlook Reports. The IRAC focuses primarily on enlisting Indigenous views with regard to risks (commenting, for example, on frameworks for sea country management plans, traditional use of marine resources agreements, etc.) and does not appear to have actively engaged with Indigenous tourism issues¹⁹.

The Tourism Reef Advisory Committee (TRAC) established in 2014 provides advice to the GBRMPA on tourism matters and includes an Indigenous Affairs representative. The TRAC occasionally comments on issues specifically relevant to Indigenous tourism in the Reef, such as suggesting provision of Indigenous interpretation programs (GBRMPA, 2017a). Local Marine Advisory Committees are voluntary organisations that provide a community forum for

¹⁸ Under the *Marine Park Act*, the Marine Park Authority Board must have at least one Indigenous member experienced in Indigenous issues relating to the Marine Park.

¹⁹ Based on a review of the above database undertaken in July 2019.

interest groups (including Traditional Owner groups), government and the community to discuss issues.

2.1.4 Marine Tourism permits

All commercial tourism activities and operations in the GBR Marine Park require a permit to operate. Under the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cwlth)*, GBRMPA notifies all registered native title holders or claimants of any activity requiring a permission that is proposed to occur on or near their claim or determination area (GBRMPA, n.d.-c).

GBRMPA has specifically set aside 18 *Indigenous Special Tourism Permissions* under the Plans of Management for Cairns (5 permits), Hinchinbrook (3 permits) and the Whitsundays (10 permits). These permits are intended for traditional inhabitants who have traditional affiliations with the relevant Planning Area and are allocated through an expression of interest process (GBRMPA, n.d.-a).

These permits are intended to provide an opportunity for Indigenous people to build marine tourism businesses and build relationships with existing operators. Selection criteria for allocating the permits includes demonstrated competence and knowledge relevant to the tourism opportunity (e.g. prior tourism experience), extent to which the operation will enhance protection of Marine Park values (e.g. improved protection of sites of cultural significance), and extent to which the operation will enhance presentation of Marine Park values (e.g. quality and quantity of interpretation and education). Applications from joint venture partnerships or companies that include non-Traditional Owners are allowed, providing that eligible Traditional Owners are the major partner(s) or majority shareholder(s) (i.e. maintain at least 51% control over the partnership).

However, to date none of the *Indigenous Special Tourism Permissions* have been allocated²⁰. Over the past 15 years, GBRMPA have received only a handful of applications for the special permits, but in each case the applicants were either not yet business-ready, or their activities fell under normal permit use (e.g. they were for activities that would operate in waterways along the coastline for less than 50 days per year).

2.1.5 Traditional Owner Heritage Assessment Guidelines

GBRMPA's 2017 *Traditional Owner Heritage Assessment Guidelines* are intended to provide guidance on assessing impacts to Traditional Owner heritage values within the Marine Park permission system. The Guidelines make reference to the GBRMPA's Position Statement of Indigenous Participation in Tourism and Its Management (see section 2.1.1), as well as identifying several hazards and possible impacts to Traditional Owner heritage arising from tourism programs. These hazards include:

- Changes in access and the presence of visitors may restrict or impede Traditional Owner use and dependency, with follow-on implications for their wellbeing.

²⁰ GBRMPA, pers. comm. September 2019.

- Increased pressure on both tangible (including sites and artefacts) and intangible (including stories, songlines, totems, cultural practices, observances, customs and lore) Traditional Owner values.
- Impacts on totemic species or species of significance that impacts Traditional Owner values.
- Impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem health that impact on Traditional Owner social values, including human health, personal connection, understanding, appreciation and enjoyment, employment and income, and equity.
- Impacts on aesthetics (environmental and experiential attributes), e.g. through increased visitation and/or infrastructure, by changing the visual appearance underwater, at the water surface or aerially; changing the ambiance of an area by increasing noise and decreasing air quality; and/or other changes to the beauty, naturalness, solitude, tranquillity, or remoteness, for example.

On the other hand, some impacts from tourism may have positive outcomes, such as:

- Increased access may result in positive impact on the public's understanding and appreciation of Traditional Owner values and provide Traditional Owners with avenues for economic benefit.
- Some facilities may enhance Traditional Owner access to country, for example jetties or boat ramps, and therefore strengthen Traditional Owner values. Such benefits should be maximised while negative impacts avoided and minimised.

2.1.6 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy

GBRMPA's 2019 *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park* was developed to outline a collaborative approach for assisting the Traditional Owners of the Reef to safeguard their Indigenous heritage. Among other threats, tourism is identified as posing a threat to Indigenous heritage, and GBRMPA has undertaken to finalise and implement modules to increase the cultural awareness of tourism operators as part of its Master Reef Guide certification training and certification process.

2.1.7 Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report

The 2019 Outlook Report reviews, *inter alia*, the condition and trends of commercial marine tourism (GBRMPA 2019b). Several benefits of marine tourism are identified in the Outlook Report, including economic (in 2015-2016, tourism generated \$2.4 billion (value-added) for Catchment communities), well-being (approximately half the tourists surveyed considered the Reef contributed to their quality of life and well-being, and 88% thought the Reef supported a desirable and active way of life), and cultural heritage (over 65% of tourists valued the Reef because it provided a place where people can continue to pass down their wisdom, traditions and way of life). The report also discusses the impacts of commercial marine tourism on ecosystem and heritage values. One of the most significant of these is 'incompatible uses', where tourism use may displace or affect another user group, such as Traditional Owners. Other impacts include direct effects such as damage to coral from tourists and physical damage, e.g. from tourism pontoons, as well as wildlife disturbance.

In addition, the 2019 Outlook Report reviews the current condition and trends of Indigenous heritage values across the Reef. This section notes, *inter alia*, issues that may relate to tourism,

including reduced access to country (e.g. through increased visitation by other users) and efforts to erode rights such as lobbying to ban turtle and dugong hunting, which may threaten cultural practices. Other possible consequences to subsistence lifestyles of Traditional Owners may arise from fishing trends and disturbance of acid sulfate soils by coastal development, and there is an ongoing possibility of people exhibiting behaviours, or conducting illegal activities, at Indigenous heritage sites that may affect the site's intangible cultural heritage. In addition, across the region, several species that form spiritual totems may be at risk. The report also notes that foundational capacity gaps for Traditional Owners to visit and manage their country, combined with fragmentation of cultural knowledge is likely to have an impact on the heritage of the Reef.

2.2 Reef Research Organisations

2.2.1 Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS)

The Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) is a tropical marine research centre that undertakes research in Australia's tropical marine estate to inform decision-making for government and industry, in order to support growth in its sustainable use, effective environmental management and protection of its ecosystems. The AIMS long-term Monitoring Program has been surveying the health of reefs across the Great Barrier Reef region for over 30 years (see also s.1.4.3.2 on Reef surveys).

The Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) *Indigenous Engagement Strategy* (AIMS, 2018a) outlines how AIMS engages with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in order to build reciprocal capacities through mutually beneficial research. It includes mechanisms to incorporate Indigenous perspectives, improve cultural awareness, establish relationships with Traditional Owners, improve partnerships with Indigenous Land and Sea Managers, and to contribute to training of Indigenous peoples in marine science. The newly established Indigenous Partnerships Plan aims to build capacity to support the sustainable management of land and sea country, to protect Indigenous values, and to bring together Indigenous knowledge with other areas of science to create new insights into management of marine systems (AIMS, 2019a).

One of the three key impacts for the nation that are outlined in the *AIMS Strategy 2025* (AIMS, 2018c) that is particularly relevant to Indigenous tourism is to create economic, social and environmental net benefits for marine industries and coastal communities (AIMS 2019a). The 2025 Strategy does not specifically mention Indigenous tourism, but indicates that AIMS will work with Traditional Owners to create new shared research that integrates Indigenous knowledge of sea country with other sciences, and to undertake science collaborations with Traditional Owners in key projects focused on sea country. Some individual research papers released by the Institute may have tangential relevance to Indigenous tourism, such as a recent paper on the economic value of shark tourism in Australia that included the reef shark industry in Osprey Reef (Huveneers et al, 2017). The first AIMS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement coordinator was appointed in 2018 (AIMS, 2018b).

2.2.2 Australian Marine Sciences Association (AMSA)

The Australian Marine Sciences Association (AMSA) runs annual Indigenous Engagement Workshops, which include tourism as part of the discussion agenda of Sea Country research

projects. The 2018 Workshop report highlighted ways in which the Gumma Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) in NSW are using eco-tourism to re-invest into Sea Country management “through including cultural research and monitoring that is derived from Traditional knowledge and Traditional Owner priorities into cultural tourism” (Reinhold et al, 2019).

2.2.3 Other research organisations

There are numerous other research organisations in Australia and Queensland who are actively conscious of Indigenous engagement and issues relevant to Indigenous coral reef tourism. These include the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre (RRRC); the Australian Government’s National Environmental Science Program (NESP) Tropical Water Quality Hub that supports the management of the GBR; the Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF); CSIRO; Cape York Institute; North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA), the Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia; CQUniversity Centre for Tourism and Regional Opportunities; The Cairns Institute; James Cook University; University of Queensland Business School; and Griffith Institute for Tourism.

2.3 Federal Oversight

There are numerous Australian Government programs and resources available that may facilitate Indigenous tourism development and employment in coral reef tourism. This section reviews tourism organisations and accreditation programs, Indigenous business organisations, and several advisory bodies that have recently been involved in establishing policies relevant to Indigenous reef tourism not covered above.

2.3.1 Tourism Australia (TA)

Tourism Australia is the Australian statutory authority responsible for attracting international visitors to Australia, and is governed by a board of Directors that report to the Federal Minister for Tourism. ‘Aboriginal experiences’ are identified as one of seven ‘signature’ Australian experience themes (Tourism Australia 2018), and one of the six strategic areas of the *Tourism 2020* plan is to increase the supply of labour, skills and Indigenous participation in Australian tourism (Tourism Australia, 2011).

As part of Tourism Australia’s Signature Experience of Australia Program, it promotes the “Discover Aboriginal Experience” collective, which has 43 members offering over 130 guided experiences. Nine of these experiences are located in Queensland, with the first Indigenous Reef experience, ‘Dreamtime Dive & Snorkel,’ added in January 2019 (Tourism Australia, 2019).

Tourism Australia and Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) ran an “Indigenous Tourism Champions” campaign in collaboration between 2015-2016. The campaign included the launch of the film *Aboriginal Australia, Our Country is Waiting for You* on the ‘Australia’ YouTube Channel in 2015, and an Indigenous Tourism Roadshow that involved 11 Indigenous Operators who travelled to Paris, Frankfurt, Munich and Hamburg to develop business relationships with Tourism Australia’s key distribution partners, specialist operators, Aussie Specialist agents and media. Neither of these activities included particular mention of the GBR, and there are no future campaigns in the pipeline at this stage specific to Indigenous tourism.

Tourism Australia also confirmed that there are no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives on Tourism Australia's board or in executive leadership positions.

2.3.2 Tourism Research Australia (TRA)

Tourism Research Australia is an independent agency located within Austrade that provides statistics, research and analysis on both international and domestic tourism within Australia. They run two major surveys that measure the contribution of tourism including the International Visitor Survey and the National Visitor Survey. Relevant results from these surveys are discussed above in the review of Indigenous tourism in Australia (see s1.3).

A TRA report profiling Australia's domestic market for Indigenous tourism notes that Indigenous tourism visitors are an important component of the Australian domestic tourism industry (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010). Specific recommendations providing guidance to Indigenous tourism operators and governments from this report highlighted opportunities related to product marketing and information dissemination (need for online presence and effectiveness of brochures targeting accommodation providers as well as word-of-mouth promotion); product packaging and cross promotion (e.g. Indigenous tourism operator partnerships with mainstream tourism); opportunity leveraging from the convention and conference market; consistency in product quality and authenticity (e.g. accreditation programs and employing Indigenous people to deliver the Indigenous tourism experience); and product accessibility (location, time and cost).

2.3.3 Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC)

The Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) is a not-for-profit national representative body for tourism. It supports tourism through three industry programs: Quality Tourism Accreditation, the Australian Tourism Awards, and Star Ratings Australia. ATIC does not have a specific Indigenous tourism strategy or program, which are instead managed by individual State and Territory industry councils.

2.3.4 Indigenous Business Australia (IBA)

Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) is a government organisation that provides workshops, advice, business support programs and in some cases, business finance, to eligible Indigenous business owners.

In 2012, the IBA commissioned a study on 'Demand and Supply Issues in Indigenous Tourism: A Gap Analysis' to identify perceptions of demand and interest in Indigenous cultural tourism products (Ruhanen et al, 2013). IBA also collaborated with Tourism Australia to deliver the Indigenous Tourism Champions Program (ITCP) in 2015-2016 (see also section 2.3.1 on Tourism Australia). IBA is also working with the Queensland Government on the Ecotourism Trails Program.

The IBA Investment and Asset Management program supports the creation of sustainable ventures that provide meaningful opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to accumulate wealth – in 2017-2018 this included the Tjapukai Cultural Park in Cairns and the MiHaven Social Impact Property Fund in the TNQ region.

2.3.5 Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC)

The Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC, formerly known as the Indigenous Land Corporation or ILC) assists Indigenous people with the acquisition and management of land, saltwater and fresh water so they can achieve economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits. The ILSC has a Tourism Advisory Committee to provide advice on Indigenous tourism projects, business opportunities and general tourism activities on ILSC-acquired land across Australia.

The ILSC's tourism businesses offer employment and training opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia. The businesses are operated by Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia, one of the ILSC's wholly owned subsidiaries. The National Indigenous Training Academy at Yulara in the Northern Territory works in partnership with ILSC to provide 'accredited, enterprise-based training in hospitality and tourism with guaranteed employment' (Voyages, 2019). Voyages also currently operate Home Valley Station (a pastoral-based resort in the Kimberley), Ayers Rock Resort in Central Australia, and Mossman Gorge Centre in Queensland.

2.3.6 National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)

The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)²¹ was established on 1 July 2019 and works to support the Minister for Indigenous Australians (NIAA, 2019b). NIAA works to influence policy across the Australian government, as well as liaising with State and Territory governments. The Indigenous Advancement Strategy determines how the Government delivers funds and programmes targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, with grant activities falling under the IAS Grant Guidelines.

The Tourism 2020 Working Group on Indigenous Tourism (ITG) was previously located within the Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade) and focused on ways to increase the quality and quantity of Australia's Indigenous tourism product offering, and the participation of Indigenous Australians in the tourism industry (Austrade, n.d.-a). The *Tourism 2020 Implementation Plan Matrix* identified several key reform areas, including the need to 'develop a skilled tourism workforce to better service the visitor economy,' and to 'integrate national and state tourism plans into regional development and local government planning to generate effective infrastructure to service regional communities, services to the visitors and encourage private investment in tourism infrastructure' (Austrade, n.d.-b).

In April 2019, the Government announced a \$40 million commitment over four years for an Indigenous Tourism Fund (ITF). As part of the announcement, extensive consultation with Indigenous stakeholders was promised before finalising the details of the ITF. NIAA released an ITF Discussion Paper in October 2019 that considers tourism's contribution to the Australian economy and the Indigenous tourism sector. NIAA identifies some of the key barriers to Indigenous tourism businesses getting started or growing as "lack of specialised business experience, lack of infrastructure, complex or lengthy application process for grants, difficulty of operating in a seasonal environment and difficulty finding trained staff" (NIAA, 2019a).

²¹ Prior to the establishment of NIAA in 2019, the functions of this Agency were delivered by the Indigenous Affairs Group of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

2.3.7 Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia (JSCNA)

In 2014 the Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia released its report *Pivot North: Inquiry into the Development of Northern Australia* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2014). *Pivot North* identified tourism as a significant opportunity for developing Northern Australia. The Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia (JSCNA) was appointed in 2016 and produced the *Northern Horizons – Unleashing Our Tourism Potential* report on opportunities and methods for stimulating the tourism industry in Northern Australia in 2018 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018c). The Committee noted that the tourism industry presents a major opportunity to support the long-term economic and social development of the north and thereby contribute to the sustainability of a large number of remote and regional communities, and Part 6 of the *Northern Horizons* report is substantially devoted to Indigenous participation in the tourism industry.

In North Queensland, JSCNA held hearings at Hamilton Island, Airlie Beach, Port Douglas, Cairns, Townsville, and Yeppoon. It heard from four Indigenous entities: Girudala Community Cooperative Society (Airlie Beach), Wujal Shire Council (Port Douglas), Culture Connect (Cairns), and Olkola Aboriginal Corporation (Cairns). In addition, the Committee visited Hamilton Island in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Debbie to hear from tourism operators about how they responded to challenges associated with the cyclone, and what opportunities there were to grow tourism in the Whitsunday region. Great Keppel Island formed another case study and highlighted the positive impact a tourism development can have on an entire tourism region²².

Of the 93 written submissions to the Committee, none were made by a Queensland Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisation. The Committee did not visit the Torres Strait. Nonetheless, the Committee noted that Northern Australia's rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, coupled with increasing demand for cultural tourism experiences, presents a unique tourism opportunity for the north. Tourism may also serve as an additional source of employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in regional and remote areas.

Among the recommendations made by the Committee were the following:

- Establishment of a peak body for Northern Australia representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism operators and the body to work with Tourism Australia and state and territory tourism bodies to develop a strategy for the development of cultural tourism in Northern Australia [Recommendation 22 6.103]
- Tourism Australia works with Indigenous Business Australia to re-establish the Indigenous Tourism Champions Program [Recommendation 23 6.104]
- Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet consider expanding the scope of its Indigenous Ranger projects to include opportunities to support the tourism industry in remote areas [Recommendation 24 6.105]
- The Australian Government review business development programs to ensure they stimulate the creation and growth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism businesses in Northern Australia [Recommendation 25 6.106].

²² However, the Great Keppel Island case study makes no mention of the Woppaburra Traditional Owners, in spite of them having a TUMRA over the Keppel Island region, and having their own Cultural Heritage Plan negotiated with GBRMPA in place.

The JSCNA ceased to exist at the dissolution of the House of Representatives in April 2019, and their *Inquiry into the Opportunities and Challenges of the Engagement of Traditional Owners in the Economic Development of Northern Australia* lapsed at this time. A review of the submissions made to the lapsed Inquiry reveals several observations that related to Indigenous tourism, including:

- “While native title gives rise to economic opportunities, it is not necessarily sufficient, in and of itself, to enable native title holders to capitalise on them. There are some limitations on what native title can be used for... and there may be additional tenure or rights required to undertake a commercial enterprise or venture, such as a tourism license...” (DPMC, 2019, p.14)
- A case study of an investment of \$258,938 in PBC Capacity Building funding to the Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation in Far North Queensland “supported the organisation in establishing camp grounds and cultural trails, tours and other tourism ventures... Tourism and business contracts have created new economic opportunities in the region which have generated almost 100 per cent Indigenous employment.” (DPMC, 2019, p. 31-32).
- “The WA Government is leveraging cultural tourism opportunities for Aboriginal economic development... Successful realisation of opportunities on the Dampier Peninsula [an Aboriginal community in WA] will require funding by the Commonwealth, noting the economic objectives significantly align with Indigenous Reference Group’s ... recommendations relating to the establishment of Regional Collaboration Areas.” (Government of WA, 2019, p. 5).
- The Northern Territory high-level tourism action plan includes actions that “increase the number of quality Aboriginal cultural experiences, and develop Aboriginal people’s interest and capacity to work in tourism” (NT Government, 2019, p. 40).

2.3.8 Office of Northern Australia

The Ministerial Forum on Northern Development (a strategic partnership under the Office of Northern Australia) acknowledged the JSCNA *Northern Horizons* report and agreed that development of new tourism products and destinations is a priority, including investment in tourism infrastructure in northern Australia (Ministerial Forum on Northern Development, 2018). They also committed to progressing recommendations from the Indigenous Reference Group (IRG) to maximise the economic opportunity and contribution of northern Australian Indigenous businesses, individuals and communities, including development of a Northern Australian Indigenous Development Accord.

The Office of Northern Australia is leading the implementation of the priorities of the northern Australian economic agenda, as set out in the 2015 white paper *Our North, Our Future* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015a). The white paper identifies tourism and hospitality as one of the ‘five industry pillars that play to Australia’s strengths and have the most potential for growth’ (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015a, p.3), as well as noting the ‘value of traditional knowledge [for businesses]’ (p. 135) and the importance of promoting economic opportunity for Indigenous Australians. Yet in the paper the only reference to Indigenous tourism is made in passing (i.e. a note that northern Australia’s tourism industry ‘includes high end visitor and Indigenous tourism experiences’ (p.77)), and the only mention of the Great Barrier Reef that

includes Traditional Owners is in relation to a general statement that they are stakeholders in managing World Heritage sites.

The Office's 2018 Implementation report (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018a) notes that Indigenous Australians bring their 'unique tourism products and offerings' (p. 21) to the shared economic growth agenda. However, specific steps do not appear to have been taken to enact the recommendations made by the JSCNA to improve Indigenous tourism as outlined above (see s. 2.3.7), such as establishment of a peak body to represent Indigenous tourism operators, and a review of business development programs to stimulate Indigenous tourism business.

The IRG was established in 2017 to develop policy initiatives to enhance the engagement of Northern Australian Indigenous interests. The Ministerial Forum has endorsed 16 policy recommendations presented by the IRG, which are broadly relevant to the development of Indigenous tourism in the GBRR, and can be categorised as initiatives designed to:

- Create jobs and foster labour participation, entrepreneurship and business acumen among the Northern Australian Indigenous population;
- Develop knowledge management systems and commission research and development that is designed to improve the decision-making environment for Indigenous managers and business owners in Northern Australia;
- Develop infrastructure that supports Indigenous economic development in Northern Australia;
- Provide improved access to capital and international markets for Indigenous businesses in Northern Australia;
- Activate the economic value of land, water, sea and cultural resource rights and interests of Northern Australian Indigenous people; and
- Give effect to institutional arrangements that work to activate, accelerate and optimise Indigenous economic development across Northern Australia (IRG, 2019, p.4).

2.3.9 Australia Council: International Arts Tourism

The arts are acknowledged as an important part of tourism for a destination (Jolliffe & Cave, 2012), including visual arts, music, theatre and dance. As discussed in s1.2.3, Indigenous arts in the GBR region may additionally be considered as providing social, political and cultural commentaries.

Using TRA data from 2017, the *Connecting Cultures* report by the Australia Council highlights the importance of international arts tourists to Australia's tourism industry, and consequently to Indigenous tourism in the GBR region. An international arts tourist is defined as an international visitor who did at least one of the following while in Australia (Australia Council for the Arts, 2018):

- attended theatre, concerts or other performing arts
- visited museums or galleries
- visited art/craft workshops/studios
- attended festivals/fairs or cultural events
- experienced First Nations art/craft and cultural displays

- attended a First Nations performance.

The significance of the findings of the report to those GBR Indigenous tourism businesses that are arts-based include:

- Of the 8.1 million international visitors to Australia in 2017, 3.5 million (43%) included the arts in their itinerary.
- International arts tourism to Australia is growing – Arts tourist numbers grew by 47% between 2013 and 2017, a higher growth rate than for international tourist numbers overall (37%).
- Nearly 830,000 international tourists engaged with First Nations arts (that is, performances and art, craft and cultural displays), an increase of 47% since 2013. One in four of these tourists engaged with First Nations arts (24%), as did more than one in four international tourists travelling in school groups (28%).
- International arts tourists are more likely to visit regional Australia and help drive regional tourism than international tourists overall.
- There is great and growing potential for the arts to support economic activity and local economies – International arts tourists spent \$17 billion in 2017, making up 60% of the \$28.4 billion spent in Australia by all international tourists – a spending increase of 55% since 2013
- Asia is Australia's largest arts tourist market with almost half (48%) coming from the region. Leading countries for arts tourism in Australia are China (620,00 arts tourists in 2017), UK, USA, New Zealand and Japan.
- Arts tourists who visited regional Queensland were also highly engaged with First Nations arts while visiting Australia.
- Indigenous-owned art centres generate tourism in regional areas.
- The report recognises that fairs and festivals, such as the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF) and Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair, are a platform for First Nations arts, showcasing works from some of the most remote First Nations communities in Australia. (Australia Council for the Arts 2018).

These overall findings highlight the importance of nurturing the Indigenous community-based art centres in Tropical North Queensland, as well as events like CIAF (which attracted 50,000 attendees in 2017) and the Torres Strait Islanders' Winds of Zenadth Cultural Festival. They also highlight the need to nurture other Indigenous creative industries (music, dance and theatre), and the role of the regional art galleries, such as the Cairns Art Gallery, which hold major exhibitions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, such as the critically acclaimed *Queen's Land Blak Portraiture – Late 19th Century to the Present*, presented in 2019 in partnership with CIAF. International visitors account for around 45% of the visitors to the Cairns Art Gallery with the balance being domestic, although these figures can fluctuate according to the exhibitions on at the time (K. Jaunzems, *pers. Comm.*).

Development of Indigenous arts tourism in Tropical North Queensland will also lend further weight to TTNQ's Timeless Experiences brand by adding to the quality and number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hero experiences (see also s.2.4.4).

2.3.10 Northern Australia Tourism Initiative

The Northern Australia Tourism Initiative was established in 2016 to provide management advice (through the Entrepreneur's Program) and business support services (through the Australian Small Business Advisory Service) in northern Australia. It provided grants of up to \$700,000 to deliver low cost advice and information services to tourism small businesses and intenders. The programme concluded in December 2019; however, only five Indigenous businesses accessed the fund during its operation (Office of Northern Australia, 2019, p.1).

2.3.11 Tourism accreditation programs

Two of the principal tourism accreditation programs on the Reef are (i) the Australian Tourism Accreditation Program's "Trust the Tick" accredited tourism business Australia logo²³, and (ii) Ecotourism Australia with its range of ECO Certified logos. GBRMPA recognises Ecotourism Australia certification as well as EarthCheck certifications²⁴ for high standard tourism operations. Ecotourism Australia also manages the Respecting Our Culture (ROC) accreditation program for businesses that manage Indigenous cultural heritage products and experiences, and demonstrate respect and inclusion of Indigenous cultures and heritage (Ecotourism Australia, 2015).

Ecotourism Australia's ECO Certification process for ecotourism operators outlines the importance of showing cultural respect and sensitivity, and to embrace the cultural aspects of an area visited as an important part of ecotourism, an issue also brought to the attention of the JSCNA (JSCNA, 2018, p. 143). With respect to Traditional Owners and Indigenous communities, this involves the following:

Consultation and training: Tourism operations should consult with and involve local Indigenous communities in the delivery of the product.

Visitor information: Tourism operations should consult with Traditional Owners to seek permission to deliver cultural content and to ascertain accuracy of cultural information delivered.

Indigenous arts, crafts & goods: Tourism operators should ensure that all goods and services sought are authentic and that local communities are adequately reimbursed for goods and services provided (Ecotourism Australia, 2018, p. 22).

In addition, Ecotourism Australia's 'business ethics' form requires all tourism businesses seeking ECO Certification to make the following commitment:

*This business... acknowledges and respects Traditional Owners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations and recognises the primacy of their obligations, rights and responsibilities to Country, the diversity of their cultures and the deep connections they have with Australia's lands and waters.*²⁵

The ROC program is a tourism industry development tool originally designed by Aboriginal Tourism Australia. ROC embraces national accreditation standards, making sure tourism experiences meet customer expectations in a professional and sustainable way. It also encourages the industry to operate with respect for Indigenous cultural heritage. A number of

²³ See: <https://qualitytourismaustralia.com/australian-tourism-accreditation-program/>

²⁴ See: <https://earthcheck.org/products-services/certification/certification/>

²⁵ Ecotourism Australia's business ethics form can be found at: <https://www.ecotourism.org.au/assets/Business-Ethics.pdf>

Indigenous tourism businesses in North Queensland have ROC certification, including Mungalla Aboriginal Tours, Mandingalbay Yidinji Eco Cultural Tours, Mossman Gorge Centre, Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park and Rainforestation Nature Park which operates the Pamagirri Aboriginal Experience. However, ROC accreditation is not limited to Indigenous businesses; it is intended to encourage the tourism industry to operate in ways that respect cultural heritage. Minimum ROC certification fees as at 2019 (for businesses with an annual turnover less than \$250,000) include an application fee of \$395 and an ongoing annual fee once certification has been granted of \$565, with on-site audits every three years²⁶.

2.3.12 Other national programs and resources

Other national programs and resources include, for example, funding under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy through the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC, n.d.-a) – now NIAA, Indigenous education resources through the Department of Education and Training (DET n.d.), Indigenous wage subsidies through the Department of Jobs and Small Business (DESSFB, n.d.), and employment opportunities through the National Landcare program (DPMC, n.d.-b).

Other general economic development services that may support Indigenous enterprise include the Indigenous Entrepreneurs Fund, the Community Development Program's pilot business incubator²⁷, and micro-enterprise development support through Many Rivers Microfinance²⁸. Some of the support services established to contribute to the economic development of northern Australia may be out of reach of Indigenous stakeholders due to eligibility criteria, such as the Entrepreneurs' Program, which even with a lowered threshold for remote and northern Australia still requires an annual turnover of \$750,000 or more along the GBR region.

2.4 Queensland Tourism

2.4.1 Department of Innovation and Tourism Industry Development

The Queensland Government's Department of Innovation and Tourism Industry Development (DITID) is responsible for tourism policy, tourism investment attraction, infrastructure and access, industry engagement and innovation as well as major events. The Department manages a number of programs and funds that may be relevant to building Indigenous tourism, including the DestinationQ partnership, the Growing Tourism Infrastructure Fund and the Attracting Tourism Fund.

2.4.2 Tourism & Events Queensland

Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) was established by the *Tourism and Events Queensland Act 2012* (Qld) as a statutory body of the Queensland Government and is its lead marketing, destination and experience development and major events agency. TEQ focuses on driving demand through efforts in Indigenous tourism experience development and marketing. In addressing supply, TEQ works in partnership with government and industry to create an environment conducive to stimulating Indigenous tourism product and event

²⁶ <https://www.ecotourism.org.au/our-certification-programs/eco-certification-4/certification-fees-2/>

²⁷ See <https://www.niaa.gov.au/indigenous-affairs/employment/cdp>

²⁸ See <https://manyrivers.org.au/>

development, tangible business growth opportunities for existing operators, and expanded employment opportunities across the industry (TEQ, n.d.). TEQ currently has two Indigenous representatives on its 9-member board.

TEQ's *Great Barrier Reef Framework 2018-2025* articulates how TEQ will grow positive awareness and drive overnight visitor expenditure (TEQ, 2019b). It identifies three unique selling propositions compared to other reefs around the world, namely: size and use, diversity of wildlife and ecosystems, and conservation. TEQ targets high value travellers (HVTs) and the framework notes that high quality, distinctive experiences have strong appeal to these travellers, as well as international visitors. Strategic directions articulated in the framework include fostering a united voice for tourism, growing marketing (including leveraging social media influencers), strengthening strategic partnerships, supporting industry engagement and experience development, and leveraging relevant events in the region.

TEQ has stated an intention of making Queensland the country's number one destination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences (Morgans, 2018). Recent activities exploring Indigenous experiences have included release of the 2017 *Connect with Culture – 50 ways to experience Indigenous culture* ebook, providing input into the development of the Gold Coast GC2018 Reconciliation Action Plan; and working with RTOs to support experience development (TEQ, 2018). One of TEQ's focus areas for 2018-2019 includes seeking opportunities to grow nature-based tourism and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences.

2.4.3 Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC)

The Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) is a not-for-profit, private sector, membership-based organisation representing the interests of Queensland's tourism and hospitality industry. QTIC actively promotes Indigenous participation in the tourism industry. It currently has Indigenous representation on its board of directors, and, as members of QTIC's Advocacy & Industry Support – Business Development team, employs an Indigenous Programme Manager and Indigenous Programme Officer (QTIC, n.d.-a).

QTIC's *First Nations Tourism Plan: 2020-2025* identifies a "growing desire to embrace opportunities for First Nations engagement in the tourism industry" and "the need to remove barriers that are inhibiting the sustained growth of First Nations tourism in Queensland" (QTIC, 2020). It has six goals, which include promoting recognition and respect for First Nations, encouraging the creation of strategic partnerships, promoting strategic coordination and structure through advocacy for the First Nations tourism sector, developing business capability and capacity development, authentic product development, and promoting First Nations experiences. This will be further developed throughout 2020.

QTIC has been running its Indigenous Champions Network since 2008, commencing with 16 volunteer tourism businesses. These businesses have exhibited industry best practice and commitment to a business leadership culture that is inclusive of Indigenous people; ensuring that Indigenous people are active participants and valued members of their businesses and the broader tourism industry. The tourism industry looks to this network of Champions as an industry leader, industry advocate and holder of advice and expertise for engaging with Indigenous people. QTIC convenes regular Indigenous tourism forums, and also has a

partnership with the Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP) which supports creating new jobs in key sectors of the tourism industry for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as increasing opportunities for Indigenous businesses to link into tourism industry supply chains.

In 2015, with the support of The Star Entertainment Group, three regional employee networks, or chapters, were established for North Queensland, South East Queensland and Western Queensland to support Indigenous employees within the industry. The employee networks offer:

- Peer-to-peer mentoring of like-minded people
- Participation as an employee determined to strengthen the industry
- Build strategies to encourage the participation of potential employees
- A safe place to discuss issues and what is happening elsewhere
- Build strategies how to encourage Indigenous people into the industry
- Address blockages to increasing Indigenous employment

The chapters meet every two months to share ideas, strategies and opportunities for the Network to encourage more Indigenous people to consider a career in the diverse tourism and hospitality sector. The Network also provides input into relevant discussion papers, resources and events which may contribute to the increased recruitment of Indigenous people and maintains a folio of resources that can be accessed via QTIC's website.

QTIC seeks to continually expand the Network, actively seeking businesses and support agencies who would like to join in pro-actively supporting the employment of Indigenous people within the tourism industry. The network currently includes around 35 'Champions', a small number of which are GBR operators. The Champions are involved in increasing the participation of Indigenous employees within the industry. This is the first project of its kind in Queensland and aims to increase operators' awareness on how to encourage and maintain increased participation of Indigenous Australians within the mainstream tourism industry. The Champions strive to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to choose tourism and hospitality as an employment and career pathway by working collectively to identify potential opportunities, support workplace experiences, and invest in the development of resources that assist in recruitment, employment and retention of Indigenous people in the tourism industry (QTIC, n.d.-b).

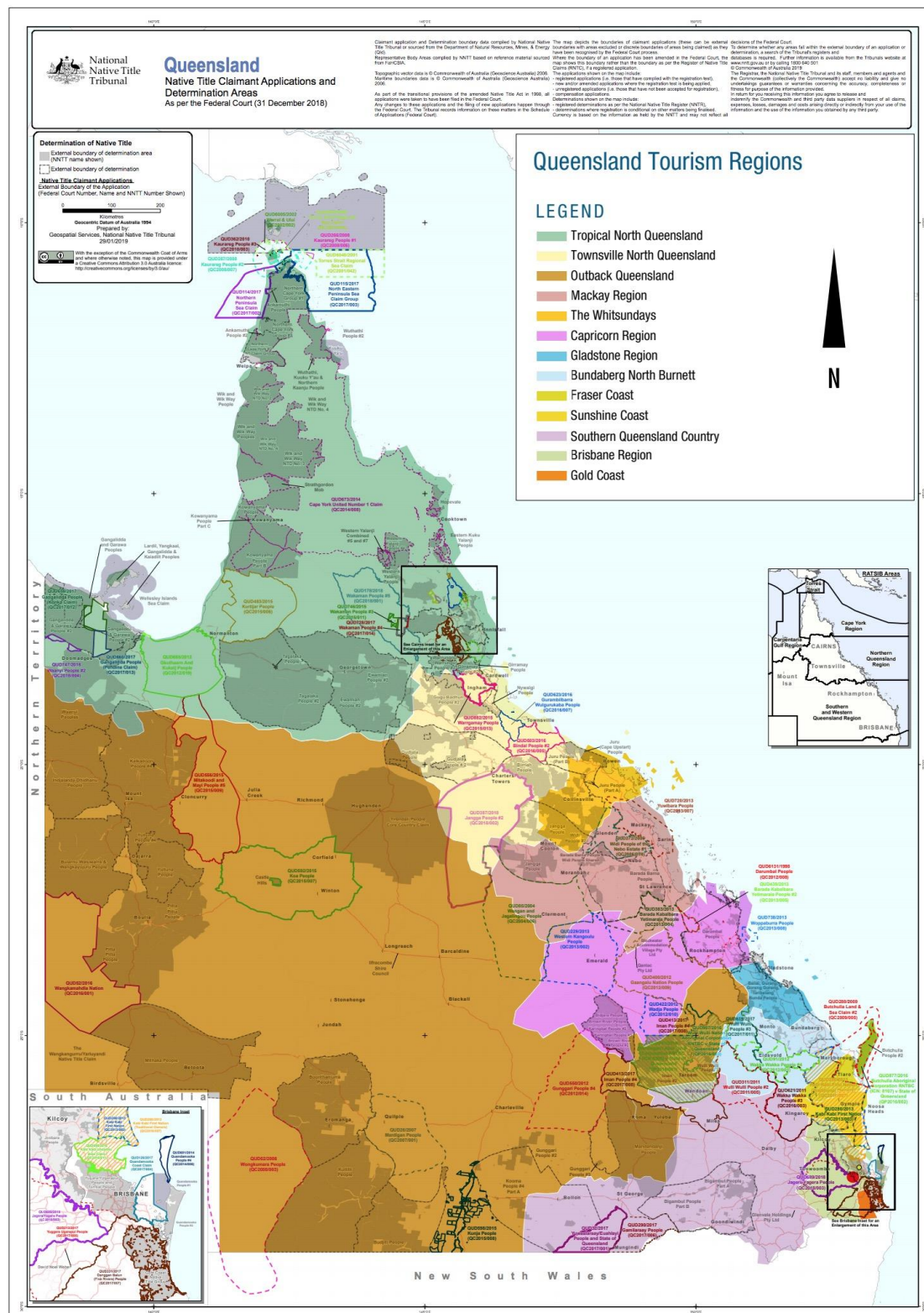
2.4.4 Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) and Local Tourism Organisations (LTOs)

For branding and destination marketing purposes, Queensland is divided into thirteen tourism regions. The branding and marketing of GBR tourism is largely carried out by seven regional tourism organisations (RTOs) that are responsible for implementing marketing strategies to promote their regions as a travel destination, supported by local tourism organisations (LTOs) which target grass roots industry development.

The seven RTOs whose regions include sections of the Great Barrier Reef, from north to south are:

- Tropical North Queensland (Tourism Tropical North Queensland - TTNQ)
- Townsville North Queensland (Townsville Enterprise Ltd)
- The Whitsundays (Tourism Whitsundays)
- Mackay Region (Mackay Tourism Ltd)
- Capricorn Region (Capricorn Enterprise Ltd)
- Gladstone Region (Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Ltd)
- Bundaberg North Burnett (Bundaberg North Burnett Tourism Ltd)

With the exception of Tropical North Queensland, which extends from Cardwell in the south to the Torres Strait and west to the Queensland/NT border, each RTO's region of responsibility includes extensive hinterlands, often extending two or three hundred kilometres inland from the coast. However, as much as possible, research is focused on their role in promoting and marketing tourism in the sections of the GBR and its coastline that fall within their regions. In several cases, Native Title claims and determinations may fall in more than one RTO region (Figure 2).



While there are variations in corporate structures and responsibilities, RTOs are membership-based, industry-funded incorporated private companies, and, as such will largely reflect the attitudes and priorities of their members. They are not statutory bodies like Tourism and Events Queensland and therefore have no statutory obligations to implement TEQ policies, however, they all partner with and receive significant funding from TEQ to develop and promote their

brands. As the Chair of TEQ recently pointed out in the Statement of Intent addressed to the Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development:

TEQ's partnerships with RTOs and [the Queensland Tourism Industry Council] QTIC are also critical in meeting your expectations. These partnerships enable RTOs to secure additional matched funding; foster community pride for tourism in their destination and enhance the profile of their destination and Queensland. TEQ will continue to work in partnership with RTOs, QTIC and industry to ensure Queensland experiences deliver on consumer expectations (Godfrey, 2018, p. 4).

While our research addresses many issues behind the lack of Indigenous participation in the GBR tourism industry, the role of the RTOs is considered important because they are primarily responsible for the development, management, promotion and marketing of their destination brand on behalf of their members and their regions more broadly. Some RTOs also carry out their own domestic and international market research, responding to data produced by TRA and TEQ, and GBRMPA and AIMS reports on the health of the GBR, and local conditions (e.g., weather events, changes in airline services, etc.). RTOs collaborate with the local shire councils within their regions (who must develop their own economic development plans) and major service providers (particularly in relation to travel and accommodation) to coordinate the delivery of their region's brand. In response to these wide-ranging sources of information, RTOs prepare a constant flow of media releases, primarily to reassure potential visitors that the tourism and event attractions that their regions have to offer are still open for business. Without the brand endorsement of their products, and the marketing savvy and global reach of the RTOs, Indigenous tourism businesses have a diminished chance of succeeding, particularly in the digital age.

Within each RTO region, there are also a number of local tourism organisations (LTOs) that focus on their own unique attractions and take responsibility for further promotion and marketing of their own brand. These smaller organisations are part of the broader marketing activities to promote the whole regional destination and its over-arching story as articulated in its Destination Tourism Plans (DTP) and hero experiences.

Table 4: GBR Marine Park Management Areas, RTOs, LTOs and Traditional Owner Groups

Management Area	RTO	LTO (if any)	Traditional Owner Groups ²⁹
Far Northern	Tourism Tropical North Queensland	Tourism Port Douglas Daintree Tropical Tablelands Tourism Tropical Coast Tourism	Darnley Island (Erub) groups Murray Island (Mer) groups Stephen Island (Ugar) groups Gudang Yadhaigana Wuthathi Kuuku Ya'u Kanthumpum Uutaalgnunu (Night Island) group Umpila

²⁹ The information in this table is based on Table 1, pp.17-18 (GBRMPA, 2018a), the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003* p.2 (B: The Amalgamated Great Barrier Reef Section, para. 13), and p.3 (Map: Great Barrier Reef Marine Park – Amalgamated Great Barrier Reef Section), and TEQ (teq.queensland.com/about-teq-new/contacts/rtos).

Management Area	RTO	LTO (if any)	Traditional Owner Groups ²⁹
			Angkum Lama Lama PaalPaal
Cairns / Cooktown		Savannah Way Ltd (Cairns)	Guugu Yimithirr Warra Nation Ngulan people Yuku-Baja-Muliku Eastern Kuku Yalanji Yirrganydji people Gimuy Walubara Yidinji Gunggandji Guru Gulu Gunggandji Mandingalbay Yidinji – Gunggandji Wanyurr Majay Yidinji Lower Coastal Yidinji Mamu people Djiru
Townsville / Whitsunday	Townsville Enterprise	Magnetic Island Tourism	Gulnay Girramay Bandjin Warrgamay Nywaigi Manbarra Wulgurukaba Bindal
	Tourism Whitsundays	Bowen Tourism	Juru Gia Ngaro
Mackay / Capricorn	Mackay Tourism		Yuwibara
	Capricorn Enterprise		Darumbul Woppaburra
	Gladstone Area Promotion & Development		Taribelang Bunda Bailai
Bundaberg / North Burnett Southern GBR	Bundaberg Tourism		Gooreng Gooreng Gurang

While there are a range of matters that Traditional Owners and organisations must address in producing a market-ready tourism product or experience, these are generally not the responsibility of the RTOs, although they may well offer assistance and advice through their various membership-based programs. However, if appropriate resourcing were made available, RTOs could be a viable option to deliver support for Indigenous product/experience development with set key performance indicators.

RTOs can also play a critical role in publicising and ensuring that their members that engage in marine tourism activities follow the GBRMPA's 2019 *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park*. In its *Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2019: In Brief*, the GBRMPA noted that Indigenous heritage values, in particular, are closely tied to the condition of the GBR ecosystems, with the condition of many of those values

remaining limited and under growing pressure (GBRMPA, 2019). The report also indicated that marine tourism use and associated impacts mainly occur in a few high-use areas, where the most significant threats to Traditional Owners mainly occur in relation to incompatible uses that may displace or affect them (GBRMPA, 2019).

The role of RTOs, with their destination brand and marketing power in promoting Indigenous tourism experiences along the GBR, will play a critical part in meeting the overall objective of making Queensland the country's number one destination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences. Not all RTOs have yet engaged significantly with Indigenous tourism businesses in their regions (see s. 3.2), however, those RTOs that have engaged have proven highly successful in supporting Indigenous tourism. For example, TTNQ's Indigenous Tourism brand was launched in 2018 as 'Timeless Experiences', with the tagline 'Sharing our Reef and Rainforest stories'. The brand's core proposition is 'Visit us in our Reef and Rainforest country to deepen your connection with the world, through the timeless wisdom of the world's oldest continuous living cultures'. Indigenous experiences form part of Tourism Australia's Signature Experiences activities, and initiatives have included appointing an Indigenous mentor to assist with tourism development, mentoring businesses to become expert ready, and having a dedicated booth at the Australia Tourism Exchange to promote Indigenous experiences in the region (TTNQ, 2019d). The region's 83 Indigenous experiences have been audited, and an Indigenous tourism brochure was launched in 2019 (TTNQ, 2019c). TTNQ's support of Indigenous cultural tourism in the region helped secure funding for the Mandingalbay Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation ecotourism experience near Cairns, Ewamian Aboriginal Corporation's plan to re-open the Talaroo Hot Springs near Georgetown, and Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council's plan to redevelop their cultural precinct (TTNQ, 2019a).

2.4.5 Indigenous governance in the GBR region

Indigenous or Traditional Owner governance in the GBR region is linked to cultural traditions and decision-making processes at local scale and are diverse amongst different groups. Historical legacy issues still impact today on Indigenous peoples' governance systems in Australia. However, it has been determined that distinguishing characteristics of Indigenous governance in the GBR typically include:

- **Consensus-building** in decision-making.
- **Elders and cultural leaders** included with clear roles.
- **Group-focussed resource-sharing** for families, group property and social prestige.
- **Cultural and traditional ties** as a basis for recognition of land and sea tenure.
- **Community cohesion based on relationships**, often kinship levels, with complex reciprocal responsibilities (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018d, p. 26).

In addition to customary governance provided by Traditional Owners in the GBR, there are also numerous formalised post-colonial forms of governance arrangements with a basis under Australian and Queensland legislative and policy oversight. These include:

- **Corporate and organisational entities** including Registered Native Title Bodies Corporate (RNTBCs), Prescribed Body Corporates (PBCs), Land Trusts, Companies, Indigenous corporations and associations. These organisations meet

a range of legal and statutory roles and responsibilities, including administrative and corporate administration, employment and financing. Several such entities facilitate ongoing consultations and negotiation between local Traditional Owners and other stakeholders throughout the GBR region.

- **Native-title related organisations**, including charitable trusts, discretionary trusts, companies and associations, e.g. Land and Sea Ranger Programs.
- **Geographically defined organisational governance**, e.g. at a geographically wider-scale the Northern Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA) supports Traditional Owner land and sea management across northern Australia, while a more local example would be the Giringun Aboriginal Corporation in Cardwell that comprises an alliance of nine tribes.
- **Deeds of Grant in Trust (DOGIT)** lands administered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island local governments, including on Cape York Peninsula (CYP). Aboriginal or Torres Strait Shire Councils within GBR catchments include Bamaga, Boigu, Cherbourg, Dauan, Erub, Eulo, Hammond Island, Hope Vale, Ima, Injinoo, Kubin, Lockhart River, Mabuiag, Masig, Mer, New Mapoon, Palm Islands, Poruma, Saibai, Seisia, St Pauls, Ugar, Umagico, Warraber, Woorabinda, Wujal Wujal, and Yarrabah.
- **Native Title Representative Bodies (NTRB)** Land Councils, which are corporate entities established under specific legislation to consult with and represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to regain rights to land and sea Country in a Western legal system. The four NTRBs working with Traditional Owners in the GBR are the Cape York Land Council (CYLC), North Queensland Land Council (NQLC), Queensland South Native Title Services (QSNTS) and the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA).
- **National Resource Management (NRM)** groups that deliver at a regional level including National Landcare Program projects.
- **Formalised local agreements** such as Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRAs) which are voluntary agreements developed by Traditional Owners and accredited by GBRMPA and the State Government, and Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) which are voluntary agreements between native title groups and others that govern the use of land and waters.
- **Informal committees, boards and taskforces**, e.g. Sea Country Forums, also play a role in organisation governance for Traditional Owners (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018d, pp. 26-27).

A history of colonial relocation may mean that although not all the DOGIT communities identified above are along the GBR coast, many of their residents may still consider themselves culturally connected to the Reef. This complexity and fragmentation of different governance and advisory structures for Traditional Owners in the GBR can result in significant challenges in the region.

2.5 Queensland Policy Environment

Tourism was recognised by the Queensland Government in 2012 as one of the four pillars of the Queensland economy. For nearly a decade the Queensland Government has made a

concerted effort to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities in its tourism policies, particularly in the domain of ecotourism. In the Government's vision:

Queensland is Australia's number one ecotourism destination and recognised as a world leader in ecotourism, delivering best practice nature-based experiences that contribute to the conservation of our natural resources and cultural heritage (Queensland Government, 2016b, p. 1).

One of the strategic priorities to achieve the vision involves: "Embracing a partnership approach between the tourism industry, government, community and Traditional Owners." The plan also recognises the opportunity of:

Incorporating Indigenous elements in ecotourism experiences to create a unique point of difference and provide economic and social development opportunities for Traditional Owners and Indigenous communities (Queensland Government, 2013, p. 10).

More recently the Chair of the TEQ Board noted a shift in consumer demand from a services-based tourism economy to an experiences-based economy where travellers, influenced by social media, want to experience and emotionally connect with real and authentic people, places and cultures. These insights underpin the shift in TEQ's experiences-focussed marketing approach (Godfrey, 2018). The Queensland Department of Innovation and Tourism Industry Development (DITID) released its *Indigenous Participation Plan 2018-2021* in 2018, which outlines how the department will contribute to the delivery of the *Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-2021*. Goals include increasing accessibility for Indigenous peoples, allocating 3% of the Attracting Tourism Fund, Outback Tourism Infrastructure Fund and Growing Tourism Infrastructure Fund to support Indigenous proponents, and direct investments in building Indigenous business capabilities that have identified the Tourism Business Capability Program as a potential target (DITID, 2018, p.1).

TEQ's Director of Destination and Experience Development highlighted in June 2018 that one of the challenges to deliver unique Traditional Owner experiences is realising the great potential of the untold "sea country" stories of the GBR (Morgans, 2018). The Director was alluding to Sir David Attenborough's *Great Barrier Reef* trilogy which screened in 2015 (Attenborough 2015). Part One contains a segment on how the GBR was formed around 10,000 years ago as told down the generations by the Gimuy Walubara Yidinji people, whose sea country extends out from Trinity Inlet into the GBRMP. Like the Gimuy Walubara Yidinji, all the Traditional Owner groups with Sea Country estates along the GBR will have their stories about the origins of the GBR connecting them to their sacred places and to many of its iconic species – turtle, dugong, barramundi, stingrays, sharks, whales, and so on (Morgans, 2018).

It should also be noted that all Queensland Government agencies are expected to adhere to the Government's 2019 *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Action Plan 2019-2022*, which provides strategic direction for Queensland Government agencies' cultural capability planning. The plan's strategic vision is to provide efficient, effective and responsive services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by ensuring their perspectives are an inherent part of core business across all agencies, underpinned by five principles: (i) valuing culture; (ii) leadership and accountability; (iii) building cultural capability to improve economic participation; (iv) engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and businesses; and (v) culturally responsive systems and services.

This section analyses the principal policies that address Indigenous tourism, and which, if faithfully implemented at the regional and local levels, could see a marked increase in the level of engagement by Traditional Owners, communities and Indigenous businesses in the GBR tourism industry. In essence it is about translating policy into practice. In this section the term policy also includes plans, programs, strategies, and frameworks.

2.5.1 2020: Year of Indigenous Tourism

A number of new Indigenous tourism initiatives that will be relevant to supporting Reef tourism were announced by the Queensland Government as part of the *2020 Year of Indigenous Tourism*. The \$10m 'Growing Indigenous Tourism in Queensland Fund' is intended to support new, unique and innovative Indigenous tourism products and experiences in Queensland, particularly in regional areas. The fund comprises two categories. The first category offers First Nations enterprises (e.g. PBCs, councils, Indigenous businesses) up to \$25,000 to develop a concept for an Indigenous tourism product or experience. The second category offers \$250,000 to \$1m to Indigenous businesses and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils for projects that improve or develop key tourism infrastructure and facilities, or provide a unique tourism experience (Queensland Government, 2020c).

A dedicated Indigenous Tourism Development Service will work with emerging and established Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander operators to start and grow their businesses and products, with dedicated officers located in Cairns and Brisbane (Queensland Government, 2020b).

The Indigenous Innovation and Entrepreneurs Program (IIEP) is open to Indigenous businesses, innovators or entrepreneurs across all industries, with an increased focus on the participation of Indigenous tourism operators. It is jointly funded by the Queensland Government and TAFE Queensland (Queensland Government, 2020a).

A South East Queensland Indigenous Tourism strategy is also being developed to cover the region from K'gari (Fraser Island) to the southern end of the Gold Coast (Queensland Government, 2020d). Initiatives being examined by the Working Group include development of a five-year strategy for sustainable tourism on Quandamooka Country on Mulgumpin (Moreton) and Minjerribah (North Stradbroke) islands, and creating a tourism experience based on songlines throughout southeast Queensland (Redlands Community News, 2020).

2.5.2 Destination Success: The 20-year plan for Queensland tourism (2014)

Destination Success outlines a number of strategic directions, one of which is built on the theme: Preserve our nature and culture through maximising the tourism opportunities of heritage, arts, culture, nature and Indigenous tourism experiences. It is pointed out in the plan that:

We have a rich cultural heritage, home to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our early settler history and modern multicultural society further expands our appeal. Visitors want authentic insights into this history and our communities.... These have the potential to attract many more visitors looking at different experiences of Queensland. We should focus on and promote these to provide a further range of attractions for visitors. Highlighting our heritage, arts, culture, nature and Indigenous experiences will give visitors additional reasons to visit, stay longer and spend more (Queensland Government, 2014, p. 13-14).

2.5.3 Queensland ecotourism policies and plans

2.5.3.1 Queensland Eco and Sustainable Tourism (QuEST) policy

The Queensland Eco and Sustainable Tourism (QuEST)³⁰ policy provides a contemporary tourism management policy for Queensland's national parks, and delivers a policy framework under the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service for ecotourism operators accessing the parks (Queensland Government, n.d.).

2.5.3.2 Queensland Ecotourism Plan

In the *Queensland Ecotourism Plan 2016-2020*, Indigenous heritage is explicitly mentioned in the vision statement in which the Queensland government's vision for ecotourism in Queensland to be achieved by 2020 is that "Queensland is an internationally celebrated ecotourism destination, delivering world-class interpretation and experiences that support the conservation of special natural places and unique Indigenous and cultural heritage" (Queensland Government, 2016b, p. 1). However, while the Plan makes reference to Indigenous ecotourism opportunities, it does not provide detailed steps to be undertaken to achieve these.

Showcasing the Great Barrier Reef and expanding authentic Indigenous ecotourism experiences are two of the five strategic directions identified in the Plan. Specific steps that are outlined in the plan to increase Indigenous ecotourism opportunities include:

- working with existing and potential Indigenous ecotourism product to ensure long-term sustainability;
- collaborating with members of the QTIC Tourism Indigenous Employment Champions Network to encourage participation of Indigenous Australians in ecotourism products;
- identifying new Indigenous ecotourism opportunities in and adjacent to Queensland's national parks, including jointly managed national park; investigating Indigenous 'Sea Country' ecotourism opportunities in particular on the Great Barrier Reef;
- working with the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation and key stakeholders to implement tourism actions proposed in the North Stradbroke Island Economic Transition Strategy; and
- working with Traditional Owners and communities to support development of commercially viable, indigenous-led ecotourism investment across Queensland (Queensland Government, 2016b, p. 14).

Although supplanted by the 2016-2020 Plan, the *Queensland Ecotourism Plan 2013-2020*, is still relevant because it had to be addressed by Queensland's RTOs in the preparation of their 2014 destination tourism plans (DTP), all of which are available on TEQ's and the individual RTO websites. While most RTOs subsequently reviewed or updated their DTP between 2016 and 2018, for some, such as Townsville Enterprises Ltd, Capricorn Enterprise Ltd and Tourism Whitsundays the *Queensland Ecotourism Plan 2013-2020* remains one of the foundation documents.

³⁰ QuEST replaced the previous Tourism in Protected Areas policy.

For the purpose of the 2013-2020 plan,

ecotourism encompasses activity on any public and private natural areas, but with a particular focus on national parks, marine parks and Indigenous lands including all protected areas managed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services (QPWS) and other government agencies. While the plan makes references to adventure and Indigenous ecotourism opportunities, it does not provide a detailed plan for either adventure tourism or Indigenous tourism (Queensland Government, 2013, p. 2).

Ecotourism, with Queensland's unique natural and cultural assets is a cornerstone of Tourism and Events Queensland's Brand Queensland. The brand strategy positions Queensland as a place that enriches and transforms the lives of all visitors. The four key experience themes of the brand strongly feature ecotourism:

- Natural encounters
- Queensland lifestyle
- Adventure
- Islands and beaches (Queensland Government, 2013, p. 9).

Another of the strategic priorities for implementing the vision for ecotourism in Queensland concerns facilitating best practice and innovation. This includes growing Indigenous opportunities, with actions to:

- Identify and progress three new opportunities to expand Indigenous involvement in ecotourism, working with Traditional Owners to maximise Indigenous ecotourism opportunities, including but not limited to, national parks and jointly managed national parks
- Create a program for the development of more Indigenous ecotourism guides
- Develop a certification process with Traditional Owners for non-Indigenous and Indigenous guides to retell and share Indigenous stories with visitors
- Participate in industry forums and reference groups to advance the development of best practice Indigenous ecotourism operations with a focus on improving skills and business performance (Queensland Government, 2013, p. 12-13, 16-19).

2.5.4 Best of Queensland Experiences Program (2017)

The *Guide to the Best of Queensland Experiences Program* serves as the basis for annual judging of Queensland's best experience(s) providers who

...bring the Queensland story to life and wow our visitors with quality, engaging and memorable Best of Queensland Experiences visitor experiences. They are identified as the iconic tourism products, events and locations that deliver Queensland's Hero Experiences to our guests (TEQ, 2017b, p. 2).

Its framework is based on five key Experience Pillars incorporating 25 Hero Experiences "that reflect the heart and soul of the Queensland story." The five pillars are:

- Reef, Islands and Beaches
- Natural Encounters

- Adventure and Discovery
- Lifestyle, Culture and People
- Events

Each Experience Pillar has a suite of Hero Experiences that reflect the heart and soul of the Queensland story and represent where the state has a competitive advantage. “Indigenous Experiences” is listed under the Lifestyle, Culture and People pillar; and “Indigenous Events” is listed under the Events pillar (TEQ, 2017b, p. 1).

The program assesses tourism operators whose products have a live listing on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) against criteria that correspond with the expectations of today’s guests and best practice industry standards. Tourism operators are scored out of 100 points against each of the following weighted criteria:

- Consistent delivery of an exceptional experience (60 points)
- Website with secure online booking platform (15 points)
- Active and engaging social media presence (15 points)
- Regional Tourism Organisation membership (5 points)
- Product/experience accreditation (5 points) (TEQ, 2017b, p. 4)

The significance of these criteria is that, because they represent best practice industry standards, they are put forward as the standards that Indigenous tourism businesses should aspire to in order to consider themselves as being “business ready”, or perhaps more aptly, “competition ready”.

2.5.5 Tourism employment policies

2.5.5.1 Advancing Tourism 2016-20: Growing Queensland Jobs (Advance Queensland)

Queensland’s *Advancing Tourism 2016-20* plan to grow tourism and jobs lists four strategic priorities, two of which directly reference matters related to Indigenous tourism. In relation to its first strategic priority (“Grow quality products, events and experiences”), one of the actions is to “develop new and refreshed ecotourism, nature-based and cultural heritage products and experiences” with an associated action to: “encourage the development of Indigenous, cultural and heritage tourism products across the state” (Queensland Government, 2016a, p. 6). The second is in the context of the third strategic priority (“Build a skilled workforce and business capabilities”) with one of the actions to: “Develop the Indigenous workforce for the tourism industry” by:

- Work[ing] with QTIC to support the continued development of skilled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with tourism career pathways and Indigenous tourism businesses.
- Support[ing] industry to grow Indigenous tourism workforce representation in all parts of the industry (Queensland Government, 2016a, p. 8).

This third strategic priority (“Build a skilled workforce and business capabilities”) was made the focus of the *Queensland Tourism Workforce Plan 2017-20*.

2.5.5.2 Queensland Tourism Workforce Plan 2017-20 (Jobs Queensland)

Tourism is referred to in the *Queensland Tourism Workforce Plan 2017-20* as an “industry of industries”:

Tourism encompasses multiple sectors as visitors consume good and service sourced across the economy. The industry includes: transport (air, rail, road and water); accommodation; attractions; events; food services (takeaway, cafes, restaurants); clubs and casinos; retail; arts and recreation; travel agencies and tour operators; education and training; and tourism (marketing, information and planning). There is no specific identifier in the Australian and New Zealand Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) for the tourism industry (Jobs Queensland, 2017, p. 14).

Of the 13 tourism employment sectors, “Cultural services” make up 1% of the tourism workforce (Jobs Queensland 2017). It is also the sector which is of most interest in this report as “Indigenous cultural services” can cover a range of Indigenous cultural experiences including those described in *Connect with Culture: 50 ways to experience Indigenous culture* (TEQ, 2017a).

The *Queensland Tourism Workforce Plan 2017-20* also notes that:

Indigenous participation in the tourism workforce faces many barriers such as lack of access to training and transportation, limited education and qualifications, health and family circumstances. Currently 2.2% of Queensland’s workforce identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. They primarily work in unskilled roles such as housekeepers and cleaners, cooks and kitchen hands. Ensuring engagement of the Indigenous workforce, especially in regional areas, has been identified by many industry stakeholders as a key enabler for industry growth. As part of the development of the 13 regional workforce plans, Jobs Queensland will explore with key stakeholders how Indigenous involvement can be promoted and supported (Jobs Queensland, 2017, p. 20).

In 2015-16, tourism employed over 225,000 people both directly and indirectly (9.5% of Queensland’s workforce) (Jobs Queensland, 2017, p. 11). According to the 2016 Census, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comprise 4 per cent of Queensland’s population (ABS, 2018). This suggests an equity target for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in the tourism workforce of around 10,000 jobs.

As noted above, the *Queensland Tourism Workforce Plan 2017-20* addresses the third strategic priority of the *Advancing Tourism 2016-20: Growing Queensland Jobs* plan by further building on the five priority areas which were identified in that plan, and which includes the need to develop the Indigenous workforce for the tourism industry (Jobs Queensland, 2017, p. 9). The identified actions include: (i) exploring innovative methods for engaging and partnering with Indigenous communities to increase participation in the industry; and (ii) building connections between government, tourism operators, Indigenous communities and local education providers to identify, develop, mentor and promote Indigenous tourism businesses and business opportunities. Throughout regional Queensland, the potential of “experience-based tourism, particularly that which focuses on Indigenous culture and knowledge”, has been identified as key to growing visitor numbers (Jobs Queensland, 2017, p. 32).

Direct tourism employment in each of the GBR RTO regions based on 2015-16 data, together with direct tourism employment as a percentage of the total regional workforce (where given), disclosed in their individual June 2018 *Tourism Workforce Plan 2018-2020*³¹ was:

- Tropical North Queensland (16,720 – 12.6%)
- Townsville North Queensland (5,540 – 4.8%)
- Whitsundays (3,270 – 17.5%)
- Mackay (1,770 – 2.0%)
- Capricorn Coast (3,047 - NS)
- Gladstone (1523 - NS)
- Bundaberg North Burnett (1,990 - NS)

The total number of direct tourism employment jobs across the seven GBR RTOs is 33,960. This covers tourism jobs across the whole of each RTO region, and currently how many and what percentage of those jobs relate directly to GBR direct tourism jobs is not known. However, the two standout statistics from the above data are: (i) Tropical North Queensland accounts for nearly half of the 33,960 jobs³²; and (ii) the highest proportion of direct tourism-related jobs occurs in the Whitsundays. This underscores other data presented in this report about the high concentration of GBR tourism activity in these two regions and the possible implications for Traditional Owners and Indigenous tourism businesses generally wanting to engage in GBR tourism outside of the Cairns-Port Douglas and Whitsunday regions.

The Plan emphasises that “the expectations of the skills required for tourism roles are evolving. Regardless of position (front or back of house), tourism workers will continue to need soft skills such as communication, emotional intelligence and the ability to connect and engage. They also need critical thinking and creativity to assess situations and make effective decisions for the business and the customer ... In an experience-based industry where high-quality customer service is key, more sophisticated technical skills and socio-technical skills are in demand among employees and tourism operators. Skills sought include digital literacy, people skills, problem solving, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, maintaining professional and ethical standards and leadership” (Jobs Queensland, 2017, p. 25).

The *Queensland Tourism Workforce Plan 2017-20* also emphasises that:

The onus is on tourism businesses to understand and stay abreast of changing market needs and align their offering to ensure they continue to resonate with their target markets. Tourism operators need access to the latest market information and the knowledge and skills to effectively develop, market and deliver exceptional products and experiences to meet customer needs. That is, meeting customer needs from the moment they visit websites while planning their trip until they share feedback on their return home. To support developing a unique customer experience, businesses will require workers with general technological ability (Jobs Queensland, 2017, p. 26).

³¹ Each RTO workforce plan was prepared according to a Jobs Queensland template, and all the standardised data occurs on pp. 6-7 of each plan.

³² It is assumed here, in the absence of further breakdown employment data, that a very high proportion of these jobs are in the Cairns-Port Douglas area.

This is no less true of Indigenous businesses and should be part of their preparations to become business ready for their participation in the tourism industry.

To facilitate Indigenous participation in the tourism industry, the *Queensland Tourism Workforce Plan 2017-20* makes a number of recommendations. Actions arising from the recommendations that are of direct relevance to Indigenous tourism businesses and employees include:

- **2.4:** Hold 'Come and Try' days involving, inter alia, local tourism employers, RTOs, and Indigenous community leaders
- **2.6:** Explore innovative methods for engaging with and partnering with Indigenous communities to increase participation in the industry involving, inter alia, DATSIP, QTIC, local government and RTOs.
- **4.1:** Establish community-based tourism 'skills exchange' (online or offline) opportunities for local job seekers, involving local government, RTOs and tourism employers.
- **4.3:** Build connections between government, tourism operators, Indigenous communities and local education providers to identify, develop, mentor and promote Indigenous tourism businesses and business opportunities. To be actioned by, inter alia, QTIC, DATSIP, local government, tourism operators and Indigenous community leaders. (Jobs Queensland, 2017, pp. 41 and 44)

All GBR RTOs published their regional tourism workforce plans for 2018-2020 in response to the *Queensland Tourism Workforce Plan 2017-20* in June 2018, and the plans are available on their respective websites.

2.5.6 Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-21 (DATSIP)

The 2018 *Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–2021*, prepared by DATSIP, was developed in consultation with Reconciliation Australia and Queensland Reconciliation Incorporated. In the Plan the Queensland Government recognises, *inter alia*, that:

Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples have continuing rights and responsibilities as the First Peoples of Queensland, including traditional ownership and connection to land and waters. These rights will be respected and recognised within our legal, political and economic system (Queensland Government, 2018, p. 10).

The Plan contains two actions relevant to the tourism industry. Action 1.4 is concerned to communicate Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples' culture and history through interpretative experiences in National Parks. The target is to:

Work in consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to incorporate stories, language, artwork and cultural meanings in content developed for National Park interpretative signs in Queensland National Parks signage upgrade projects and park publications. This includes Daintree National Park Discovery Guide, Barron Gorge National Park Discovery Guide and Mon Repos Discovery Centre (Queensland Government, 2018, p. 19).

Actioning this target is the responsibility of the Department of Environment and Science (DES).

The second is Action 3.6, which is to “develop the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism sector in partnership with Traditional Owners, the tourism industry and government agencies”. The four resulting targets are the responsibility of the Department of Innovation, Tourism Industry Development and the Commonwealth Games (DITID), and include: (1) promote and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism through Queensland’s DestinationQ agenda; (2) establish a cross-government working group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism; (3) work with Indigenous leaders, Traditional Owners and the wider tourism industry to develop and grow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism businesses and experiences; and (4) support Tourism Tropical North Queensland to undertake research, demand development and run an expression of interest process to deliver new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism experiences targeting Asian visitors (Queensland Government, 2018, p. 29).

2.6 Indigenous Economic Development Plans

As discussed in s.2.4.5, various regions in northern Queensland are managed by the resident Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as Deeds of Grant in Trust (DOGITs)³³ and regional councils. All of the Aboriginal Shire councils operating along the Reef are exploring tourism opportunities, and most have identified tourism as a priority area.

In the context of this report, while the emphasis is on Traditional Owners and the development of Traditional Owner owned and operated tourism businesses in Reef tourism, these will most likely fall into the category of small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs). However, few, if any, Traditional Owner groups have the resources and essential infrastructure to operate a tourism business along the GBR. Most Traditional Owner groups from Townville north to the Torres Strait, have strong links with the former reserve communities, now operating as shire councils under the *Local Government Act 2009* (Qld). As local governments, they are required to produce and report on their 5-year corporate plan and long-term community plan, which includes their economic development plan.³⁴ As local governments they provide and run important tourist attractions, such as community art centres, and sport, recreation and event facilities. Community art centres and their local artists play an important role in establishing a community’s tourism “brand”. The local governments also, in partnership with the relevant Queensland Government agencies, provide basic service infrastructure such as telecommunications, wharves and jetties, boat ramps, and in some cases, airfields, accommodation, camping grounds, and emergency and medical services.

There is also the possibility, because these local government areas contain very small populations, well under general accepted minimum population size of an Australian shire of around 10,000 persons, that some time in the future they will be amalgamated with larger neighbouring mainstream shires. This possibility was taken into account, for example, by the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council (YASC) in its economic development plan based largely on

³³ DOGIT land is a land tenure category under the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* (Qld) s. 13. It includes land granted in trust under the *Land Act 1962* (Qld) for the benefit of Aboriginal inhabitants, as an Aboriginal reserve or subject to a lease under the *Land Act 1962* or the *Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Land Holding) Act 1985* (Qld).

³⁴ In accordance with *Local Government Act 2009* (Qld), s.104(7) and the *Local Government (Finance, Plan and Reporting) Regulation 2010* (Qld), s. 119(1).

tourism, in which the possibility of amalgamation with the Cairns Regional Council (CRC) was a foreseeable reality, requiring “that all of the planning and development controls initiated by both the YEDA [Yarrabah Economic Development Association] and YASC are consistent with those of the CRC [Cairns Regional Council]” (YASC, 2012, p. 22).

In preparing this report, tourism initiatives of the following Aboriginal and Torres Strait Shire Councils within GBR catchments were considered.

2.6.1 Hope Vale

Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council (HVASC) has released a new economic development strategy, including several initiatives to attract more business and tourism to the remote community by 2023. These include:

- Liaising with the State Government and Telstra to have optic fibre delivered to Hope Vale to strengthen communication within the community.
- Launching a social media campaign, #WeAreHopeVale, aimed at introducing the community to a wider audience to boost its tourism.
- Production of a Youtube video featuring drone footage of the Hope Vale township and local beaches (Hope Vale Council, 2019).

Tourism activities in Hope Vale include an Arts & Cultural Centre, Elim Camp Ground, Guurrbi Tours and Maaramaka Walkabout Tours (HVASC, n.d.). The economic development goals of the Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council include working collaboratively towards creating a strong tourism region. Activities identified include the need to promote and support local and regional tourism initiatives; facilitate the provision of infrastructure and services to support tourism; and collaborate with tourism peak bodies to promote the region (HVASC 2014).

2.6.2 Lockhart River

The Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council (LRASC) lists numerous tourist activities in the Lockhart River region including fishing, bird-watching, and Art Centre and Kutini-Payamu (Iron Range) National Park³⁵ (LRASC, n.d.). The Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Community has identified a priority need for more local businesses and jobs that take advantage of construction and development and cultural tourism opportunities as part of its community plan. Activities identified include ongoing support for cultural initiatives such as the ‘*Kinchya Ngumpulungu* – Songs from the East Coast’ project, improving infrastructure such as undertaking limited scale beachfront development, and development of tourism business opportunities (LRASC, 2011).

2.6.3 Northern Peninsula

Cape York Peninsula’s northern-most local government area, the Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council (NPARC) represents the communities of Seisia, New Mapoon, Bamaga, Umagico and Injinoo. The Council website promotes local tourism and encourages tourists to visit the Cape York tourism portal³⁶ maintained by local operators and businesses to access information regarding tourism in the area. In November 2019, the Gudang/Yadhaykenu

³⁵ See: <http://lockhart.qld.gov.au/>

³⁶ <http://www.capeyorkinfo.org>

Aboriginal Corporation took back tenure of 211ha of land at the tip of Cape York including the Pajinka Wilderness Resort which had been abandoned for 20 years³⁷. The Traditional Owners have plans to rebuild the resort (Carruthers, 2019d).

2.6.4 Palm Island

The Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council (PIASC) has identified the need to consider opportunities to tap into economic and tourism development (PIASC 2013). Townsville North Queensland DTP references the *Palm Island Economic Development Plan* as providing:

a clear outline of Local Government vision for future economic/commercial activity, identifying tourism as a key area for potential future economic and commercial development. The Island's key stakeholders identified a strong preference for 'eco' products to align with the region's nature based attractions. Support services/infrastructure have been identified which would assist in the development of a tourism industry on Palm Island (Townsville Enterprise Ltd, 2014, p. 9).

The Manbarra Traditional Owners (Manbarra Nanggarra Wanggarra Aboriginal Corporation)³⁸ are party to the *Palm Island Improved Management Practices Indigenous Land Use Agreement* (2011). The ILUA covers Great Palm Island, Curacoa Island, Fantome Island and Esk Island.

2.6.5 Torres Strait

Tourism is currently a minor component of the regional economy in the Torres Strait region, but the Torres Strait Island Regional Council has identified potential for this sector to expand in niche markets associated with eco- and cultural tourism and recreational fishing tourism in particular. Tourism has been identified as an opportunity for local employment and can help to stem the potential flow of young educated people out of the region and opportunities will be actively identified. The Torres Shire welcome brochure makes reference to the Gab Titui Cultural Centre, which develops and promotes local Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal art (Torres Shire Council, n.d.), and the Winds of Zenadth Cultural Festival is held every two years on Thursday Island. The Council has identified climate change as a particular risk to tourism (Torres Shire Council, 2016).

2.6.6 Wujal Wujal

Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council is located in the Bloomfield valley, Daintree National Park, Cape York region. Tourist attractions include Wujal Wujal Falls and Roaring Meg Falls with sacred sites and story place, bird watching, river cruises etc. There is also an arts and cultural centre and community Indigenous Knowledge Centre. The corporate plan includes tourist attractions as part of its profile and although tourism is not highlighted as a priority area specifically, it does identify promoting the development of micro, small and medium enterprises as a major program area (WWASC n.d.).

³⁷ The Pajinka Wilderness Lodge was an enterprise of the Injinoo Aboriginal Corporation (Pajinka, c1992).

³⁸ See Palm Island ILUA: <https://www.atns.net.au/agreement.asp?EntityID=5481>

2.6.7 Yarrabah

Tourism in Yarrabah dates back at least to the 1960s, but more recently the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council (YASC) has identified tourism as an unexplored economic opportunity for creation of local employment and business creation (YASC 2011). However, within the YASC's community plan time frame, one major tourism infrastructure proposal has been considered and rejected, and another, which was planned to be finished by August 2019, has yet to start.

In November 2012 the YASC commissioned a vision paper titled *Our Story – Building Our Future* that set out the community's economic development aspirations. The document scoped a number of tourism ventures based on the development of a 570m jetty at Wungu Beach, estimated to cost \$80 million, to cater for cruise ships entering the Cairns region, and a 250 hectare eco-village tourism precinct adjacent to the jetty at Wungu, which would underpin the economic development of the community. In February 2013 the YASC commissioned Stellar Corporate Solutions to establish the business case and undertake the financial modelling to support the vision paper aspirations.

The land development values were estimated at over \$400 million, with estimated land values of \$50 million accruing to the Traditional Owners and Gunggandji PBC through a combination of ground leases and the sale of freehold lots to tourism operators and tourism residential investors. The development was estimated to generate around 250 permanent jobs in the Yarrabah community with direct salaries and wages income of \$15 million per annum. Local government charges to the YASC were estimated at \$5 million per annum, and the annual revenues generated by enterprises conducted within the development precinct estimated at \$50 million per annum (YASC, 2012, p. 8). This ambitious plan was not realised, nevertheless at 150 pages it provides a template with regard to the detail of tourism industry analysis and scoping required for any of the Indigenous communities along the GBR contemplating an economic future based largely around tourism.

The second proposal concerns a long-awaited 165m long jetty, costed at \$7 million, at Gribble Point in Mission Bay, originally expected to be completed by August 2019. Funded by the State Government, the jetty will provide the Yarrabah community with the opportunity for commuter and tourism services to be developed to and from Cairns. A regular ferry service between Yarrabah and Cairns, similar to that operating between Palm Island and Townsville, has been "in the pipeline for decades", taking about 30 minutes off the current commute by road. Considered a "game-changer for the community" by the YASC mayor: "We're hopeful that we can bring tourism into the community and showcase our culture, arts and craft... It's promoting our community in a positive way" (as quoted in Bateman, 2018, p.9). However, the project has been further delayed over concerns about the need to deepen a 150m-long entry route by about a metre to enable the ferry, as well as other water-craft, to access the jetty. It is anticipated that construction of the jetty will now start in May 2020 (Calcino, 2019).

The jetty will provide opportunities for existing mainstream tour operators, such as Experience Co, which operates the *Dreamtime Dive and Snorkel Cruise*, to include Yarrabah within their cruise itinerary. However, at the time of writing of this report, there is no evidence of work having begun for the construction of the jetty.

The community, which has an extensive cultural precinct with a museum and art centre, and an annual Yarrabah Music Festival which draws large crowds from Cairns and region, has also added some infrastructure improvements with an up-grade to the boat ramp for the launch of small water craft, and the sealing of the main road out to its southern beaches as far as Buddabudoo.

2.7 Reconciliation through tourism

In her book *Welcome to Country: A Travel Guide to Indigenous Australia*, Langton (2018) points to the absolute lack of information available for tourists about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and history in some parts of Australia. Colonial history is very often a topic that many would prefer not to talk about, yet its brutal reality is very much part of the foundational history of Queensland, and no less so along the GBR coast (Langton, 2018, p. 49). Tourism is seen by many Traditional Owners and their communities as a vehicle for increasing the awareness of the wider Australian community and overseas visitors about Indigenous cultures and histories (see, for example, Wet Tropics Aboriginal Plan Project Team, 2005, p. 93).

Some of the atrocities perpetrated by early colonisers were well-documented by themselves in their diaries and memoirs, and some of these perpetrators went on to hold high office in their local regions. Korah Halcomb Wills (1828-1896), who lived in the Bowen-Mackay region during the 1860s and 1870s, and who served as the mayor of Mackay 1876-77, is among the most notorious of these. His diary detailing accounts of his and others' atrocities against the local Aboriginal people are held in the John Oxley Library (Bottoms, 2015). It is therefore often left to Traditional Owners to retell this history as part of their tour packages. For example, the website of Mungalla Aboriginal Tours offers visitors the opportunity to: "Learn of the often brutal conflict between Nywaigi Aboriginal people and the European settlers that shaped the destiny of Queensland" (Mungalla Aboriginal Tours, n.d.).

The past forms part of the intergenerational memory of Traditional Owner communities and is re-told through traditional forms of storytelling and the places on country where colonial events took place (Langton, 2018, p. 34-37). It is also recorded by many historians³⁹, and should be available as an integral part of the tourism experience. Even the role of the Pacific Islanders in the development of the sugar-cane industry is not mentioned, yet they have an important part in the economic development of Queensland and in the history of Australia's race relations (Andrew and Cook, 2000).

The 2019 NAIDOC theme of "Voice. Treaty. Truth. Let's work together for a shared future" is drawn from the *Uluru Statement From The Heart* (NAIDOC, 2018). The recognition of the "truths" of the past is a fundamental step towards reconciliation. With events planned along the GBR coast from the Town of 1770 to Cooktown for the commemoration of 250 years since Captain James Cook's first voyage up the Queensland coast, the opportunities to explore not

³⁹ Interesting histories have been written about many of the iconic islands of the GBR. For example, for an account of the Ngarru people, see: Barker, B. (2004). *The Sea People: Late Holocene Maritime Specialists in the Whitsunday Islands*, Central Queensland. *Terra Australis*, Vol. 20; early colonial experiences of the Woppaburra people are recorded by Morris, A.J. (1989). *My island in the sun: an early history of Great Keppel Island*. Alan J. Morris, Emu Park Queensland; and Dorothy Jones' 1976 account of the history of Green Island at: https://espace.library.uq.edu.au/data/UQ_204835/s00855804_1975_76_10_1_91.pdf

only the first encounters, but also their longer term consequences, will provide locals and tourists alike with moments for reflection. The Australian National Maritime Museum's *Encounter 2020* program, for example, is aimed at both commemorating Cook's voyage to Australia, as well as marking the lasting impact it had on Australia's First Peoples and in shaping the country's future (DCA, 2019).⁴⁰

2.8 Capacity of Traditional Owner groups to supply experiences, products and services to the GBR tourism industry

This section explores the issue of the capacity of GBR Traditional Owners to establish tourism businesses or otherwise engage in the GBR tourism industry by focusing on the capacity of PBCs and those Land Trusts registered with ORIC according to their size, numbers of employees and consolidated gross operating incomes based on an analysis of their 2018 General Reports.

In the final report of the *Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Aspirations Project*, in the context of improving local governance capacity and infrastructure, the issue was raised that:

Self-defined family, clan and tribal groups and their PBCs, Land Trusts and relevant corporations, in many cases, have very low levels of resourcing and therefore capabilities. This issue is amplified in the northern section of the GBR with vast remote areas lacking basic physical infrastructure, people to manage the Reef and few industries such as tourism to assist (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018, p. 67).

In relation to PBCs and Land Trusts, of those Traditional Owner groups that have native title, 20 PBCs were identified⁴¹, and also 23 Land Trusts established to hold freehold land transferred under the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* (Qld) and the *Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991* (Qld).⁴² Among the Land Trusts, 11 were registered with the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC).

2.8.1 Prescribed Body Corporates (PBCs)

Of the 20 PBCs, one is awaiting registration following their native title determination in April 2019. Another (listed as a small corporation) was registered in August 2017 and did not submit a General Report for financial year ending 2018. Thus, of the 19 PBCs reviewed, 13 were classified as small corporations and 6 medium corporations. There were no large corporations identified.⁴³

⁴⁰ See: <https://www.arts.gov.au/what-we-do/cultural-heritage/250th-anniversary-captain-cooks-voyage-australia>

⁴¹ Under the NTA, PBCs have to be registered with ORIC.

⁴² Accessed at: https://www.dnrme.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/108723/land-trusts-map.pdf Land Trusts can also be registered under the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Acts*.

⁴³ Under ORIC classifications, corporations must satisfy at least two of the criteria in their class:

- a small corporation has consolidated gross operating income of less than <\$100,000; consolidated gross assets valued at <\$100,000; or fewer than 5 employees
- a medium corporation has consolidated gross operating income between \$100,000 and \$5 million; consolidated gross assets valued between \$100,000 and \$2.5 million; and between 5 and 24 employees
- a large corporation has consolidated gross operating income of \$5 million or more; consolidated gross assets valued at \$2.5 million or more; and more than 24 employees. Information accessed at: <https://www.oric.gov.au/publications/catsi-fact-sheet/corporation-size-and-reporting>

With regard to the numbers of employees, of the 18 General Reports submitted to ORIC, seven PBCs had no employees, while 8 had either one or two employees. Only 3 had 10 or more employees.

With regard to consolidated gross operating income, three did not submit the required financial information with their 2018 General Report. Of the 15 that submitted completed General Reports, four did not report any income for the 2017-18 financial year. The income of another, at less than \$5,000, is not significant. Of the remaining ten PBCs, two had incomes between \$50,000 and \$100,000; seven recorded incomes between \$100,000 and \$1 million, while one recorded an income of more than \$2 million. It is these ten PBCs, depending on whether their income is, for example, project sourced, generated from assets, or fee-for-service contracts, or a combination of these, that have the best potential to engage in the tourism industry. Those that have their own land and sea ranger services, and depending on local tourism opportunities, would be best placed to engage in tourism activities with mainstream operators. With employment secure, rangers, for example, could be contracted to mainstream operators as tour guides, cultural ambassadors, etc.

The plight of many of the PBCs extends further. Those PBCs with no income and no employees, are largely reliant on member volunteer support and resources, and most likely operate out of a member's home. In some situations, this means they are not living on country and can be difficult to contact. This suggests that many PBCs are unable to carry out their functions as established under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth) and the *Native Title (Prescribed Bodies Corporate) Regulations 1999* (Cth) in managing and holding native title.⁴⁴ For example, negotiate ILUAs and monitor and enforce compliance; deal with a steady stream of Future Act Notifications (FAN) including those that come from GBRMPA and QPWS; and ensure that their sea country heritage values are being respected and protected by mainstream tourism operators. This last point is reinforced in the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park* where it states that:

A further risk to heritage is a lack of on-ground management capacity and opportunities for Traditional Owners. Limited access to marine areas due to not having suitable boats, and limited resources to conduct protection and rehabilitation activities, prevent active management. On-ground management requires competent organisations with strong governance in place that have cultural authority to make decisions, and resources such as boats and rangers to implement management activities. Programs and funding often lack continuity. Without on-ground management, cultural and legislative rules and responsibilities cannot be implemented or enforced (GBRMPA, 2019a, p. 20).

2.8.2 Land Trusts

There are 23 Land Trusts distributed along the GBR from Gladstone to the Torres Strait. These Land Trusts hold land transferred under the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Acts* as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander freehold, a form of communal freehold tenure that provides similar rights and responsibilities to the Indigenous landowners as to the owners of fee simple freehold land, the main difference being that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander freehold land is inalienable so it may not be sold. In addition, the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*

⁴⁴ Specifically NTA ss 55, 56, 57; and *PBC Regulations* 6(1)(a - e), 7(1)(b-f), and 8(2).

(Qld) (NCA) provides for the creation of a class of protected area called "National Park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land)" (CYPAL). This class of protected area provides for existing and proposed national parks to become Aboriginal land and to also be dedicated and managed as a National Park (CYPAL). Existing Aboriginal land and unallocated State land in the Cape York Peninsula region can also become National Park (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018, p. 61). These areas are jointly managed by Traditional Owners (represented by a Land Trust) and the Queensland Department of the Environment and Science. Joint management arrangements for a National Park are established through the development of an Indigenous Management Agreement (IMA) and a park management statement or management plan. Most of the land in the GBR catchment north of the Daintree River is now Aboriginal freehold land and managed directly, or jointly in the case of CYPAL land, by Aboriginal landowners.

Of the eleven Land Trusts that are registered under ORIC, 8 are small corporations, and three are medium. In terms of employee numbers, of the 9 that submitted their 2018 general reports⁴⁵, five had no employees, three had either one or two employees, and one had in excess of 50 employees. In terms of income, of the 9 that submitted their General Reports, one did not include financial information. Of the 8 complete reports, 4 had no income, one had income less than \$50,000, two had income between \$100,000 and \$1 million, and one had income in excess of \$2 million.

2.8.3 Summary of capacity of PBCs and Land Trusts

In summary, between the PBCs and Land Trusts, in terms of size, number of employees and consolidated gross operating income:

- 1) Size of the 30 ORIC registered land holding bodies:
 - 21 are listed as small and 9 as medium. There are no large corporations.
- 2) Numbers of employees (based on 2018 general reports submitted by 18 PBCs and 9 Land Trusts):
 - 12 had no employees; 11 had either one or two employees; and 4 had 10 or more employees.
- 3) Income (based on 2018 general reports submitted by 15 PBCs and 9 Land Trusts who have included financial information):
 - 8 had no income; 2 less than \$50,000; 2 between \$50,000 and \$100,000; 9 between \$100,000 and \$1 million; and 2 over \$2 million.

Overall, there is a strong correlation between the size of the corporation, the number of employees and the level of income. As noted above in relation to the PBCs, a quarter of the 31 land holding bodies are small, have no employees and no income, and on this basis, lack the capacity to fulfil their native title obligations, let alone contemplate engagement in the GBR tourism industry. This may partly explain why there has been a failure by Traditional Owners to be sufficiently "business ready" to take up any of the 18 Indigenous Special Tourism Permissions on offer since 2005 allowing everyday operations within the Whitsundays, Hinchinbrook and Cairns Planning Areas (see also section 2.2) (GBRMPA n.d.-a).

⁴⁵ One did not submit a General Report for 2018, and another, registered in September 2017, also did not submit a General Report.

2.8.4 Traditional Owner capacity to engage in GBR tourism industry

It is clear that Traditional Owners, particularly those who hold land and sea country under native title and/or Land Trust arrangements, including National Park CYPAL, have a particular responsibility to manage their country and have few resources left to fund and engage in other activities such as tourism.

As is pointed out in the Traditional Owner Aspirations Project report in relation to the obligations of Land Trusts:

Aboriginal land trusts, as the owners of Aboriginal freehold land, are responsible to manage that land in compliance with relevant legislation and overarching management plans. The Reef 2050 Plan identifies that water quality due to land based run off and coastal land use change are key risks to the reef. As land owners Aboriginal land trusts on Cape York are responsible for managing run off from their land and land use changes. Therefore, if water quality and land use in the northern third of the GBR is to be managed to achieve Reef 2050 objectives, Aboriginal land owners must be properly engaged and supported to achieve water quality and land use management actions. Also, this approach sets a precedent in Queensland for Joint Management. Feedback from Traditional Owners in Cape York Peninsula during this project would suggest that while the National Park Joint Management system in Cape York is poorly resourced/implemented, it does provide an improvement on past exclusion models (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018d, p. 61-62).

The *Queensland Ecotourism Plan 2013-2020* establishes that national parks and other protected areas are the primary assets around which Queensland's ecotourism industry is based, that "[e]cotourism, with Queensland's unique natural and cultural assets, is a cornerstone of Tourism and Events Queensland's Brand Queensland" (Queensland Government, 2013, p. 9). Indigenous Traditional Owners have native title rights and interests in practically all of them along the GBR. However, as already noted, despite being the largest single land-owning group in the northern GBR catchment and having emerging Native Title rights that will impact across the whole Reef, Indigenous people clearly remain under-represented in decision-making bodies (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018d, p. 29). It is therefore critical that Traditional Owners are properly engaged across the entire GBR as primary landowners - not just as stakeholders. The key challenge then "...is to move from recognition of Traditional Owner values and the provision of advisory roles to Traditional Owners to a situation where Traditional Owners are in authoritative decision-making roles. These roles for Traditional Owners must also reflect and have strong links to customary governance arrangements within and between Traditional Owner group" (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018d, p. 68). This should extend to having strong decision-making roles within the GBR tourism industry, particularly within the GBR RTOs and LTOs.

Of the Traditional Owner groups identified by GBRMPA (see Table 1), 21 have native title determinations along the GBR coastline, and in some cases, over "sea country" within the GBRMP. Currently Traditional Owner groups have nine Traditional Usage of Marine Resource Agreements (TUMRAs) and one Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) in place, meaning that their traditional rights and interests are recognised along the GBR coast and within the GBRMP itself. Combined, these agreements cover approximately 25 per cent of the GBR Region's coastline (GBRMPA, 2019c, p. 11). Because national parks and protected areas are subject to native title claims, many holders of native title have concluded joint-management arrangements over the GBR national park estate and established ranger services to maintain

the parks. Working in the tourism industry as cultural interpreters and ambassadors is a natural extension of their ranger duties. These agreements are fundamental to these Traditional Owner groups' participation in providing Indigenous tourism experiences.

Most of the better resourced PBCs and Land Trusts have established their own ranger services to manage their land and sea country, for example, the Wuthathi⁴⁶, Eastern Kuku Yalanji⁴⁷, Mandingalbay Yidinji⁴⁸, and Giringun⁴⁹ Traditional Owners. With regard to participation in the GBR tourism industry, it is a natural extension of their duties for rangers to also be engaged in the tourism industry. For example, Mandingalbay Yidinji operate its own tourism business, Mandingalbay Ancient Tours through its Djunbunji Land and Sea Ranger Program, as does the Gudjuda Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation with their land-based tourism enterprise, Bush Tukka and Rock Art Tours.⁵⁰ Juru Enterprises Ltd, supported by Juru and Bindal Traditional Owners, operates the Juru Walk at Plantation Park, Ayr.⁵¹ The Eastern Kuku Yalanji Traditional Owners, through their Jabalbina Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC have also been pursuing tourism development with the support of QPWS and Indigenous Business Australia.⁵²

⁴⁶ See: <http://www.wuthathi.com.au>

⁴⁷ See: <http://jabalbina.com.au/projects/our-rangers>

⁴⁸ See: <http://www.djunbunji.com.au/mandingalbaiyidinji-corporation/>

⁴⁹ The Giringun Aboriginal Corporation represents the interests of traditional owners from nine tribal groups: Bandjin, Djiru, Girramay, Gugu Badhun, Gulnay, Jirral, Nywaigi, Warrgamay and Warrungnu. Giringun established the Giringun Ranger Service in 2010. See: <https://giringun.com.au/programs/giringun-aboriginal-rangers>

⁵⁰ Gudjuda has established a new tourism program promoting culture and adventure. Gudjuda also offers employment and training for Traditional Owners, and sources funding from several streams including tourism funding from Townsville City Council's sister cities programs with China, Japan and PNG. See GBRMPA (2018b), and <https://www.gudjudatours.com.au/new-page>

⁵¹ See: <http://www.jruenterprises.com.au/about.html>

⁵² See: <http://www.jabalbina.com.au>

3.0 ASSESSMENT OF INDIGENOUS TOURISM ENGAGEMENT ALONG THE REEF

This section provides an analysis of the current status of Traditional Owner involvement in the GBR tourism industry and the nature and extent of that involvement in the various facets of both the mainstream and Indigenous sectors of the industry within the different regions of the GBR.

3.1 Assessment Methodology

3.1.1 Purpose of the assessment

The geographic region covered by this report is what is generally referred to as the Great Barrier Reef Region (GBRR), which includes the World-Heritage Listed Great Barrier Reef itself and the GBR Catchment area that covers the coasts adjacent to the GBR, therefore Indigenous-owned tourism-related activities that operate within this region are the focus of this report. The approach is also intended to be inclusive of a wide range of Indigenous businesses that generally benefit from GBRR tourism, rather than to include only those that offer experiences, products and services directly related to the GBR.

To identify the issues under review in this report, desk-top research was initially carried out in 2016 through CQUniversity's Centre for Tourism and Regional Opportunities (CTRO) which revealed that, despite the seemingly abundant opportunities, Indigenous Traditional Owners of the GBR appear to show little interest in participating in the lucrative coral reef tourism industry (Marrie, 2018; Deloitte Access Economics, 2017). Consequently, this project was developed to follow up the initial research with qualitative studies to gain an understanding of why this is so.

3.1.2 Methods

This report is based on a comprehensive literature review, as well as data collected through interviews and self-completed surveys from GBR stakeholders including Traditional Owners along the Reef, and local and regional tourism organisations active in the area, complemented by detailed case studies and an informal review of Indigenous tourism businesses in the Cairns region. Interview and self-completion survey data collection methods were used due to the advantages of being reliable and inclusive with relatively low collection costs.

Responses from the surveys have been anonymised for inclusion in this report (unless specific permission was received for attribution), so in most cases granular regional-level detail has not been provided due to the possibility that it could identify respondents. To aid with determining relationships between the data, the results from the surveys were manually entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 23) for review.

3.1.2.1 Eliciting stakeholder experiences

Research activities included a combination of literature reviews; grey literature surveys (e.g. tourism brochures); and structured interviews and surveys of Traditional Owners, mainstream tourism operators and their representative bodies, to assist in mapping out the opportunities for Indigenous participation in both mainstream and Indigenous-initiated ventures, and to

provide an assessment of current obstacles and what can be done to mitigate them; and stakeholder-driven consultations with Traditional Owner groups and regulatory authorities to determine their experiences and attitudes to the tourism industry in the GBRR. Analysis of the results aimed to match barriers and opportunities with policy and management requirements, to provide an assessment of their compatibility, and to suggest appropriate modifications.

Detailed survey forms were prepared for Traditional Owners and RTO stakeholders (see Appendix 1 and 2), including questions that related directly to the project objectives, as well as questions designed to collect comparative data to that which had previously been collected in previous surveys (such as the IBA Indigenous cultural tourism gap analysis conducted in 2013: Ruhanen et al, 2013). The surveys were structured into multiple sections, including both closed and open-ended questions, tailored for the different stakeholders but including some overlapping questions for comparison purposes. Stakeholder representatives were given the opportunity to respond either directly via self-completed survey form, or via telephone interview with a researcher, initially within a two-month timeframe, although in most cases the deadlines were extended.

3.1.2.2 Regional Tourism Organisation Survey

For the RTO survey (Appendix 1), Section A considered experiences with Indigenous tourism activities and engagement with Traditional Owners, Section B considered governance processes and policy measures, and Section C asked about mainstream and Indigenous tourism opportunities and barriers in the region. Duplicate questions were included in relevant sections to enable comparison between the different stakeholders within each region.

With the assistance of Tourism & Events Queensland, all of the regional tourism organisations operating along the Reef were identified, along with three local tourism organisations to be contacted as part of the survey (LTOs were selected to represent the coastal subregions). One of the LTOs was no longer operational, and the remaining organisations were contacted by email and telephone with details about the project and survey. A 60% response rate was recorded with four organisations responding via interview and two via self-completed form. Two RTOs advised they were unable to participate due to resource constraints. RTO/LTO surveys were undertaken between May and August 2019. Interviews typically took between 30 minutes to an hour, and most organisations provided responses that incorporated inputs from at least two members. The total number of valid RTO surveys was N=6.

3.1.2.3 Traditional Owner Survey

For the Traditional Owner survey (Appendix 2), Section A considered Indigenous experiences with tourism activities, Section B asked about Indigenous tourism opportunities and interests, Section C considered barriers to participation, Section D considered engagement with RTOs and Section E explored the impacts of policy measures.

Fifty-nine Traditional Owner groups along the Reef were identified through Native Title Prescribed Bodies Corporate, Land Trusts and Traditional Owner organisations. Valid contact

details were obtained from 2018 ORIC reports⁵³, websites and referral requests for 42 of the Traditional Owner groups. Representatives of these 42 groups were contacted by telephone with details about the project and followed up with the survey via email or hard copy mail-out according to their preference. Traditional Owners were given the opportunity to respond either directly via self-completed survey form, or via telephone interview. Following an initially poor response, Traditional Owners were contacted at least two more times via email and/or telephone to encourage participation and deadlines were extended by two months. A 29% response rate of contactable Traditional Owners was recorded (20% of identified groups), with nine Traditional Owners responding via self-completed form and three via off-survey interviews. Two Traditional Owner representatives advised that they were unable to participate due to resources constraints, and one due to a lack of interest in tourism activities. Traditional Owner surveys were undertaken between May and September 2019. Interviews ranged from 30 minutes to two hours. The total number of Traditional Owner valid surveys was N=12.

3.1.3 Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance for the project was granted on 1 February 2019 by the Human Research Ethics Committee, Research Division – CQUniversity in accordance with the university's standing ethics policies and guidelines (project reference CQU 4677)⁵⁴.

3.1.4 Survey limitations

The RTO survey responses represent over 60% of the available organisations along the Reef and the Traditional Owner survey responses represent over 25% of Traditional Owner groups active in the region. Due to the relatively small number of eligible participants in the surveys, care should be taken when generalising the results.

3.2 RTO and LTO Experiences: Survey Outcomes

3.2.1 Geographic characteristics

Seven regional and three local tourism organisations along the reef were contacted by phone and email and invited to participate in the survey. Survey responses were received from representatives of organisations in Bowen, Bundaberg, Gladstone, Port Douglas, Cairns and the Whitsunday regions, representing 60% of the organisations contacted⁵⁵. In a few instances organisations opted not to answer certain questions.

⁵³ It is worth noting that over 40% of the contact information available from 2018 ORIC reports was no longer operational within six months of the reports being made available (e.g. phone numbers no longer in service, and websites and associated email addresses expired), as it highlights the significant communication issues that may be experienced by Traditional Owners along the Reef.

⁵⁴ Including 2018 Human Ethics Application Guidelines – National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council and the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee. 2007 National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. Australian Government, Canberra. 2016 Research Data Management Policy and Procedure, 2016 Policy and Procedure: Travel and 2014 Occupational Health & Safety Unit: Task/activity Risk Assessment. CQUniversity, Rockhampton.

⁵⁵ Representatives of the Capricorn Enterprise, Mackay, and Townsville RTOs and Tropical Coast Tourism LTO were unable to participate due to resource constraints. Cape York LTO was not in operation at the time of the surveys.

3.2.2 Experiences with Reef tourism

3.2.2.1 Indigenous tourism activities in the region

Levels of Indigenous tourism along the GBR catchments vary significantly with location. Several regions reported no Indigenous tourism businesses, or only nascent projects under development, and cited reasons such as recovery from Tropical Cyclone Debbie (2017) as having an impact on local business development. A couple of regions reported operational partnerships, such as between local Reef operators and sea country rangers, and future plans such as a bush tucker trail. One region was significantly more advanced than others with regard to Indigenous tourism experiences, including boutique touring, beach walks and galleries. All regions agreed that the level of Indigenous tourism activities around the Reef in their regions was too low.

3.2.2.2 Impacts of mainstream tourism on Indigenous peoples

Generally, RTOs/LTOs considered that potential impacts from mainstream tourism on Indigenous peoples were mostly low impact, including impacts on Indigenous use and enjoyment of sea country, rights to take marine resources, sites of significance, marine habitats and animals, and cultural or spiritual wellbeing. One respondent noted that *“organisations and businesses should be consulting with traditional custodians and governing bodies to ensure that significant sites and marine habitats are not impacted by any form of tourism”*. However, there was high agreement that tourism opportunities have the potential to make a positive impact on economic wellbeing for Indigenous peoples.

3.2.2.3 Engagement between mainstream tourism businesses and Traditional Owners

RTOs/LTOs consider that ‘mainstream’ tourism businesses operating along the Reef (i.e. non-Indigenous tourism offerings) show respect to Traditional Owners, and the majority believe there is no bias within the mainstream tourism industry against including Indigenous tourism experiences/products in the region, with one respondent commenting *“quite the opposite, local operators are keen to include such experiences”*. However, one respondent considered that there was some reluctance in their region to engage based on a previous experience with an industry and Traditional Owner partnership that had proceeded unprofessionally.

Most regions have some form of acknowledgement of Traditional Owners in place, such as inclusion in local printed area guides and operational strategies, email signatures, and acknowledging Traditional Owners of the land during event openings. The regions with more active Indigenous tourism ventures (i.e. those that self-reported greater experiences with Indigenous tourism) were typically more proactive, promoting Welcome to Country services and other civic receptions, such as welcoming cruise ships on arrival.

Involvement with local Traditional Owners was more varied, as some regions noted limited involvement and marketing due to the lack of Indigenous tourism in the region. Regions in which Indigenous tourism businesses were more active (north, central and southern GBR regions) tended to have several formal engagement initiatives in place, such as creating an Indigenous cluster group (consulting with Indigenous business owners and operators), cultural protocols for engaging with Indigenous businesses and communities, and initiatives to introduce Indigenous tourism businesses to trade and media promotion opportunities.

3.2.2.4 Barriers to tourism in the Reef

Respondents were asked to consider potential obstacles for mainstream tourism businesses (i.e. not just Indigenous businesses) in their region in order to determine if there were particular barriers that were linked to regions with low levels of Indigenous business activity. However, there was no significant correspondence between perceptions of barriers and other experiences with Indigenous tourism. One respondent noted that the diversity of tourism activities made answering questions in this section in a general way impossible, as each product needed to be considered on an individual basis in order to overcome its specific barriers. Others commented that general barriers to tourism include “*high turnover of staff*”, “*competition with nearby regions along the Reef*” and that “*navigating red tape can be particularly intimidating for start-up businesses*”.

For all regions, the barriers to tourism that were most impactful included finding appropriate staff; costs of equipment and insurance, and finding necessary finance; and the ability to meet government regulations such as getting appropriate permits for activities on the Reef, all of which were rated as medium-high barriers to participation (see Table 5). Other barriers identified by RTOs were more localised to individual regions, such as communications infrastructure, making and managing bookings, remote operational costs (e.g. issues of road and air access), the short duration of the tourism period due to seasonal conditions, the economic environment (e.g. fluctuating visitor numbers), and marketing/ awareness/ advertising issues.

Table 5: Typical barriers experienced by mainstream and Indigenous tourism businesses within the GBR Region – RTO experiences

Potential barrier	Typical impact on Reef tourism businesses
Finding appropriate staff	Medium-High
Costs of equipment and finding necessary finance	Medium-High
Meeting government regulations (e.g. getting permits)	Medium-High
Costs of insurance	Medium-High
Uncertainty about market demand	Medium
Competition with mainstream tourism ventures	Medium
Lack of physical infrastructure (e.g. camping facilities, boat ramps, etc.)	Medium
Lack of training (e.g. in areas such as first aid, digital literacy, etc.), including uncertainty about the nature and level of training required	Low-Medium
Lack of support services (e.g. medical)	Low-Medium
Competition with other Indigenous tourism ventures	Low
Competition with other types of business (e.g. competing with the mining industry for accommodation)	Low
Lack of communications infrastructure (e.g. Internet access, mobile coverage, EFTPOS, etc.)	Variable (low-high)
How to make and manage bookings and their payments	Variable (low-high)
Remote operational costs (e.g. issues of road and air access)	Variable (low-high)

Potential barrier	Typical impact on Reef tourism businesses
Short tourism period due to seasonal conditions	Variable (low-high)
Economic environment (e.g. fluctuating visitor numbers, \$AUD exchange rate)	Variable (low-high)
Marketing/awareness/advertising issues	Variable (low-high)

3.2.3 Governance

3.2.3.1 Inclusion of Traditional Owners in governance processes

Although recognised as stakeholders within the regions, most RTOs/LTOs do not specifically include Traditional Owners in the governance process (although one had a TO place on the board of directors). However, most would consider a variety of options to improve participation including Traditional Owner participation at board level, Traditional Owner participation in executive management teams, and appointing an Indigenous champion or mentor. Existing governance processes would be able to address such participation without modification. Where specific options such as Traditional Owner participation on boards or in executive management teams were not supported, the organisation had other options already in place, including an Indigenous advisory committee, Indigenous mentor and Indigenous staff members. While all organisations would consider establishing an Indigenous tourism advisory committee, several noted that the low level of Indigenous tourism in the region did not indicate a need for this yet. Similarly, all would consider employing Indigenous staff members (and at least two already have), but most operated with very small numbers of staff (e.g. two or three staff members), and noted that such employment was considered as part of the regular recruitment process.

Most RTOs considered that governance participation of RNTBCs and land trusts would be best addressed through representation on existing committees rather than through special membership categories, as this is similar to the process for local councils, chambers of commerce, etc., and would provide the same benefits and levels of support.

Only one RTO had a staff member with specific responsibility for consulting with Traditional Owners, local Indigenous tourism businesses or other local Indigenous organisations about participation in the tourism industry. Most typically either had a single membership officer who was responsible for liaising with all stakeholders, or all staff shared the responsibility.

3.2.3.2 Increasing Traditional Owner participation in RTOs

Suggestions for involving Traditional Owners more in the work of the RTOs included opportunities for volunteer work in Visitor Information Centres for young people to learn more about the tourism industry, and building partnerships with long-term businesses (such as existing tours) to establish cultural tourism experiences to help overcome initial entry barriers to new businesses. Several noted the importance of face-to-face communication and connections. The most common barrier to participation identified was that potential Indigenous tourism businesses were not yet trade-ready.

3.2.3.3 Strategies and plans to promote Indigenous tourism

All tourism organisations surveyed (both RTOs and LTOs) were aware of the strategies by TA, TEQ and QTIC to actively promote Indigenous cultural experiences, particularly in relation to ecotourism, in both the domestic and overseas tourism markets, with several RTOs indicating that they were working actively with these organisations to contribute to and promote these strategies. However, there was limited awareness of the GBRMPA's *Traditional Owner Heritage Assessment Guidelines* among the RTOs, suggesting that the potential application of these guidelines to mitigating the impact from mainstream tourism activities has not been widely considered.

Most RTOs and LTOs considered that cultural awareness training provided to members by the RTOs in conjunction with the relevant Traditional Owners on how to respect Indigenous heritage values of their land and sea country would have an impact and “*would be well-received.*” Additionally, several respondents noted that such training has already occurred in with some success within the region (although awareness training had not specifically focused on the Reef). Consequently, one organisation noted that “*it may have low impact because there is already awareness in the region.*”

There was considerable variation among RTOs and LTOs regarding whether a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) negotiated with Traditional Owners, Indigenous tourism businesses and local Indigenous organisations would be likely have an impact on the organisation's level of engagement with the Indigenous community. Comments included that a RAP might “*create more awareness*” and “*opportunity for conversation*”, but also that it “*needs to be driven by local groups*”.

3.2.3.4 Accreditation

There was broad support for a system of accreditation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism experiences to help guarantee their quality, particularly with regard to enduring, consistent and reliable opening times to enable long-range tour bookings. Reluctance for support indicated that “*accreditation is valuable, but we don't want to add to the regulatory burden for start-up businesses*”. Suggestions for who could be responsible for such accreditation included QTIC, Tourism Australia, or “*making it a subsection of the existing Ecotourism Australia program*”.

3.2.3.5 Tourism levy

RTOs and LTOs did not support the introduction of a Traditional Owner tourist levy to help build the capacity of local Traditional Owners to participate in the tourism industry. Comments on this topic included that any levy would need to be “*part of a broader conversation about the tourism industry and creating sustainable funding for destination marketing, tourism development and capability building, and visitor services,*” there is “*local resistance to any sort of additional levies*” and “*it could be counter-productive to introduce a levy into an existing industry and likely to cause tension*”, and that “*it would be unlikely to provide greater support beyond currently available initiatives*”. Queries regarding alternatives suggested exploring ‘other options’ to increase Indigenous capacities.

3.2.4 Tourism opportunities

3.2.4.1 Traditional Owner heritage visibility

All RTOs and LTOs considered that Traditional Owner heritage visibility could be improved along the GBR, and that this would have a positive impact on the popularity of Indigenous tourism. Table 6 below indicates the anticipated impact from suggested options for improving visibility, highlighting that the most supported options included putting up information boards outlining the significance of a place/site to Traditional Owners, establishing Indigenous art and culture/heritage trails, and putting in place public art works by Traditional Owner artists.

Table 6: Anticipated impact of options to improve Traditional Owner heritage visibility (RTOs)

Option to improve visibility	Anticipated impact on Indigenous tourism
Putting up information boards outlining the significance of a place/site to Traditional Owners	High
Indigenous art and culture/heritage trails	High
Public art works by Traditional Owner artists	High
Signage identifying the Traditional Owners of the country being travelled on	Medium – High
Including local Traditional Owner names for places on signs alongside “whitefella” names	Medium – High
Including the traditional names for places in tourism brochures and travel guides	Medium

3.2.4.2 Market research

Few RTOs/LTOs had commissioned market research to assess the level of demand for Indigenous tourism products or experiences within their regions, and most did not have marketing strategies that specifically include Indigenous activities. However, the lack of Indigenous marketing strategies was strongly correlated with low levels of Indigenous tourism businesses in these regions.

Where market research had been conducted, it indicated that the demand for Indigenous tourism was not a high priority for domestic travellers, but was higher for international travellers. The resulting marketing strategy particularly targeted domestic and Western travellers.

Visitor surveys to gauge interest in Indigenous tourism experiences in the Wet Tropics suggests that first-time visitors are more likely to have participated in an Indigenous tourism activity than repeat visitors, and that the majority of Indigenous artefacts are purchased by visitors who did not participate in an Indigenous tourism activity (Pabel et al, 2017). These findings and further research into tourism interests and demand for Indigenous tourism products and experiences on the Reef would be valuable in determining the future development of Indigenous tourism products to assist in coordinating tourism development efforts within their regions to ensure that market constraints are recognised and non-viable duplication of efforts is minimised. However, it should also be borne in mind that Indigenous cultural drivers of engagement in tourism in the region tend heavily towards perceived benefits

of cultural education and information-sharing in balance with economic viability, rather than being purely profit-driven.

3.2.4.3 Barriers

Organisations were asked if they encountered any specific barriers to supporting Indigenous tourism businesses. One commented that Indigenous groups have not participated in any of the free mentoring or business capability-building workshops they have offered and they would welcome feedback on identifying why there was no participation in existing offerings. Another noted that *“limited Indigenous businesses in the region means we have limited opportunities to engage”*.

3.2.4.4 Training and mentoring opportunities

All RTOs/LTOs indicated a willingness to provide training and mentoring assistance. Most already offer such support to their members, and were enthusiastic about the opportunity to provide feedback to Indigenous businesses interested in setting up a tourism venture.

3.2.4.5 Other opportunities for improvement

One RTO noted that they had received queries about participating in Indigenous tourism activities, but they had no local businesses to promote. The availability of Indigenous experiences along the Reef was patchy, leading to *“a gap in the storyline”* in certain regions.

Most RTOs/LTOs were already able to identify local mainstream tourism businesses with a high level of interest in partnering and collaborating with Indigenous initiatives. Partnerships with existing businesses, rather than competing in a small market, was also identified as a method to defray operational costs.

Another observation was the opportunity to build a stronger network between Indigenous businesses along the Reef to improve experience and product development both locally and between regions.

3.3 Traditional Owner Experiences: Survey Outcomes

3.3.1 Survey respondents

Traditional Owner groups with land and sea country along the Reef were contacted by phone and email and invited to participate in the survey. Survey responses (n=12) were received from representatives nominated by local elders, that provided a broad geographic spread of Traditional Owner groups asserting their rights and interests along the Reef, including Cape York, Central Queensland coastal region and the Southern GBR region.

3.3.2 Experiences with tourism

3.3.2.1 Mainstream tourism activities in the region

More than half of the Traditional Owner group respondents surveyed considered that the level of mainstream (non-Indigenous) tourism activities in their sea country was too high. Observations included that it *“interrupts our ability to practice and enjoy our culture,”* and that *“we do not have native title determination... which has made it challenging (and without a*

voice) when it comes to the important sea country work on our foreshores, the Great Barrier Reef and the waters between”.

Specific concerns that were highlighted regarding mainstream Reef-related activities included: having to manage impacts from tourists on land and sea country; compliance issues and impact from professional or illegal fishing; and the unnecessary need to work under the “umbrella of other organisations”. Several respondents raised problems with pressure being put on certain species by tourism activities, from direct impacts such as turtle vulnerability to increasing numbers of speed boats, as well as rejection and censure of traditional hunting practices: “[tourism] interferes with turtle and dugong migrations and feeding and breeding patterns. Also we can’t hunt turtle and dugong like we use to be able to do. Their numbers are down - particularly dugong, and tourists don’t like the idea of us hunting them”.

3.3.2.2 Positive impacts of mainstream tourism on Traditional Owners

Only a small number of Traditional Owner groups reported positive interactions with mainstream tourism businesses operating on their country through showing respect to the Traditional Owners, e.g. “some operators are respectful and have asked if they may include cultural information on their tours which is excellent,” and “most tourism operators don’t engage with us, but we do have a good working relationship with one company”. However, most respondents considered that mainstream businesses show respect only sometimes or not at all, and/or they show bias against including Indigenous tourism experiences, e.g. “many tourism businesses operate without consent by TOs”, “there is no engagement or communication”, “we are only included when we are needed to be”, and “sometimes I feel that they don’t know we exist, or just can’t be bothered with us”. There was also uncertainty among Traditional Owners regarding what local Indigenous cultural history may be incorporated in mainstream tours without permission from Traditional Owners: “sometimes you hear about it, but I don’t really know”.

In some cases, tour operators are approaching Traditional Owners about conducting their tourism businesses on traditional country and this is generally very well received by the Traditional Owner groups. Positive highlights included rangers being asked along on tours, and invitations for Traditional Owners to incorporate cultural knowledge into tours, or offered other employment opportunities.

3.3.2.3 Negative impacts of mainstream tourism on Traditional Owners

Many Traditional Owner groups considered that there were numerous negative impacts from tourism being felt at varying levels by the Indigenous peoples in their region as summarised in Table 7 below. The greatest concerns were expressed regarding negative impacts on marine habitats and animals, and consequent effects on cultural or spiritual wellbeing. Negative impacts on rights to take marine resources and impacts on sites of significance were also high in some areas, which correlated with a negative impact on use and enjoyment of sea country. Areas that had already established Indigenous businesses reported a medium positive economic impact from tourism. One respondent commented that commercialism had resulted in some Indigenous tourism experiences losing their authenticity and cultural integrity because “some Indigenous tourism products/experiences have become disconnected from their community or Traditional Owner group”, as well as “many tourism organisations’ experiences/operations have not been officially authorised by Traditional Owners, e.g. tours

on country, etc.". Establishment of a mechanism to enable "official recognition" of Traditional Owners to enhance the authenticity, grounding and reputation of Traditional Owner organisations was suggested.

Table 7: Impacts of tourism on Indigenous peoples' activities along the Reef

Area of potential impact	Typical level of impact on Traditional Owners
Marine habitats	Medium-High Negative
Cultural or spiritual well-being	Medium-High Negative
Marine animals	Variable (Low-High Negative)
Rights to take marine resources	Variable (Low-High Negative)
Sites of significance	Variable (Low-High Negative)
Indigenous use and enjoyment of sea country	Low-Medium Negative
Economic	Low-Medium Positive

3.3.3 Barriers to participation

3.3.3.1 Level of interest in tourism industry

Approximately 30% of respondents (n=4) expressed no interest in establishing a tourism business. Reasons given for this lack of interest were typically either that they were unsure of what would be involved or what potential benefits might be, or that there was a lack of finance or other resources to consider it.

There was a strong correlation between Traditional Owner groups that lacked interest in establishing a tourism business and poor experiences with mainstream tourism businesses (e.g. feeling that there was a lack of respect from mainstream operators, seeing bias in the tourism industry, experiencing negative impact on sea country), along with poor or no engagement with the RTO in their region. There was also a strong correlation with barriers linked to remote operational costs and lack of communications and physical infrastructure in these regions. Individually or in small clusters, these negative experiences or lack of infrastructure were not enough to correlate with a reduced interest in tourism, but all groups with no interest in tourism reported experiencing at least five of the six indicators listed in Table 8.

3.3.3.2 Training and financial support

Table 8 outlines the range and level of barriers identified by survey respondents. Financial support and training were the two obstacles identified most frequently, e.g. "*we have people we could train, but we don't have enough funding to pay them or the trainers*". More detailed questioning revealed that equipment costs and insurance were identified as almost universally posing a high financial barrier to participation in the tourism industry, e.g. "*if we could get resources for more wetsuits, safety helmets etc., we could expand.*"

In addition to start-up costs, equipment such as marine vessels and small touring buses to transport tourists were beyond the means of most groups interested in tourism activities. Those groups that had raised funds for relevant equipment usually relied on external funding (such

as through partnership with an NGO), or accessed equipment and infrastructure through collaboration with mainstream tourism organisations. Traditional Owners with tourism businesses and ranger services typically involved their ranger service as part of their tourism activities, but as rangers were only resourced to maintain their country, *“more funds are needed to expand the service to include tourism operations”*.

One respondent noted that the Traditional Owners had a long history of carrying out their traditional activities on country and therefore considered them *“safe”*; however, this view was not shared by insurance operators, who were unfamiliar with traditional activities and therefore they classified them as very risky making them expensive to insure.

Another respondent noted that although training and employment within the tourism industry is *“the drawcard”* for many Indigenous tourism operations, *“direct benefits are only going to the individuals being trained or employed”* and this *“does not directly benefit their TO group”*. Providing *“contributions to the Traditional Owner groups business structure”* or *“contributing to or investing in ... ranger programs, land and sea country-based plans, IPAs, TUMRAs, art programs, education programs, community activities, tribal sciences projects, etc.”* was suggested as a solution to this issue.

3.3.3.3 Other barriers

Remote operational costs, seasonal conditions and the cost/difficulty of meeting government regulations were also assessed as posing medium to high barriers for most groups. In some cases, it was not necessarily even the actual seasonal conditions in their location that had an impact, but rather visitor perception about impacts from events elsewhere in the state, e.g. *“Our biggest hurdle is usually weather related - big wets or cyclones. Visitor numbers can be down, even when our region is not directly affected, e.g. the flood in Townsville gave the impression everywhere else along the Reef was flooded. Not so.”*

Table 8: Barriers experienced by Traditional Owners in establishing and/or maintaining a tourism business

Obstacle	Typical level of barrier for Traditional Owners
Costs of equipment and finding necessary finance	High
Costs of insurance	High
Remote operational costs (e.g. road and air access)	Medium-High
Short tourism period due to seasonal conditions	Medium-High
Meeting government regulations (e.g. permits)	Medium-High
Finding appropriate staff	Medium
Lack of training (including uncertainty about nature and level of training required)	Medium
Uncertainty about market demand	Medium
How to make and manage bookings and payments	Low-Medium

Obstacle	Typical level of barrier for Traditional Owners
Competition with other Indigenous tourism ventures	Low
Lack of communications infrastructure (e.g. Internet access, mobile coverage)	Variable (Low-High)
Lack of physical infrastructure (e.g. camping facilities, boat ramps)	Variable (Low-High)
Lack of support services (e.g. medical)	Variable (Low-High)
Competition with mainstream tourism ventures	Variable (Low-High)
Competition with other non-tourism business (e.g. competing for accommodation with mining industry)	Variable (Low-High)
Marketing/awareness/advertising	Variable (Low-High)

Traditional hunting was also identified as causing issues with Traditional Owner tourism. Permissions being granted for tourism operations in culturally significant areas used for traditional use of marine resources has resulted in *“tourism organisations contesting and lobbying against Traditional Owner’s rights to undertake traditional use of marine resources in the GBR Marine Park. This leads to deterring Traditional Owners from enjoying their sea country, impacting on the continuation of connection, culture, identity and livelihoods to the GBR, and a decline in cultural heritage values”*. Adoption of the *Woppaburra Heritage Assessment Guidelines* (GBRMPA, 2019d) was proposed as a solution, as well as ongoing education and awareness-raising of tourism organisations and other users of the Reef.

3.3.4 Tourism opportunities

3.3.4.1 Tourism magnets

The majority of Traditional Owner respondents were able to identify a broad range of local activities or landmarks in their country that they considered could be particular draw-cards for tourists, including environmental sites like beaches and inshore coral reefs; sites of cultural significance such as rock art; interactions with marine animals such as green turtle, dugong and whale watching; and cultural experiences such as spear throwing, fire making and bush tucker activities.

3.3.4.2 Business models

Concomitant with current low levels of Indigenous tourism along the Reef, only three respondents already had a tourism business(es) in operation, and two of these were still in early stages of development. Business models being used included having the business be part of the Traditional Owner ranger program, as Traditional Owner-run businesses independent of the land-holding body, collaborating with a mainstream tourism operator, or some combination of these three options. The only Government support accessed in establishing the tourism businesses reported by respondents was through funding provided for the ranger program. Marketing strategies were fairly general and targeted both domestic and international travellers, although they usually focused on small groups.

All of the existing businesses incorporated cultural habitat or sacred site tours; ritual experiences, festivals or celebrations; art experiences; bush tucker; and included Indigenous storytelling as part of their operations. Other activities that were more location specific included bush medicine, Indigenous dancing, 4WD touring, fishing, and providing guiding services to a mainstream tourist operator. No existing business was yet able to provide accommodation, although several noted that this would provide significant opportunities to expand their offerings and make Indigenous tourism more widely available in their region.

3.3.4.3 Accommodation

Incorporating accommodation for tourists was also identified as being of high interest for Traditional Owners operating on country located outside large cities. Respondents noted that current reliance on leased buildings is a concern; getting involved in building accommodation would also help to build skills and training for people in the region; and that it makes economic sense to be able to co-locate tours with rangers working on country e.g. *“Definitely needs to reside in the region, simply economics to have both Sea Rangers and a Ranger program that looks after the National Parks on country”*.

3.3.4.4 Traditional Owner heritage visibility

All Traditional Owner respondents considered that Traditional Owner heritage visibility could be improved on their traditional country, and that this would positively impact on the popularity of Indigenous tourism in the area, e.g. *“Everyone should know whose traditional country they are on”* and *“I think it would help make people a bit more curious to know more about us TOs. Hopefully enough to take a tour with us or visit our art shop.”* One respondent noted that rangers already do a lot of work raising heritage visibility, but issues with native title claims can impact on their ability to carry out the work.

Table 9 indicates the anticipated impact from various options for improving visibility, highlighting that the most highly supported options were including the traditional names for places in tourism brochures and travel guides, as well as on place name signs; adding signage identifying the Traditional Owners of the country being travelled on; and developing Indigenous art and culture/heritage trails.

Support for public art works by Traditional Owner artists received medium-high support, with one respondent commenting that *“establishing an art centre rather than public art works could be better as it would provide an opportunity for several artists to access resources they need to create the art”* as well as a space to collaborate and exchange ideas.

Support for putting up information boards outlining the significance of a place/site to Traditional Owners was variable, with one respondent noting concerns with putting up information boards that label significant sites as this could encourage vandalism (as has been experienced before at rock art sites).

Table 9: Anticipated impact of options to improve Traditional Owner heritage visibility (TOs)

Option to improve heritage visibility	Anticipated impact on Indigenous tourism
Including the traditional names for places in tourism brochures and travel guides	High
Signage identifying the Traditional Owners of the country being travelled on	High
Including local Traditional Owner names for places on signs alongside “whitefella” names	High
Indigenous art and culture/heritage trails	High
Public art works by Traditional Owner artists	Medium-High
Putting up information boards outlining the significance of a place/site to traditional owners	Variable (Low-High)

3.3.5 Engagement and partnership-building

3.3.5.1 Partnering with mainstream tourism businesses

Traditional Owner groups interested in establishing or expanding their business unanimously expressed high interest in providing cultural guiding or ambassador services to mainstream tourist operators. One group was already engaged in this and reported positive impacts from the partnership.

3.3.5.2 RTO awareness

Less than 40% of the respondents were aware of the RTO responsible for their region, even including some respondents with established tourism businesses. The level of engagement for those aware of the RTO ranged from poor (the most common response) to good,⁵⁶ but the majority of Traditional Owners were interested in being more involved with their RTO. Engagement activities ranged from simply attending meetings at which RTO representatives were present, to direct approaches that had been made by Traditional Owner groups to their RTO in anticipation of establishing a new tourism business. The presence of an Indigenous staff member at the RTO was positively correlated to good engagement with the RTO: “[the RTO] has been good since they’ve employed an Indigenous person full-time. She’s been really active in getting out in the community.”

One respondent noted that “although [we] are generally invited as part of regional tourism delegations travelling interstate and overseas, there is no representation and support for Traditional Owners in the delegation”, as well as a lack of financial resources to cover RTO membership expenses and limited representation of Traditional Owners “with authority to represent their group” in regional tourism boards. They also commented that “Indigenous workers for a mainstream tourism organisation earn less, as opposed to Traditional Owner ‘owned’ businesses delivering the service”⁵⁷ and that it was “unfair to restrict an Indigenous worker’s pay rate on the basis that [for example] they cannot play a didgeridoo, which is not

⁵⁶ Very good and excellent were also options, but none achieved at this level.

⁵⁷ Note that this would be similar for a non-Indigenous person working in the tourism industry.

by choice but obligation under lore and custom". Tourism organisations *"to establish a Traditional Owner advisory reference group to provide advice on managing cultural values in the workplace (including developing and implementing reconciliation action plans and other strategies"* was proposed as a solution, along with *"tourism organisations to remunerate and value Traditional Owner representation and advice"*.

3.3.5.3 Improving engagement

The majority of respondents considered that their RTO could help more with Indigenous tourism in their country, for example by better understanding what the Traditional Owners have to offer; helping with foundation work to establish a tourism business; and helping with advertising and promotion of Indigenous tourism activities. One respondent suggested that business-oriented support may be more successful in supporting Traditional Owner businesses during the early stages of establishment, such as via industry training delivered through IBA or the private sector, and promoting opportunities to connect with other businesses in a mentoring capacity.

Another respondent noted the importance of *"cultural immersion and the building of rapport and trust as a key strategy to building solid partnerships with Traditional Owners"*, and another expressed frustration that Traditional Owners have been surveyed previously by policy-makers, but have seen limited outcomes as a result of the information provided. These observations highlight the importance of engaging with Traditional Owners in a meaningful and mutual exchange of information that may often require a one-on-one context, particularly when considering the remote-area disadvantage experienced in many regions of the Reef. Indigenous methodologies and approaches to building knowledge and capacity must be treated with the same respect as Western frameworks to ensure genuinely collaborative progress towards building a successful Indigenous tourism industry along the Reef: *"We would like to see real people sit with us, take a personal interest in us, and discuss real options to establishing viable business operations."*

3.3.6 Managing risks from tourism

It is well known that in addition to tourism's potential positive impacts on Indigenous communities, there are also risks that need to be managed (e.g. Weaver, 2009; Schellhorn 2010; Liu & Lu, 2014). Negative impacts may include influences on the economy (such as price rises at tourist sites exacerbating poverty problems for local communities), culture (such as the traditional status of elders who do not participate in the tourism industry being undermined), and ecological environment (such as disturbances arising from increased tourist activity in sensitive areas exacerbating risks to threatened species).

The complex relationship between tourism development and Indigenous development is still difficult to clarify and may differ on a case-by-case basis (Weaver, 2009). However, community monitoring is recognised as an efficient tool for collecting information and observations about impacts in Indigenous territories. Indigenous communities may recognise different indicators and survey impacts in a different manner to scientific monitoring systems, and therefore such a system would need to ensure the involvement of Indigenous peoples themselves in deriving their own indicators to monitor and report on tourism impacts. In the first instance, creating stronger networks between Indigenous tourism businesses operating on the Reef would

provide an opportunity to document and further investigate anecdotal evidence about impacts, prior to establishing a more codified monitoring system.

3.3.7 Policy environment

3.3.7.1 Indigenous tourism accreditation

Respondents unanimously supported maintaining high standards for Indigenous tourism, and considered that a system of accreditation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism experiences could help to guarantee their quality. However, several noted it would be important that this was not cost-prohibitive, and one commented that such a system should be supportive, for example through providing mentoring to help businesses achieve the required standards.

Various organisations were suggested that could take responsibility for such accreditation, including Traditional Owner groups, TUMRA organisations, *“an Indigenous body within Tourism Queensland”*, and *“an independent body, like QTIC, or Ecotourism Australia”*.

3.3.7.2 Policies promoting Indigenous tourism

There was low awareness (<30%) among Traditional Owners of federal and state government policies and packages that have been put in place to specifically promote Indigenous tourism and to encourage Indigenous people to enter the industry. Respondents commented that Reef tourism was promoted, but not necessarily Indigenous Reef tourism, e.g. *“I have seen lots of activities promoting GBR tourism in general, but not much about Indigenous tourism”*. Two respondents noted that they were aware of the existence of some packages, but did not have the resources to create a submission to access them.

One respondent commented on the need for more action to address the selling of fake Aboriginal art: *“There’s a lot of shops selling [fake art] in our region”*. Another respondent noted that better mechanisms to share information with Traditional Owners about tourism policies that may affect them should be in place, e.g. *“It gives us a bit of leverage if we can use them when talking to other tour operators and applying for grants and assistance”*.

3.4 Indigenous Reef Tourism Case Studies

Internationally, the criteria for establishing Indigenous ownership of tourism businesses can be as low as 30%; however Indigenous businesses in Australia are generally understood to be those enterprises which are at least 51% owned by people identifying as Indigenous. In the GBRR, Indigenous-owned tourism-related businesses cover a wide range of experiences, products and services. A range of different types of Indigenous businesses was identified, and attempts were made to contact businesses that reflected a variety of these different categories in different regions along the Reef. Most participants agreed to be interviewed, others were sent the outcomes of a desktop review for comment before inclusion in the report.

For example, based on the database of Indigenous experiences advertised by TTNQ, such experiences include Indigenous owned art galleries/community art centres (retail and interactive), guided tours, events (such as CIAF and the Winds of Zenadth Festival), accommodation (camping grounds), centres (such as the Gab Titui Cultural Centre, Mossman

Gorge Centre), individual artists/performers who offer their services (e.g., as MCs for functions and events), walking trails (such as Gamaay Dreaming Track, Cooktown), and transport services (e.g. McDonald's Ferry, Thursday Island). However, GBRR Indigenous-owned tourism-related businesses do not include, for example, mainstream art galleries (such as the Cairns Art Gallery, although it regularly holds exhibitions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art), or the Pamagirri Aboriginal Experience at Rainforestation (owned by the CaPTA group/Woodward family), even though these are identified among the fifty experiences in TEQ's *Connect with Culture: 50 ways to experience Indigenous culture* (TEQ, n.d.).

3.4.1 Indigenous cultural festivals

It is well-known that Indigenous festivals are not only important to Indigenous communities for their contribution to wellbeing and cultural confidence, and providing an inclusive space of reconciliation, but they also provide the opportunity to leverage significant cross-sectoral value from their investments, including the potential to form a sustainable part of the Indigenous tourism events and experiences market (e.g. Phipps & Slater, 2010; Whitford & Ruhanen, 2013). In the case of the Reef, limitations of remote localities can be turned into an advantage (e.g. through promoting the attraction of "getting away from it all"), and such events provide training, networking and other opportunities to support Indigenous people to further develop their entrepreneurship skills in the tourism and related sectors. Successful Indigenous festivals in the Reef can contribute significantly to raising tourism awareness and participation and should be supported and encouraged.

3.4.1.1 Laura Aboriginal Dance Festival

The Laura Aboriginal Dance Festival is a biennial three-day event celebrating the cultures of the Aboriginal people of Cape York Peninsula through song, dance ceremony and performance (Ang-Gnarra Corporation, 2018). The Festival began in the early 1980s and is believed to be the longest running Indigenous cultural festival in Australia. Today it involves around 20 communities and 1,000 performers, and attracts thousands of visitors from across Australia and internationally (TEQ, 2019a).

3.4.1.2 The Winds of Zenadth

The Torres Strait biennial cultural festival, The Winds of Zenadth has been running since 1987 (TSIRC, 2018). The event runs for four days and celebrates the practice, revitalisation and preservation of Torres Strait language, culture, art and ceremony. A major part of the festivities is the daily *Ailan* (meaning: 'old dance'), which brings together around 20 traditional dance groups from communities across the Torres Strait. In 2018, a historical project featuring a traditional village that shows what life was like pre-colonisation was unveiled, which will remain outside of the festival to serve as a Torres Shire tourist hub initiative (SBS 2018).

3.4.1.3 Cairns Indigenous Art Fair

The Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF)⁵⁸ is an annual event and public interface for Indigenous artists from around Queensland, providing an opportunity to extend their skills, promote their culture, and sell their artwork, as well as offering tourists and other visitors an opportunity to

⁵⁸ See: <http://www.ciaf.com.au>

participate in cultural exchange. CIAF attracts around 50,000 visitors and generates art sales of over \$700,000 (CIAF, 2018). In addition to the money from sales that is returned to the artists, since its establishment in 2009 by Arts Queensland, CIAF has injected over \$7 million into the Queensland economy and became a non-profit organisation in 2013.

CIAF plays a critical role in strengthening Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures by providing the opportunity for artists to share stories, collaborate and celebrate their connection to Culture and Country. Additionally, it offers an important interface for the non-Indigenous community to experience Aboriginal and Torres Strait cultures and purchase artwork in an ethically run marketplace. An example of CIAF's success in offering innovative festival-style programming is the Fashion Performance, a hugely popular initiative which has since been adopted by events in other states. One of the distinguishing features of CIAF is as an incubator for professional development, with members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community participating not only as artists, but also working in sales, security, performance, workshops, public programs and so on.

Interest in participating in CIAF as a member of the Collectors + Curators (C+C) cohort has steadily grown over the past ten years and accelerated in recent years to the point that demand exceeds opportunities to be part of the program. The CIAF C+C program annually hosts directors and curators of state and national galleries and museums, and in the last few years has worked in partnership with state galleries to tailor programs to their benefactor groups. CIAF C+C is one of the few, if not only, events nationally that offers a hosted program for specialist curators and art collectors for a VIP behind-the-scenes experience. Over the past few years the program has grown to include a community visit to encourage the appreciation of art centres and community-based practice. The growth of CIAF over recent years demonstrates not just the strength of the event, but its crucial role in the cultural fabric of the country. The event provides a rare opportunity for participants to engage in an immersive program of storytelling through an array of arts mediums in a way that is not offered anywhere else in the country.

A further attraction for visitors to CIAF, as well as the participating artists, is the opportunity to meet and share their mutual appreciation in a professionally presented, relaxed and creative environment. Collectors have developed close connections with many of the participating artists and collectives over the years and CIAF hosts a number of regularly returning guests. Many visitors comment that a key incentive to visit CIAF is as a place of engagement, learning and sharing rather than a purely commercial, pressured selling environment. Along with an excellent sales record, many commissions and special exhibition projects have arisen from the connection between makers and curators and collectors forged under the auspices of CIAF.

Central to the success of CIAF is its charter of offering a platform for supporting and promoting ethical and innovative practices by artists who work with collectives, commercial galleries or independently. With the recent focus on fake art and exploitative industry practices rife in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts, CIAF considers that with support it can be a powerful and effective tool for combating the unethical and unprincipled operators that threaten to cripple Indigenous artists' careers.

In developing the annual CIAF program, CIAF partners with a number of existing cultural venues to co-present events and exhibitions, including the Cairns Cruise Liner Terminal,

Cairns Art Gallery, Tanks Arts Centre, Centre of Contemporary Arts Cairns, Cairns Performing Arts Centre, Munro Martin Park, and in 2021 The Court House will be added to the mix. Each of these venues celebrate Queensland's First Peoples' through the installation of arts or the natural environs of the rainforest and reef.

In relation to the Australian Indigenous art fair and festival space, CIAF's key points of difference include:

- A proven history of delivering high-quality programming.
- An Indigenous curator.
- A combination of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and cultures across Queensland.
- Broad cultural immersion opportunities for visitors in addition to the core visual arts fair.
- Cairns' location is accessible to national and international audiences.
- Access to a free program alongside reasonably priced tickets
- Annual five-day event.

Opportunities identified by CIAF for future development include:

- Further collaboration with other Indigenous arts events to expand the audience for Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, particularly in programming and commissioning
- Attracting high profile business, political and academic leaders from around the world.

Over the next five years CIAF plans to extend its reach, to create opportunities for more of Queensland's First Peoples' artists. As a platform, CIAF is committed to increasing direct engagement with the whole of the State to ensure CIAF grows its representation of Queensland artists. CIAF is also poised to expand its footprint globally by building connections with other First Nations artists and organisations around the globe, particularly the Pacific Islands. Those connections will drive outcomes and growth not just for the event, but also for artists and arts centres, through collaborations, promotion and economic returns.

3.4.2 Indigenous cultural centres

There are several successful commercial Indigenous tourism businesses operating in Queensland that offer training for Indigenous people in the tourism and hospitality industries, including Tjapukai Cultural Park⁵⁹ out of Cairns, and Mossman Gorge Centre⁶⁰ in the Daintree National Park. These centres provide model operations that should be considered for replication elsewhere along the Reef; however, as they are concentrated in the rainforest regions they do not necessarily address the cultural, educational and political/historical needs of the broader First Nations communities along the Reef, particularly in the north.

3.4.2.1 Kubirriwara Bubu Murukubinalmalmal (Kubirriwara Cultural Education Centre)

Established on a kilometre-long slender finger of coastal land at the northern end of Cooya Beach at the mouth of the Mossman River, Kubirriwara Bubu Murukubinalmalmal is the initiative of the families of the Kubirriwara clan of the Kuku Yalanji people, whose traditional

⁵⁹ See: <https://www.tjapukai.com.au/>

⁶⁰ See: <https://www.mossmangorge.com.au/>

clan land and sea country is in the Port Douglas-Mossman region north of the Mowbray River. After about 10 years of negotiation, primarily with the Queensland Government and Douglas Shire Council, an agreement was made transferring responsibility for the approximately eight hectares of land to the Kubirriwara clan families to develop the area and create a cultural facility to enable Kubirriwara Elders to continue cultural traditions regarding language, music, dance, and ceremony, and for them to pass on this knowledge to Kubirriwara youth. Unlike the rainforest lands of the more northerly Kuku Yalanji clans, most of Kubirriwara country has been alienated for sugar cane production and very little is left to enable Elders to pass on essential cultural knowledge about Yalanji plant uses and bushcraft. The land is covered by mangroves along its Mossman River boundary, with the balance under coastal rainforest ensuring a rich range of marine and bush foods. Also the area has very strong historical associations for Kubirriwara families. Not long after European settlement in the region, several families built small shacks along the beach. These shacks were destroyed by a cyclone in the early 1930s, however some of the families re-settled in what is now Cooya Beach and maintained their close connection to their traditional land and sea country.

The transfer of responsibility for the area to the Kubirriwara families is also of mutual benefit to the Douglas Shire Council as the land is gradually being restored to health through the application of cultural burning practices, and rubbish and weeds are being removed, and illegal use of the land by 4WD-ers and casual campers has been stopped. The eradication of an agave cactus weed infestation is a particular priority. Also land, which was essentially a burden on Council to maintain, is now being put to productive use.

The maintenance and development of the area is being undertaken voluntarily by members of the Kubirriwara families, and facilities are being built using their own skills and with their own funds. No outside assistance has been sought. The facilities include a solid-structure shelter where visitors can assemble to receive initial instruction about Kuku Yalanji culture, a camping ground, enviro-toilet, mains-water, and areas set aside for the teaching of specific cultural skills, such as basket weaving, and artefact making. Bush gardens for traditional food and medicinal species have been established, and in the near future two shipping containers will be placed on site to store essential equipment. In the longer term, it is hoped that some beach huts can be established where the original shacks were located, and a board-walk with wheel-chair access is planned to enable visitors to gain comfortable access to the beach at the mouth of the Mossman River where important Kuku Yalanji cultural sites along the coast, such as Kaya Biji (Snapper Island), and in the mountains are visible. A special area has been set aside where the Elders can teach their young people cultural knowledge through ceremony and storytelling.

While the primary motivation for establishing the cultural facility is to enable Kubirriwara Elders to actively practice their traditions and to impart their cultural knowledge to the younger generations, they are also keen to have the area open for fee-paying visitors and tourists. It is hoped that once basket-weaving, bushfood and artefact production takes off, regular market days can be established enabling Kubirriwara members to sell their products manufactured on site. About a half-hour's drive from Port Douglas, already small numbers of tourists visit the facility under arrangement with other tour operators. School tours are particularly welcome. Still early days, the Kubirriwara families are hoping that their Kubirriwara Bubu Murukubinalmalmal will become a significant cultural attraction and learning centre for both

residents of the Port Douglas-Daintree region and for domestic and international visitors more generally.

3.4.2.2 Mossman Gorge Centre

The Mossman Gorge Centre workforce has approximately 90% Indigenous employment, including local Kuku Yalanji people along with Indigenous staff from other areas across Queensland and Australia. Tourism experiences are designed to offer an authentic Indigenous experience and incorporate visitor information that reflect the beliefs and customs of local Indigenous communities, and the use and promotion of locally produced goods and services such as local/regional Indigenous arts and crafts. The Ngadiku Dreamtime Walks include experienced Indigenous guides, traditional story-telling, visits to culturally significant sites, traditional activities (smoking ceremony, and soap & ochre paint making demonstrations), and bush tea and damper. Mossman Gorge Centre has won the 2014, 2016 and 2018 Qantas Award for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism in the Queensland Tourism Awards.

Each year Mossman Gorge Centre provides up to six traineeships for local community members as an entry into the workforce. A twelve month structured training program provides a career pathway for students leaving high school and for community members who need additional support and training to achieve their employment goals. In addition, the Centre's residential Training Centre provides up to 30 Indigenous traineeship places each year for students from remote and regional communities around Australia as part of the ILSC's Training to Employment Program. The Training Centre, which opened in 2012, was developed by the ILSC, and initial training was supported by the local industry, with hotels and hospitality companies assisting in providing ILSC-funded traineeship opportunities. The Training Centre provides accommodation for up to 20 Indigenous students, and offers accredited training courses with guaranteed job outcomes with Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia.

3.4.2.3 Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park

Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park combines theatre and technology with interactive activities featuring traditional culture and customs. The attraction includes multiple separate arenas allowing visitors to experience many facets of the Tjapukai people's culture, where they can interact and learn more about the Tjapukai way of life and traditional practice. Areas include the History Theatre, which explores what happened when this ancient Aboriginal culture was thrust into the modern world, the Creation Theatre, where Aboriginal actors combine with holographic images to tell the creation myths of the Tjapukai, and the Dance Theatre and interactive cultural village, the Cultural camp which teaches cultural activities such as spear-throwing, and an evening dinner show that incorporates a corroboree ritual and fire ceremony.

The Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park is a partnership owned by the Djabugay and Yirrgandyji people, Indigenous Business Australia, the Chapman Group and Freeman Productions. Indigenous people own the land occupied by the Park, and more than two-thirds of employees are Indigenous.

3.4.2.4 Girringun Aboriginal Art Centre

The Girringun Aboriginal Art Centre, based in Cardwell, represents artists from nine Traditional Owner Groups, the Nywaigi, Gugu Badhun, Warrgamay, Warungnu, Bandjin, Girramay,

Gulnay, Jirrbal and Djiru people⁶¹. The Centre is funded by Arts Queensland Backing Indigenous Arts and Ministry for the Arts Indigenous Visual Arts Strategy. The Girringun Collection, launched in 2014, was a suite of arts products created, produced and featuring work by artists from the Girringun Aboriginal Art Centre (ArtsEngage, 2015). The collection was developed through a creative enterprise collaboration between Girringun Aboriginal Art Centre and Independent Arts Management. The collaboration aimed to identify, plan and produce a suite of art products for national and international audiences. In developing the range, consultation was undertaken with business and cultural communities to determine the types of products and price points and to gauge interest levels from stockists. Sessions and skills development workshops were hosted to assist artists to translate their art into affordable, high quality, small scale and collectible objects.

3.4.2.5 Mandingalbay Indigenous Cultural Tourism Precinct

Mandingalbay Yidinji country includes a great diversity of environments, from Trinity Inlet, east of Cairns over the Malbon Thompson Range, across the coastal plain to the south of Yarrabah and into the Coral Sea, including the Franklin Islands.

Prior to the 1970's, "Bana ngayinga" today referred to as East Trinity Reserve was supported by an abundance of mangroves and samphire flats in the estuarine reaches with coastal lowland rainforest on the upper sand ridges, thriving flora and fauna, "Bana jibarra", Hills Creek which continues to flow through East Trinity today.

East of Trinity Inlet, the land was extensively cleared in the 1970's, and a bund wall was constructed on the seaward fringe to prevent tidal inundation from reaching newly developed agricultural lands. However, the combination of the installation of a bund structure and extensive clearing resulted in severe acidification of the site causing dieback in remaining samphire and mangrove communities and extensive colonisation of *Melaleuca leucadendra* across drained and acidic sites (Newton *et al*, 2014).

The Queensland Government purchased the property in 2000, installed gates in the bund wall and actively applied lime to reduce acidity on the site and runoff into the Trinity Inlet estuary. The Mandingalbay Yidinji Rangers worked in collaboration with the State government to implement remediation treatment.

Between 2008 and 2013, the Queensland Herbarium undertook remediation monitoring in which case findings have proven the remediation work to be successful, reportedly, despite severe disturbance, reduction in soil and water acidity and natural tidal exchange has improved water quality within Hills and Georges Creeks. A significant increase in marine vegetation into areas subject to increased inundation and an associated decline in encroaching *Melaleuca leucadendra* open forest that expanded across the highly acidic soils following site disturbance (Newton *et al*, 2014). Despite its disturbance history, the project site area contains and adjoins several areas of Matters of National and State Environmental Significance (MNES/MSES) and support a range of habitat values.

⁶¹ See: <http://art.girringun.com.au/>

In 2014, the Mandingalbay Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation MYAC, Registered Native Title Body Corporate RNTBC commenced a process of planning and consulting with the Mandingalbay Yidinji people's, securing funding, engaging expertise and negotiations with stakeholders. The ambitious driven project is intended to deliver an intergenerational socio-economic opportunity for the MY people and wider indigenous community of Yarrabah, FNQ. Following a series of negotiations, informed decision making, support from State and Australian government, including the Indigenous Land & Sea Corporation, ambitions to develop the "Mandingalbay Indigenous Cultural Tourism Precinct" in the heart of Bama ngayinga (East Trinity Reserve) was approved by the Cairns Regional Council in October 2018.

The subject site is located at Pine Creek – Yarrabah Road, East Trinity, and is owned by the State Government and is a reserve for environmental purposes. The Mandingalbay Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation currently holds a Trust Permit and Commercial Activity Agreement over East Trinity Reserve. The subject site is located within the Cairns Regional Council Local Government Area and is approximately 1.5 km from the Cairns city centre.

The site is directly associated with the Mandingalbay Yidinji people's environmental management and spiritual/cultural connection to the land. The stated vision for Mandingalbay Yidinji country is to meet their responsibilities by:

- Protecting all our scared places
- Maintaining and passing on our culture and practices
- Caring for all the animals and the plants and their environments
- Using our traditional resources sustainably
- Repairing the damage caused by others in the past
- Developing an economy that is respectful of our country
- Sharing our country and culture with visitors from near and far
- Working in partnership with others who support our vision.

The first zone in the precinct is the first activity space that users will experience. Arrival and departure will occur from the Hills Creek Jetty which provides a connection by boat to Cairns Harbour. Amenities and shelter structure will be provided at this arrival and departure station. The boardwalk will provide a clear movement corridor to Tower 1 encouraging observation of the surrounding wetland landscape and cultural awareness through art installations. Tower 1 is the welcoming space where users can access the visitor information centre, participate in orientation activities through the interactive display space, and access bookings, retail and dining/refreshment facilities.

Zone 2 is the central activity point of the proposed development which focuses on recreational activities, cultural awareness, and function and training facilities. Zone 2 includes conference rooms acting as event and function spaces, a stage and covered amphitheatre for workshops and performances from traditional landowners, dining area, bush medicine garden, uncovered breakout spaces, accommodation areas and activities (rock climbing on the tower and zipline).

Zone 3 is the core of scientific education and research with a purpose-built demonstration area, outdoor education, cultural awareness demonstrations and training, research lab and fauna display spaces. The staff facilities, including accommodation, amenities and dining facilities

are located within this tower as well. Similarly, to Tower 1 and 2, Tower 3 has a small development footprint of 73m². The zone serves an important function for MYAC and the Djunbunji Rangers in that it seeks to further indigenous and environmental research and monitoring of environmental performance in the area. It is intended that this space will be the lowest intensity zone. Zone 3 is the only area within the proposed development site which allows for vehicle access via Abbott Road. This transport corridor will provide opportunities for specialised tours of the site, researcher transport/loading and unloading and the like.

Early works and construction activities, funded through the TTNQ, ILSC and NIAA allocations, are scheduled to start in May 2020. The early works are focused on enhancing and attracting the international mainland markets to their existing products available under their Mandingalbay Ancient Indigenous Tours brand, but also for expanding investment opportunities for the larger scale project. An information memorandum to attract investment is being finalized with the assistance of the Queensland's Department of Innovation and Tourism Industry Development (DITID), with market testing and marketing to continue during 2020 for the purposes of attracting investors. The construction phase is expected to create 360 jobs with more than 150 ongoing positions once operational, providing employment opportunities for the residents of Yarrabah, a community which suffers a chronic unemployment rate 75 per cent. At this scale, the MICTP could become one of the largest private sector employers of Indigenous people in the tourism sector.

3.4.2.6 Yarrabah Arts and Cultural Precinct

The establishment of the Yarrabah Arts and Cultural Precinct (YACP) in 2002 formalised a tradition of sharing art and culture reaching back into pre-colonial times. Today the YACP, an arm of the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council, is a focal point for the community, enabling local artists and art-workers to preserve, reinvigorate and mobilise their culture to benefit locals and educate visitors. The YACP interacts on a daily basis with educational, health and welfare services in Yarrabah, providing healing and learning opportunities. Involvement in programs to teach traditional language and preserve culture digitally is also a priority.

Through their commercial and critical success, Yarrabah artists have created a significant international brand, generating income, but just as importantly, bringing positive attention to the community as a whole. The tremendous commitment by artists, management and art-workers has resulted in great successes including sell-out exhibitions, media attention and praise from national and international art, cultural and learning institutions. This positive attention is helping to turn around years of negative media coverage, with the good news stories of Yarrabah's artistic successes feeding back into creating a higher and brighter profile for the Yarrabah Shire Council area and brand "Yarrabah".

It is not just in the major events that Yarrabah hosts (Yarrabah Music & Cultural Festival, *Jabu Birriny Land & Sea* Annual curated touring exhibition, *Land Sea Sky* annual exhibition in partnership with the Yarrabah State Secondary School and many artist workshops for local and visiting artists and students), and attends (the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair, Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair, Centre of Contemporary Art markets and exhibitions in Queensland and interstate showing artists from Yarrabah), but in the grass-roots work that happens each day. Visitor experiences could include being guided by senior artists through the artist studio, learning about what takes place there and the cultural context. In the Menmuny Museum and

Gallery, visitors encounter Yarrabah State Primary and High School students who are absorbing culture and learning about career pathways in the arts, including in exhibition preparation, and hanging, packaging and storing artwork.

Recent years have illustrated the Yarrabah artists' ability to achieve excellence in their field, exhibiting in art awards, exhibitions and attending art fairs. This year the YACP, in partnership with the State Library of Queensland and the Flying Arts Alliance, held the opening of the *Jabu Birriny [land + sea]* exhibition which showcased the work of eight distinguished Yarrabah artists. The exhibition is touring venues around Queensland during 2019 and 2020. Next year artists from the YACP will contribute specially commissioned artworks to two historically significant exhibitions in Canberra.

To date, the YACP has attained significant success and distinction using only small to medium scale one-off funding to resource activities and infrastructure. Inter-community activities have helped to make funding go further, as has support from Council. An example of the determination to overcome challenges has been YACP involvement in CIAF. Over time Yarrabah's profile at the event has grown exponentially, and their exhibitions of pottery, painting, textile, fashion, printmaking, fibre art and sculpture stands on equal ground with other Queensland art centres and commercial galleries.

Now the YACP has positioned itself as a satellite venue for CIAF, a multi-arts platform, where audiences can experience a complete range of cultural experiences including exhibitions, forums, performances and music. Guaranteed recurring funding to build upon existing infrastructure, management, art programming and artist workshops will contribute to furthering the process of Yarrabah being identified and experienced as the representative of Indigenous Cairns, the home of CIAF.

Yarrabah has artwork held in important Australian and overseas institutions and has journeyed to represent their culture nationally. Artists, management, art-workers, community, council, existing infrastructure, programming and partnerships have over the past decade, been strategically placed to make the next step of bringing the world to Yarrabah.

The YACP is a hub for the Yarrabah Indigenous community to connect with local service providers and the wider Indigenous Far North Queensland art community. The Centre hosts meetings for the Indigenous Art Centre Alliance (and currently has two elected members on the Management Committee), holds workshops such as the Endeavour 250 Arts Development Workshop which was attended by Hopevale and Wujal Wujal artists, and professional development opportunities including working with emerging artists from the Atherton Tablelands. In line with building a socially, physically, mentally and culturally healthy community, the YACP partners with schools, the Gurriny Yealamucka Health Aboriginal Corporation and the Yaba Bimbie Men's Group to combat issues such as suicide, substance abuse, domestic violence and truancy.

The YACP's role in community goes far beyond nurturing a handful of artists who have the ability and desire to become professional artists. While having successfully marketed the Yarrabah brand of art to the outside world, taking care of community has also been prioritised.

The desire to grow and reach out beyond existing frontiers is a natural consequence of steady achievement and good management. The YACP is at a turning point where four-year funding from the Australia Council for the Arts will allow for advancement in service provision, training, employment, income, event management and support for existing artistic excellence. It would also facilitate the growth of artistic expression in the high community and audience-demand areas of music, dance and performance. Strong support in the form of governance from the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council will ensure good value for money and benefits distributed throughout the whole community. As the YACP moves into a future filled with opportunities to act on the national and international stage, it is clear that every success will be shared with, and bring tangible benefits home to the community and services that are at its heart.

3.4.3 Indigenous-led Tourism Businesses

3.4.3.1 Dreamtime Dive & Snorkel

Dreamtime Dive & Snorkel owned by Experience Co Ltd combines a full-day Great Barrier Reef cruise with Indigenous cultural storytelling from Traditional Owners with historical connections to the sea country visited⁶². The cruise offers an educational opportunity to explore the Reef with traditional owners. The cruise departs from Cairns and visits two sites on the outer Great Barrier Reef: Moore Reef & Milln or Flynn Reef.

Prior to launching the product Experience Co spent over a year working with local elders to devise a tour that represented the four local tribes (Gimuy Walubara Yidinji, Gunggandji, Mandingalbay Yidinji and Yirrganydji) found along the stretch of coastline from Port Douglas to the Frankland Island, as well as determining how the venture would benefit the tribes. During the research and strategy planning stage, it was difficult to identify an organisation that could assist in developing the product and in meeting Indigenous guidelines, and a regionally independent authority to ensure that the product was meeting national Indigenous tourism guidelines would have been a valuable addition to the local Traditional Owner meetings. Rather than duplicating infrastructure, it appeared that these guidelines could be delivered through the RTOs and LTOs if they were mandated to do so and incorporated an appropriate Indigenous cluster. In addition, a well-known and highly valued national Indigenous accreditation process would also have been sought if such existed (over and above the ROC program under Ecotourism Australia), as this would be considered a massive commercial asset in converting potential clients.

A commitment to forging an employment pathway for local Aboriginal youth was key for gaining Indigenous support, with Experience Co wanting to ensure social and economic benefits would flow through to local communities. In preparation, Experience Co also developed an Indigenous Tourism Strategy, Indigenous Engagement Strategy, Indigenous Training and Recruitment Strategy and Indigenous Product Financial Business plan.

Experience Co have trained over 70 indigenous staff through their Dreamtime cultural training program, and currently directly employ 17 indigenous staff for the Dreamtime product. Indigenous Dreamtime Rangers are members of the local tribes, as well as Torres Strait Islanders. Their primary role is to share their Sea Country traditions and tell ancestral stories

⁶² Dreamtime Dive & Snorkel. Website: <https://dreamtimedive.com/>

from a personal perspective (rather than follow a consistent script). The tour also includes and Indigenous acknowledgement of country, the Reef creation story, as well as explanations of various ancestral tools and instruments used in ceremonial dances. Rangers also accompany guests on snorkel tours, where they explain their relationship with the Reef and its marine life.

Indigenous staff also fill almost all the operational roles of the daily tours, from Coxswain to Safety Supervisor, and have achieved various additional skills and qualifications in maritime, food and safety, first aid etc. However, there have been some challenges in recruiting Indigenous staff to non-operational middle management roles (e.g. accountants, sales managers, diesel marine engineers) due to a lack of Indigenous applicants. For 100% Indigenous owned and operated tourism businesses, Indigenous staff progression through the middle management are of tourism is critical experience needed to ensure executive roles such as CEOs and owners are also filled by Indigenous staff.

As of November 2019, the Dreamtime product has been in operation for 12 months. In this period over 12,000 guests have experienced the product, which focuses on indigenous culture, engagement and education from the local region. To date the product has not received or asked for any funding from either State or federal Government, and have funded the product assets and content privately at an estimated cost of \$3.5 million.

3.4.3.2 Ngardu Cultural Heritage Cruise and Tours

'Yirbing' to the Yidinji People or Yimir to the Meerooni People in the Southern part of the Reef, Cherissma Blackman-Costelloe is a Traditional Custodian both there and the Torres Strait Islands. Cherissma is the Manager/Owner of Ngardu Cultural Heritage Tours, and funded a trial run of Indigenous cultural heritage and day tours of coastal islands on the Great Barrier Reef in December 2017.

Sites visited included Magnetic Island (Sealink), Airlie Beach and Whitehaven Beach (Cruise Whitsundays), Gladstone, and Port Curtis (Curtis Island Ferries), in consultation with Traditional Owners of these areas. Ngardu Cultural Tours operates as an autonomous fully-Indigenous owned business, and has the vision to expand on tours, commencing from the Southern Great Barrier Reef.

Some of the issues identified as barriers by the operators during the early trial runs included alignment with the Government funding framework (i.e. inability to use income/revenue projections as collateral to raise capital) and governance requirements (because clan and tribal groups that do not have recognition through Native Title or Sea Claim do not have formal governance structures, Indigenous sole traders and businesses need to form part of a larger business structure). Feedback mentioned that considering Governance structures of Indigenous enterprises "*should not be a one size fits all approach, as identified with some of the Native Title Claims statuses*".

Positive feedback from the trial runs included that target customers were easily identified and the market campaign was original to the GBR region, cultural experiences were a clear market niche, and traditional knowledge and Indigenous intellectual property rights could be captured in various dimensions of the tours including art, artefacts, story-telling, and song and dance lines.

3.4.3.3 Minjil Yidinji Cultural Services

Minjil Yidinji Cultural Presentations (Minjil) was founded in 2017 by Carl Maa-roon Fourmile to provide opportunities for young Indigenous people in the Cairns suburb of Moorooloolool to gain Yidinji cultural knowledge, and performance and presentation skills. Since then Minjil has become much sought-after to provide a range of cultural services in urban Cairns. Building a reputation initially on its innovative and refreshing welcomes to country tailored to the occasion, the group provides welcomes for a range of international, national and local events and government and corporate conferences. It also provides cultural workshops for primary and secondary schools, and community groups. It has only recently entered the tourism market by providing cultural experiences to small organised tour groups.

Late in 2017, Minjil signed up with Community Owned Enterprises (COE), a subsidiary of training and employment provider My Pathway, to receive business mentoring to the point that, by mid-2019 they would become an independent outfit capable of sustaining their own business. Under COE they gained basic book-keeping, business-planning, invoicing, IT, personnel management, risk identification and management, advertising and booking skills. During 2019 Minjil entered into the tourism market, linking up with a boutique tour provider specialising in customised experiences for small groups of tourists and super-yacht clientele. This boutique company, specialising in high-value tourism, handles all the booking and payment arrangements and advertises extensively through social media and tour-booking platforms. Working through the Cairns Regional Council they are able to make their cultural presentations to tourists in the Centenary Lakes Park. Tours involve a bush food and medicine walk, a welcome burning-of-the-barks ceremony, story-dance performances related to culturally important species (hammerhead shark, cassowary, sea-eagle), presentation of rainforest artefacts and skills, and a bush-tucker meal. Tours can include various add-ons, such as a visit to a local Indigenous art shop and to view Indigenous public artworks in the Cairns CBD. These customised tours provide a market alternative to the larger group presentations available locally at the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park and Pamagirri Aboriginal Experiences.

As a small performance company with around ten employees, Minjil had its breakout performance at Dance Rites in Sydney in 2017, and now performs regularly at cultural events in Cairns, including at the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair and Big Talk, One Fire. Such cultural performances are also part of their range of welcome to country options, particularly for international events and visiting dignitaries. Through Indigenous Business Australia, Minjil has bought a nine-seater vehicle and tools for artefact production, and finance to develop its website and social media profile⁶³. It is also negotiating employee training assistance with DATSIP. It has also negotiated a deal with a local hotel chain to provide cultural experiences for their international clients on a weekly basis. Minjil members have become adept at artefact production, specialising in shields, swords, cross-boomerangs, didgeridoos, and items of personal adornment, all using designs unique to Yidinji rainforest culture. Aware of the vagaries of the tourism market, Minjil has developed a diversified business around a range of products and experiences catering for both community-based and tourism markets. Its members are developing specialised skills and responsibilities. Minjil also has a cluster

⁶³ See <https://www.minjil.com.au>

approach to working with and supporting other small arts-related Indigenous businesses in Cairns, to team up with other performers for big or special occasions, or for different styles of presentation. It also enables Minjil to call on their personnel, and vice-versa, if a Minjil member needs to take time off for personal reasons.

Minjil has created its own market and demand for its cultural services, and currently its biggest challenge is dealing with the pace of its own expansion, with the need to attract and develop the range of employee and organisational skills necessary to meet the demands of its new market opportunities. Minjil considers that having its own business premises to relieve the demands of running a business from home would be a beneficial future development.

3.4.3.4 Mainie Aboriginal Art Gallery

Mainie Australia ('Mainie') is the business brain-child of Charmaine Saunders, a descendant of the Gunggari Aboriginal people from the Maranoa River region in South Western Queensland, and her husband Denis Keeffe. The Mainie business story began in 2010 with Charmaine's "Oprah moment" when she saw Oprah Winfrey in front of the Sydney Opera House wearing a silk kaftan by Australian fashion designer, Camilla, and thinking the moment "would have been so much more powerful had she been wearing a kaftan printed with an Aboriginal art design." After nearly five years of business planning, initial testing of the concept of melding Aboriginal art and fashion in 2013, market research, and further product development, Charmaine and Denis launched the first Mainie fashion collection of authentic Aboriginal art designs in Cairns in August 2015.

Mainie's trade-mark fashion-wear products involve central Australian and local rainforest Aboriginal designs printed on the highest quality Chinese silk. An Indigenous Art Code Dealer Member, their brand has been built on a commitment to ethics and sustainability. After celebrating their commercial success, Charmaine and Denis opened the Mainie Aboriginal Art Gallery in November 2019 in Scott St Bungalow (an inner suburb of Cairns), and consider Mainie "a proudly home-grown Cairns brand." Their story is inspiring.

Mainie has grown rapidly since the launch of its maiden collection in 2015. Ports North provided Mainie with its first opportunity to grow its international sales with a "pop-up shop" in the Cruise Liner Terminal enabling interaction with passengers from some of the world's most luxurious cruise liners visiting Cairns. Mainie is now available at over 80 retail outlets at the most prestigious shopping precincts across Australia including Collins Street Melbourne, The Rocks, Circular Quay, Darling Harbour and the Queen Victoria Building in Sydney and the Southbank Cultural precinct in Brisbane. Mainie is also now stocked by major travel retail chains at international airport terminals in Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Cairns, Alice Springs, Uluru and Darwin, with Canberra, Adelaide and Perth airports next on the horizon.

As Charmaine has pointed out:

When we were first approached in 2018 by the retail precinct managers at Sydney Airport, we were told that a lot of people had tried to do what we were doing with Aboriginal art and fashion but we were the only ones who had done it right. I'm not sure that we are the only ones, but we certainly strive to be recognised as industry leaders and best practice representatives.

The backing of the Cairns community has been an integral part of Mainie's transition from fashion design concept to global brand. In addition to initial key support from business friends, a breakthrough occurred four years ago, when "the world's most prestigious luxury retailer" took Mainie on-board – "it was truly a Cinderella moment for our fledgling brand". Mainie's positioning in DFS Galleria's Cairns store granted it the "incomparable credibility and allure that was needed to establish the Mainie's reputation as a luxurious, authentic and unique Australian fashion brand." Skyrail, one of Cairns' and Tropical North Queensland's major tourist attractions is currently Mainie's third largest retailer after Sydney International Airport and the Voyages Sails in the Desert Resort at Uluru.

Mainie, however, has also made important contributions to Cairns Indigenous cultural landscape with the Cairns Regional Council's Cultural Services giving Mainie the opportunity to create the Indigenous design ties and scarves for the staff at the newly refurbished Cairns Performing Arts Centre. Likewise, major hotel chains have supported the brand. The Pullman Reef Hotel Casino was among the first "at the top end of town" to recognise what was trying to be achieved with Charmaine and Denis's ethical approach to creating a uniquely Indigenous Australian experience, with Mainie designs created by local Aboriginal artists prominent in both the casino and hotel and being shared with international visitors to Cairns. Crystalbrook Bailey have also given the opportunity for Mainie to be part of "the most exciting hotel development in Cairns in decades" with Mainie artist designs incorporated, not only in the décor of the rainforest lobby, but also the Indigenous design scarves worn by front of house staff.

However, along the way, there have been a few challenges. For example, one of the financial challenges concerned currency fluctuations. All of the initial price analyses and financial forecasts in the first feasibility studies and business plans were done when the AUD was at parity with the USD. By the time Mainie was launched in 2015, the AUD was worth around USD 0.80 and over the past four years has fallen as low as USD 0.65. This has had a significant impact on offshore supply chain costs, and consequently profit margins. The business has countered this by streamlining the supply chain - eliminating all "middleman" agent costs and ordering in larger volumes to negotiate a better manufacturing cost price without compromising on quality or Mainie's competitive pricing policies. Unfortunately international trade and currency fluctuations are things the business has no control over.

Another challenge concerned the logistics of having the location of the Mainie head office and warehouse in regional Queensland a long way from the major air and sea freight ports of Brisbane and Sydney, adding a lot of extra freight costs and shipping time to Mainie products. The road freight costs in particular are very high and the business encounters these costs both ways - that is, when bringing manufactured goods into the Cairns warehouse for processing and then again, when the goods are shipped out to Mainie's major wholesale customers in the metro regions and interstate. Similarly Mainie encounters these higher shipping charges and times when sending goods to international online customers. This means that the business is not able to be as competitively priced as it would like to be. At this stage, the company is still working on addressing these issues before the planned expansion into northern hemisphere markets in 2020.

The Mainie Aboriginal Art Gallery is a welcome addition to the Indigenous art retail sector. The Gallery has a collection of important artworks from two of the most famous arts communities in Central Australia, Utopia and Yuendumu. These communities are located on the remote

desert homelands of the artists, where there is an unbroken connection to their traditional Aboriginal culture and languages. The impeccable provenance and irreplaceable cultural significance of the artworks created by the Utopia and Warlukurlangu Artists of Yuendumu have made their paintings highly sought after by major fine art galleries and museums around the world.

In 2020, Mainie will take a big step towards achieving its vision to become a global brand, by expanding into new markets in the northern hemisphere, commencing as an official provider of VIP gifts and staff uniforms to the Australian Pavilion at World Expo 2020 Dubai, already being dubbed “the Greatest Show on Earth”. Mainie has also been selected as the exclusive supplier of Indigenous fashion products to the Pavilion retail store, where it will be stocked alongside some of Australia’s most iconic brands.

3.4.3.5 Cairns Indigenous Tourism Hub

Opening in January 2020, the Cairns Indigenous Tourism Hub provides a location for four independent tourism-related businesses, each operating separately but complementing each other. The businesses are: AppOriginee, an Indigenous experience booking platform; the K’gari 3 Sisters Art Gallery and Gift Shop; GumbuGumbu Bugang Bulmba, a restaurant serving bush food made from locally sourced native ingredients; and Indigenous Tours, established to develop tourism products in partnership with local Indigenous groups. The Hub also provides office space for the Gimuy Walubara Yidinji Elders Aboriginal Corporation and a meeting place for Elders in the local Cairns community.

Realising that an opportunity existed to develop a specialist online booking platform for Indigenous tourism businesses to more efficiently link them with their markets, AppOriginee was established as a start-up in 2014 by GudjuGudju Fourmile and Jenny Lynch. They won the Cairns Tourism Start-up competition and were awarded a place by Horizons Travel and Tourism Accelerator⁶⁴ to join Slingshot which runs the accelerator program in Brisbane to receive intensive training in a competitive environment on how to “pitch” their product to an industry audience. However, they found it difficult to find funding for digital development, and there was not a sufficient number of local Indigenous tourism businesses to make their platform viable. In 2018, they won a stage one Horizons start-up competition which enabled them to further develop their platform and hone their marketing skills. Also the number of local Indigenous tourism businesses had increased, and funding was more available for developing digital enterprises, enabling them to extending their reach nationally. This improved business environment enabled AppOriginee to become an economically viable proposition. The next step was to take their home-based business into the Cairns CBD, leasing a space from another city-based Indigenous business.

AppOriginee enables the platform’s users to locate and book tours with Indigenous tour operators and experience providers across Tropical North Queensland as well as Australia wide. Besides the larger Indigenous tours operated, for example, by the Djabugay Cultural Park and the Mossman Gorge Centre, the platform also provides access to smaller on country

⁶⁴ The Horizons Tourism and Travel Accelerator program for Queensland is sponsored by the Queensland Government and Amadeus, and seeks local (QLD based), early stage tourism and travel businesses. Slingshot has been appointed to run the Horizons program. See: <https://horizons.slingshotters.com>

businesses that don't have their own website and booking facilities on the twin conditions that they must have their own appropriate insurance cover, and the necessary permits to operate their tours, for example, in national parks. Ultimately GudjGudju and Jenny want to also develop a fee-for-service down-loadable app for AppOriginee.

Their other business, Indigenous Tours, in addition to developing and providing their own tours on country, also provides a range of services that include: workshops and mentoring for Indigenous small tourism businesses for website and brochure development; brokering partnerships with mainstream tour operators; advice to events managers whose clients may also be looking for options for Indigenous experiences; and provision of information on industry grants and financial support available through a range of government programs. Having been through the process themselves, GudjGudju and Jenny are also able to mentor other small Indigenous tourism start-ups to become business ready, and ultimately export ready for the international market. They emphasise, however, that there are a number of emerging Indigenous tourism businesses that have developed market-ready products, but lack the marketing skills to deliver. Under the umbrella of Indigenous Tours, they provide coaching to improve presentation and marketing skills.

Late in 2019 an opportunity arose to create an Indigenous business partnership between AppOriginee, Indigenous Tours, GumbuGumbu and K'gari 3 Sisters, and to lease premises on the fringe of the Cairns CBD that provided enough open space for the four businesses to co-exist and complement each other. This, in effect, created an Indigenous tourism hub and meeting place - a one-stop shop for Indigenous tourism.

The GumbuGumbu Bugang Bulmba restaurant, which translates into "anytime eating place" in the local Yidin language, specializes in creating menus using locally sourced native bush ingredients. A self-funded enterprise, which also caters for small functions and events, the business provides another market for wild harvesters to bring their produce and explore the potential of different recipes using their wild ingredients with GumbuGumbu chef, Keith Wright and partner Felicity Fourmile. However, the seasonality of many bush-food species is a challenge, and many suppliers also have difficulty keeping up with local demand. Because of the open-space layout of the Hub, visitors are able to dine and also explore the art works and gifts in the gallery, while also providing an informal space to discuss business, and for visitors to think about their choice of Indigenous experiences. The restaurant is also proving to be a popular meeting place and networking opportunity for local Indigenous people mostly working in the Cairns CBD. GumbuGumbu has its own website and Facebook page.

The K'gari 3 Sisters gallery is owned and operated by local Indigenous artists Susan Reys and Hendrick Fourmile, both of whom over the last few years have established themselves as creators of a wide range of ceramic art works and who regularly operate stalls in the Palm Cove and Port Douglas weekend markets, both popular destinations with tourists. During 2019 they operated their gallery and gift shop in the Cairns Central shopping complex, but, realizing the opportunities afforded by having a larger retail and display space in the Hub, and with their lease due to expire in January 2020, they decided to relocate their business. Their art gallery and gift shop offers a wide range of products, from souvenir ceramic pieces and paintings to fashion-wear and home/office décor. The owners also market their products online, however, most of their sales come through face-to-face interaction with customers. While realizing the potential benefits of online marketing, they have also found it difficult to balance the daily time

needed to sell items in their shop and for the weekend markets, as well as production time to design and make their products to meet customer demand, with the expense and time needed to up-date and maintain their website as well as the content for their other marketing platforms, such as Etsy and Facebook.

While it is a newly established venture, currently confronted with a very difficult market, the Hub nevertheless provides visitors with first-hand contact with Indigenous people in a very informal business environment where they can view and purchase Indigenous artworks, and discuss the kinds of Indigenous experiences they are seeking during their stay with Indigenous tour professionals over a meal of local “bush tukka”. As it becomes an established part of the regional tourism environment, local mainstream operators will also be able to come to the Hub and seek advice on how to best engage with local Traditional Owners, partner with local Indigenous tourism businesses and enhance their own tours with Indigenous experiences. As a meeting place for Indigenous tourism business operators, the Hub also has the potential to take on a regional role in Indigenous tourism marketing and advocacy – to provide a voice for Indigenous people working in the tourism, events and hospitality industries.

3.4.4 Gaps and opportunities in Indigenous businesses on the Reef

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism businesses on the Reef currently offer a world-class variety of local experiences that reflect Indigenous values, providing visitors with access to cultural experiences while supplying important employment opportunities for local communities. Nevertheless, looking at the business development case studies and survey responses outlined above, several opportunities to further support Indigenous tourism product and event development and growth can be identified.

3.4.4.1 Building the business skills, acumen and capacity of Indigenous tourism operators

There has been much discussion over the years regarding how best to support Indigenous people and businesses to establish themselves within the tourism industry. Currently QTIC, through its Indigenous tourism programs that include its three regional employee networks, ‘Champions’ program and its downloadable folio of resources, provides ready support for existing and start-up Indigenous tourism businesses (see section 2.4.3). In addition, the Queensland Government recently announced its support for delivering an Indigenous Tourism Development Service (Queensland Government 2019b), which will work with emerging and established Indigenous operators to start and grow their businesses and products, including dedicated Indigenous tourism development officers in Cairns and Brisbane (Queensland Government 2019b). The following section includes business and funding access needs identified by Indigenous businesses on the Reef that will hopefully be addressed through this new service.

Additional business requirements have been drawn from the criteria used for inclusion in *Your Guide to the Best of Queensland Experiences Program* (TEQ, 2017) as industry best practice standards for Queensland. The ‘best of’ Queensland experiences are determined by five weighted criteria of which the critical determinant is the delivery of an exceptional experience based on guest feedback. The five criteria (slightly modified for use in this report) set as the minimum requirements for being “business ready” are: (i) consistent delivery of product/experience; (ii) a website with secure online booking platform; (iii) an active and

engaging social media presence; (iv) Regional Tourism Organisation membership; and (v) product/experience accreditation.

3.4.4.2 Integrating Indigenous cultural values into the tourism industry

Strategies to ensure integration of Indigenous cultural values into the tourism industry currently rely heavily on accreditation programs, such as the Respecting Our Culture certification (see s1.0). Although certification works well for operators who have made these commitments, it is of limited value for those who are not interested in seeking such certification. There is also a gap in the accreditation process and marketing material for easily identifying authentic Indigenous tourism experiences on the Reef, which is arguably a key marketing point of difference for Indigenous businesses.

Although there are some arguments against accreditation as providing a cost-effective method to improve tourism interest (Prideaux et al, 2019; King & Prideaux, 2010), it is notable that several Indigenous survey respondents and case study interviewees expressed strong interest in a product of this type, and that Indigenous communities have communicated a similar desire for such products for many years (see, for example, the recommendation for a 'highly visible, immediately recognizable logo for quality [Aboriginal] products' in Chjowai & JCU, 1992, p.49).

There can be a disconnect between Western evaluation and Indigenous accreditation processes, and how they are perceived by different audiences, meaning that Indigenous ownership of accreditation processes can result in different evaluation goals, objectives and definitions of success compared to Western processes. Survey respondents highlighted an expectation that any Indigenous quality accreditation process would be supportive rather than punitive.

3.4.4.3 Role of education and information in Indigenous tourism products

Cultural sites are fragile and vulnerable to disturbance by tourist use, and careful consideration must be undertaken to ensure protection and preservation of these sites. Strong legislative provisions and guidelines to protect cultural sites on the Reef are in place and are well monitored through GBRMPA and other government authorities operating in the region.

Several Traditional Owners have opened up sites of cultural significance on their lands to small numbers of visitors, and have successfully managed these visits to date through running their own information and education programs on these sites as part of the tourist experience. Such Indigenous-led education programs should be strongly supported, as this also ties into the transmission of cultural values which has been identified as a primary objective for many Indigenous peoples in establishing tourism ventures.

3.4.4.4 Strengthening interest in Indigenous Reef tourism

Traditional Owner groups across the GBR continue to stress that it is up to individual groups to determine and to promote their own aspirations at the sea country-based scale, self-defined locally at either the family, clan or tribal scales (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018). However, as Morton (2019) notes, "Indigenous tourism requires a delicate balance of supply and demand. Until the supply side of Indigenous tourism is working well, it will be difficult for organisations such as Tourism Australia, state and territory tourism organisations, and regional tourism organisations to effectively create demand for the sector" (Morton 2019, p.25).

While there is ample literature on Indigenous tourism in Australia generally and a number of business guides⁶⁵ produced over the last two decades for Indigenous people wanting to participate in the industry, the results from the small sample surveyed for this report indicate that both RTOs and Traditional Owners agree that the level of Indigenous tourism along the Reef currently is too low, and also that in some sub-regions there may not be interest from local Traditional Owners to become involved in the tourism industry. Reasons for an absence of interest are often related to other absences, such as a lack of access to capital, appropriate infrastructure, industry-ready skills, and understanding whether an Indigenous tourism business will be economically viable.⁶⁶

In addition, Traditional Owners and Indigenous communities often cite quite different reasons for starting an Indigenous tourism business compared to non-Indigenous tourism business owners. The driving focus behind many Indigenous tourism ventures includes perpetuating and sharing culture and knowledge, in addition to employment and economic prosperity for future generations (Morton, 2019), and so support programs that focus primarily on achieving economic benefits through tourism may not always be the best fit.

Nationally, the *Northern Horizons – Unleashing Our Tourism Potential* (2018) report recommended several initiatives to support Indigenous tourism, including:

- establishment of a peak body for Northern Australia representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism operators (Northern Horizons Recommendation 22);
- re-establishment of the Indigenous Tourism Champions Program (Northern Horizons Recommendation 23);
- expanding the scope of Indigenous Ranger projects to include opportunities to support the tourism industry in remote areas (Northern Horizons Recommendation 24); and
- reviewing business development programs to ensure they stimulate the creation and growth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism businesses in Northern Australia (Northern Horizons Recommendation 25 6.106) (JSCNA, 2018).

At a more micro-level, government support needed to develop Indigenous tourism will typically include long-term investment for start-ups, mentoring, facilitation for planning and business development, and monitoring and evaluation of businesses until they are able to operate independently⁶⁷. In some cases, Indigenous businesses need funding assistance and support in making a funding submission. IBA has noted that funding should focus on 'building the business acumen, capacity, and skills of Indigenous tourism operators' in order to ensure that it does not mask poor business models (JSCNA, 2018, p. 146).

Most of the small Indigenous businesses surveyed as part of this report had not taken advantage of financial assistance specifically to establish their tourism experiences, rather they often tried to expand the scope of other projects (such as their Ranger program) to realise tourism objectives. One interviewee noted that "*I know these programs exist but we just don't*

⁶⁵ See, for example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (1996); Focus Pty Ltd (1996); Sayers Consulting Pty Ltd. (2002).

⁶⁶ Some similarities may be found in the Tun Sakaran Marine Park, Sabah, Malaysia. See Bakar and Wall (2018).

⁶⁷ See, for example, submissions from the NLC, Parks Australia and Voyages to JSCNA (2018), p. 145.

have the ability to apply for them, and we can't afford to pay someone else to do it." The dearth of applications for the *Indigenous Special Tourism Permissions* to operate in the Reef could also be related to a lack of capacity to consider whether these would even be appropriate for proposed Indigenous tourism businesses.

Other barriers in accessing funding that reduce Traditional Owner interest in tourism activities include difficulties in applying for start-up capital loans as Aboriginal land cannot be used as security (since the title cannot be sold if loan repayments are defaulted on), delays in relaying economic concepts and business development discussions in local languages, lack of community expertise in business development, and complications from balancing economic development goals with ancestral responsibilities to protect sacred sites and care for country (Guyula, 2019). In addition, the ability of many Traditional Owner groups to improve their engagement with economic development initiatives is dependent on the functionality of the bodies managing native title rights and interests. Poorly functioning PBCs, and/or land disputes can therefore discourage, delay or derail ventures such as realising tourism opportunities (Torres Strait Regional Authority, 2019, p. 2). Because PBC directors perform their roles without monetary compensation, providing funding to ensure they receive training in governance, financial management and strategic direction is essential for their success, even at the level of addressing the logistical issues of convening compliance meetings where air travel may be needed to attend (Torres Strait Regional Authority, 2019, p. 3).

3.4.4.5 Consistent delivery of product/experience

As TEQ's *Your Guide to the Best of Queensland Experiences Program* (TEQ, 2017) points out, a tourism product must consistently provide exceptional experiences and encourage guests to submit online reviews. One of the RTOs interviewed during the survey process also noted that it was difficult to incorporate some of the Indigenous tourism offerings into several of their promotional programs because they were available only on an *ad hoc* basis, which meant they could not be incorporated into long-range tourism bookings.

Solutions for small businesses that rely heavily on single individual or small group (such as a dance troop) that would enable them to ensure that long-range commitments can be met would be of great value in improving the consistent delivery of Indigenous tourism experiences on the Reef. One such option could be coordination of a marketing cooperative, whereby a pool of local operators could share a common contract which would enable others to step in if the original business was unable to meet the original offering.

3.4.4.6 Online booking facilities

Online booking is considered industry best practice. The TEQ Guide notes that "tourism products need to have their own website and consumers must have the ability to book their experience through a secure online booking system," and Indigenous tourism businesses need to supply a booking experience that is fast, easy, convenient and secure.

Indigenous tourism businesses can purchase an existing online booking system or have one developed specifically to meet their business needs. When purchasing an existing booking

system, operators receive guarantees and back-up support and can be confident that the systems have been tested and proven over time by other in the tourism industry.⁶⁸

Examples of effective Indigenous tourism websites operating in Queensland, which include booking and payment facilities, include:

- Walkabout Cultural Adventures owned and operated by Juan Walker on Kuku Yalanji country in the Mossman – Daintree region⁶⁹;
- Mandingalbay Ancient Indigenous Tours⁷⁰; and
- Mungalla Aboriginal Tours on Nywaigi country.⁷¹

3.4.4.7 Active and engaging social media presence

Per TEQ's guidance, tourism products "must have an active and engaging presence on Facebook and/or Instagram", where activity and engagement are measured by three criteria:

- Average number of posts across a defined period;
- Consistency of posts across a defined period; and
- Quality of the posts and engagement with audience.

Currently, Indigenous tour operator voices are "minimally represented in tourism social media" (Mkono, 2016, p. 1315), despite Aboriginal Australians being enthusiastic users of social media (Korff, 2019), with, for example, First Nations peoples' usage of Facebook measured at 20 per cent higher than the national average (Callinan, 2014; McNair Ingenuity Research 2016) and Aboriginal youth choosing to own smartphones over food and clothing (Rice, 2016).

Tourism literature has identified benefits of providing training for Aboriginal entrepreneurs on social media management, such as increasing their capacity to correct cultural misconceptions (Mkono, 2016; Akbar and Hallak, 2019) and enabling smaller tourism businesses with limited marketing resources to promote themselves on major tourism destination social media feeds (Baxter, 2019). However, general concerns over loss of traditional authority and social control by Elders through the use of social media have also been noted (Korff, 2019).

Indigenous tourism businesses should be urged to engage in the many courses, online tools and workshops to assist in developing a social media strategy. Alternatively, a central marketing cooperative, or other similar channel could be developed that would allow communities not willing or able to engage in their own social media outreach could still supply their information to an outlet managed externally.

3.4.4.8 Regional Tourism Organisation membership

Without the brand endorsement of their products, the marketing savvy and global reach of the RTOs, particularly in the digital age, Indigenous tourism businesses have a diminished chance of success.

⁶⁸ Ibid. TEQ has an Industry Resources Page at: www.teq.queensland.com/bestofqldexperiences

⁶⁹ See: <https://www.walkaboutadventures.com.au/>

⁷⁰ See: <https://www.mandingalbay.com.au/tours/>

⁷¹ See: <https://www.mungallaaboriginaltours.com.au/>

Becoming a member or partner of your RTO offers significant benefits including increased market profile, resources, connections, marketing opportunities and gaining support needed to grow your business. It's an investment that delivers the best opportunity to be part of the major marketing activities for your region. The activities an RTO undertakes generate awareness, inspiration and ultimately conversion to drive visitation to your business (TEQ, 2017, p. 11).

The funding made available to RTOs from industry partnerships, DITID, TEQ and local governments allows RTOs to market member Indigenous business products and experiences to consumers on their websites and undertake activities that allow customers to more easily access information about what the business has to offer. However, the results of the surveys, as well as follow-up interviews with Indigenous business owners, indicates that there is a low level of paid RTO membership being taken up by Indigenous businesses in most regions. Yet, given that one RTO reported that even free opportunities were not being taken advantage of by local Indigenous businesses, there is clearly more at play than just financial concerns. In a circular feedback loop, the lack of Indigenous business members of an RTO can mean that Indigenous businesses in that region perceive that RTO activities are focussed on non-Indigenous business offerings, making them even more disinclined to outlay funds and submit themselves to additional administrative structures without visible indications of the return benefits. More visible evidence of networking and promotional opportunities for Indigenous businesses on the Reef could be valuable, including sharing experiences of successful RTO engagement more widely amongst the different tourism regions (for example, positive outcomes for Indigenous Reef tourism experiences being represented by TTNQ).

3.4.4.9 Support for regional cultural centres and festivals along the Reef

Indigenous festivals and cultural centres have the potential to provide unique, high-value and high-profile contributions to the tourism industry along the Reef (see section 3.4). A key strength of these events and partnerships is their diversity and connection to communities, as well as providing opportunities for Indigenous businesses that are far from the major markets to access a wider audience. Continued support for building long-term partnerships may contribute to an increase in the overall funds available, particularly for year-round management (Phipps and Slater 2010).

4.0 ANALYSIS OF OPPORTUNITIES AND BARRIERS FOR INDIGENOUS TOURISM IN THE GBRR

Based on the preceding analysis of the policy environment influencing the operation of the Indigenous tourism industry, and complemented by the results of the assessment of Indigenous tourism activities, this section discusses potential mechanisms to overcome key barriers and strengthen opportunities for Indigenous tourism in the GBRR, including recommendations for future steps to support ongoing development of the industry.

4.1 Foundational Capacity-Building and how the *Reef 2050 Plan* can support Indigenous tourism

This section answers the question 'how can we help address the underlying capacity issues that face Traditional Owner groups undertaking tourism activities in the Reef?' The objective is to identify the activities that are already addressing these broad issues of foundational capacity through the Reef 2050 Plan, and explore which actions are likely to have the most impact in supporting development of Indigenous tourism in the GBRR.

As discussed in section 1.2.2.1, international best practices show that continued support for broad, governing enablers such as land rights for Traditional Owners is essential to realise opportunities for collaboration that will empower Indigenous stakeholders to take advantage of Indigenous tourism along the Reef.

Although certain infrastructure and communication technology barriers may be common to all tourism businesses operating in the Reef, comparing the experiences of mainstream businesses as reported by RTOs against those reported by Traditional Owners involved in tourism in the GBRR (see s3.2) suggests that Indigenous operators may experience these issues as much higher entry barriers than mainstream operators. For example, Indigenous operators reported the costs of purchasing equipment, meeting government regulations, and insurance costs as posing particularly significant hurdles. Some of these barriers may appear greater for Indigenous businesses due to the historical and ongoing inequality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in areas such as education, employment and health. Other barriers may arise from the broader industry having a lack of familiarity with traditional Indigenous activities, such as Western insurance operators classifying certain traditional Reef activities as high-risk, while Traditional Owners with a long history of the activities considering them low-risk. Some of these inequalities are explored more fully via the formal Partnership Agreement between the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and the National Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations that came into effect in March 2019 to implement a new *Closing the Gap* agenda (DPMC, 2019), but they are far from solved.

The *Reef 2050 Plan* Investment Framework identifies Traditional Owner actions as one of six priority areas for future investment stating that “a key priority for investment is to improve involvement of Traditional Owners in the delivery of Reef 2050 actions”. Subsequently, the *Traditional Owner Aspirations Report* determines the need to shift to co-governance, and a more negotiated approach to governments working with Traditional Owners in the GBR, as

well as identifying several improvements to the Plan (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018, p. 43).

As discussed in s2.1.1.2, the actions identified under the *Reef 2050 Plan* that will strengthen underlying capacity issues for Traditional Owners that are particularly related to tourism activities include those that:

- Support traditional management of ecosystem health (including Actions **EHA1-EHA5**);
- Support traditional knowledge and management of biodiversity (including Actions **BA1-BA4**);
- Build capacity of Traditional Owners to protect Indigenous heritage and cultural significance of the Reef (including Actions **HA1-HA3**, **MTR HA3**, and **HA11**);
- Build capacity to improve community benefits available to Traditional Owners (including Actions **CBA1-CBA3**); and
- Improve Indigenous economic participation (including Actions **EBA1** and **EBA2**) and sustainability of the Reef (including Actions **MTR EBA 5**, **MTR EBA 7** and **MTR EBA8**).

Furthermore, the outcomes of the Assessment of Indigenous tourism experiences undertaken as part of this report (see section 3.0) strongly support the need for ongoing initiatives to ensure the *Reef 2050 Plan* remains able to meet the needs of Traditional Owners, as identified in the *Traditional Owner Aspirations Report*. With regard to Traditional Owner aspirations and tourism, Traditional Owners continue to:

- Assert the need for genuine co-governance arrangements in sea country management to empower Traditional Owners to take meaningful action in the GBRR (see Aspirations Rec 1: resolve sea country claims, Rec 2: get the foundations right, Rec 3: normalise rights-based agreement making of the Traditional Owner Aspirations report, and Rec 7: immediate Traditional Owner co-design in programs and procurement);
- Express a desire for improved governance arrangements that enable better communication with Traditional Owners on tourism activities and opportunities (see Aspirations Rec 6: establish a GBR Traditional Owners' funding facility, and Rec 8: ensure fit-for purpose delivery programs); and
- Report ongoing distress from loss of species and threats to cultural values arising from mainstream tourism activities, as well as aspirations to address Reef decline (see Aspirations Rec 10: Traditional Owners embedded in GBR monitoring).

It will also be essential to reduce barriers for small Indigenous tourism businesses to access funding, and to provide support to Traditional Owners to enable them to access services, such as assistance in preparing submissions for Government support. The Queensland Indigenous Tourism Development Service that opened in early 2020 – a dedicated service for Indigenous tourism businesses to access government and industry services (Queensland Government 2019b) – will hopefully address the issues related to these barriers that were uncovered in this report.

Recommendation 1: Provide continued support to the actions identified in the *Reef 2050 Plan* and the recommendations outlined in the *Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: The next generation*

of Reef 2050 Actions Report in order to build foundational capacities that will bolster Indigenous economic participation in the Reef tourism industry.

4.2 Improving the Business Enabling Environment

This section answers the question ‘how can we help create an enabling environment for Indigenous tourism businesses along the Reef; and how, if at all, might this differ from regulatory or policy reform to facilitate the tourism business in general?’ The objective is to inform and enhance programming decisions, and to stimulate nuanced and evidence-based high-level policy discussions that facilitate Indigenous tourism activities on the Reef.

4.2.1 Indigenous tourism advocacy

4.2.1.1 Creating an Indigenous Tourism Business advocacy body for Queensland

The *Northern Horizons – Unleashing Our Tourism Potential* report (2018) highlights the need for an Indigenous-led approach to tourism development (see also section 2.3.7 of this report). The need for a peak tourism body for Indigenous peoples in Queensland has been proposed for at least 30 years (see, for example, the Standing Task Force proposed in 1992 by the Rainforest Aboriginal Network, with a mandate to represent their interests in ‘tourism issues and developments’, Chjowai & JCU, 1992, p. 45; and Nevard & Fourmile, 1993), with the Northern Horizons report noting that an Indigenous tourism strategy “driven by parties that include a strong, appropriately representative voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism operators” was needed (JSCNA, 2018, p. 141). IBA and Parks Australia also commented on the benefits of regional coordination for Indigenous tourism as part of The Northern Horizons report.

Although a national peak body is yet to be established, several States and territories have their own dedicated Indigenous tourism advocacy bodies (see section 1.3.3) and the lack of such a network in Queensland may be a contributing factor for the lower levels of Indigenous tourism offerings along the Reef. The QTIC *First Nations Tourism Plan: 2020-2025* indicates that one of its goals is to “create an entity that gives voice to the First Nations tourism sector and provides advocacy and support” (QTIC, 2020, p.12) and so it appears a Queensland advocacy body for Indigenous peoples continues to still be under an ongoing development process.

Establishing and supporting an Indigenous tourism advocacy body that focuses specifically on the Queensland region and strengthens demand for Indigenous tourism experiences across the state will naturally have flow-on benefits for Indigenous tourism ventures in the GBR. It will better enable GBR Indigenous tourism businesses to sustainably enter the tourism market, and also provides the potential to address unique challenges faced by Indigenous operators along the Reef, for example through negotiating reduced insurance premiums for Indigenous tourist activities that take place on the Reef under Traditional Owner supervision, facilitating coordination and collaboration between businesses – particularly those in remote locations

with limited access to regular source markets, and identifying ventures and activities most likely to lead to sustainable Indigenous tourism ventures in the region.

Recommendation 2: Establish an Indigenous tourism advocacy body for Queensland. Such a body could focus on raising the profile of authentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism experiences at state, national and international level; as well as having a role in educating government and industry on how to grow the Indigenous tourism sector. A regional working group dedicated to Reef tourism could address unique challenges for the area, such as supporting businesses in remote regions, negotiating reduced insurance premiums, and coordinating efforts to link Indigenous tourism ventures along the Reef.

4.2.1.2 Building Indigenous tourism business clusters

In addition to the benefits of a coordinating advocacy body for the whole of Queensland, regional coordination along the Reef may also benefit from the development of “clusters of Indigenous businesses and products in remote locations”.⁷² Such an approach could work at both regional and local scale, for example GBR Traditional Owners, in their Reef-wide forum in 2018, grouped themselves according to the nine geographic zones or regions used for the purpose of the Reef Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program (RIMReP) Indigenous Heritage theme project and the Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Aspirations project (GBR Traditional Owner Workshop Reef-Wide Forum 2018). Encouraging stronger networking between such sub-regional groupings may enable Indigenous tourism business clusters to better operate in the context of the unique opportunities and challenges of their own particular region. This clustering has already been started in some areas by RTOs that have established a regular meeting schedule for Indigenous businesses to promote this style of collaboration in their region (e.g. TTNQ), and by Indigenous businesses that have banded together such as the Cairns Indigenous Tourism Hub.

At the local level, apart from the large Indigenous tourism corporations like Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park, and Mossman Gorge Visitor Centre, most Indigenous tourism businesses are small or medium enterprises (SMEs). This reduces their flexibility to cope with exigencies, such as sudden increases in demand for their products and experiences, catering for large events beyond their capacity, lack of staff expertise to cater for a particular opportunity, staff illness or burnout, and family emergencies. By sharing expertise, resources and networks, the members of such clusters can work together to their mutual advantage.

In addition, although the remote location of many Indigenous communities on the Reef from major tourism markets may stymie interest and/or viability of them getting involved in major tourism businesses of their own, establishing organizations such as central marketing cooperatives could provide these communities with opportunities to supply artworks, dance

⁷² As suggested by IBA in JSCNA (2018), p. 142.

troops and other skills through outlets managed by others. Promotional enterprises that link multiple communities together by providing larger Indigenous tourism itineraries that link several ‘magnet’ landmarks and experiences along the Reef could also be considered.

Additionally, more formalised communication structures between Indigenous tourism businesses operating on the Reef could also provide an opportunity to share monitoring information about the impacts of tourism activities on Indigenous culture and the ecological environment between communities, in order to identify trends and improve conservation plans.

Facilitation of such networking opportunities could be carried out by, for example, a Reef Working Group under the advocacy body proposed above, scale-up of the local Indigenous business cooperatives that have already self-initiated, and/or through funding support for a new Indigenous-led project.

Recommendation 3: Facilitate networking between Indigenous tourism businesses on the Reef to form tourism clusters that, for example, share resources and experience, monitor tourism impacts on the Reef environment, and support the development of common contracts and other such arrangements that would assist small/remote businesses to provide consistent product delivery and access to expanded source markets.

4.3 Increasing Demand for Indigenous tourism

This section answers the question ‘how can agencies improve the demand for Indigenous tourism experiences in the GBRR?’. The objective is to identify actions that could strengthen interest in and demand for Indigenous tourism, and thereby better enable GBR indigenous tourism businesses to sustainably enter the tourism market.

4.3.1 Improving Traditional Owner heritage visibility along the Reef

There was unanimous agreement among survey respondents that there were significant opportunities to improve Traditional Owner heritage visibility in a way that would likely have a highly positive impact on the popularity of Indigenous tourism along the Reef, with the most consistent support being voiced in support of:

- Including the traditional names for places in tourism brochures and travel guides.
- Signage identifying the Traditional Owners of the country being travelled on.
- Including local Traditional Owner names for places on signs alongside Western names.
- Developing Indigenous art and culture/heritage trails.

The “twinning” of European names of cities and locations in Australia with traditional Aboriginal names was recently welcomed by then incumbent federal Minister for Indigenous Australians, Ken Wyatt:

“The dual naming and the recognition of traditional Aboriginal names that prevailed before settlement is a great way for our whole state [WA] to move” ... He also observed in Australia “a growing pride in having the duality and the recognition of one of the oldest living cultures and the retention of their language names and locations” (as quoted in Laurie, 2019, p. 5).

Such recognition would also engender pride in the Traditional Owners and particularly their youth to see that their culture and history are being valued and recognised. This re-assertion of connections to country by reclaiming place names is also taking place in other countries with European colonial histories. Morton, for example, reports:

An example project presented at the American Indian Tourism Conference was the American Indians and Route 66 project. Route 66 passes through more than 25 American Indian Nations today. In 2014 AIANTA [American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association] was funded by NPS [National Park Service] to produce a visitor guide to provide first-voice interpretation of the highway; to introduce travelers to tribes living along the route and to genuine cultural experiences. The idea was to overlay the original Route 66 map with traditional names and locations in order to dispel myths about homogeneity of Native American people. A dedicated brochure and website enable visitors to learn about native history, tribes and points of interest along the historic route (Morton, 2019, p. 17).

Starting with perhaps the best-known example of “twinning”, Uluru (Ayers Rock) and Kata Tjuta (The Olgas) in the 1980s, this process has slowly been gathering pace over the decades. Travel writers now often pick up on traditional names of places, for example, Lake Eyre is now also being referred to by its Arabana traditional name *Kati-Thanda* (Bourke, 2019, p. 8). Many newly created national parks have been given language names by the Traditional Owners of the area, while some have had their language names restored, for example, Lumholtz National Park (NP) in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (WTWHA) near Cardwell had its name changed to Girringun National Park in 2003. Most of the islands in the Torres Strait are now known by their traditional names, for example Poruma (Coconut Island), Mer (Murray Island) and Erub (Darnley Island) (TSRC, n.d.).

The Woppaburra people have traditional names for places, including islands in the Keppel Group, within their traditional land and sea country whose names are usually recorded in English (GBRMPA, 2019d). There are 1,050 islands and coral cays within the GBR region – all of them, it can be assumed, have traditional names. The continued recording of traditional knowledge will in time enable islands to be officially recognised by their Traditional name and these can be used in the tourism literature (maps, guides, brochures, etc.).

But the issue of traditional naming need not be restricted to place names. It can also extend to road signs marking First Nations peoples’ tribal and clan boundaries so that visitors gain a sense of whose country they are visiting. The argument is that such knowledge may also arouse interest and a desire among visitors to want to find out more about the Traditional Owners, their country and cultures. This may stimulate their curiosity enough to visit local Indigenous cultural attractions, which translate into tourist dollars for local Indigenous businesses.

One GBR local government, the Cassowary Coast Regional Council, has developed its Cassowary Coast Wayfinding and Signage Strategy to install signage to “get tourists off the Bruce Highway into Far Northern towns” in the belief that promoting the region’s attractions

could boost business and economic activity. The drive-tourism market accounts for the majority of Cassowary Coast's tourism income and the strategy is a significant project in expanding this income stream. Currently in the implementation phase with community feedback invited, the Council is also working closely with Traditional Owners, who will provide artwork for the regional entry and major town entry statements. As strategy spokesperson, Councillor Bob Heath, explains:

Consistent and up-to-date signage will connect visitors and locals with natural attractions, retail areas, dining areas, historical walks and local facilities. It will provide opportunities for visitors and locals to use and value the region's public spaces, unique heritage and natural assets that set us apart from everywhere else (Holmes, 2019, p. 14).

Traditional Owners and relevant authorities (GBRMPA, QPWS, Department of Transport and Main Roads, local governments) should also ensure that the traditional names are protected against misappropriation. In Tasmania, Kunanyi, the widely used official dual name for Mount Wellington, has recently been trademarked by three businesses for hundreds of products ranging from whisky to clothes, bags, stationery, and stubby holders. IP Australia approved the Kunanyi trademarks within seven to ten months of application, listing no objection. However, as Heather Sculthorpe, chief executive of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation points out:

"The use of place names like Kunanyi divorced from their context strips those names of meaning, without returning any social, cultural or economic benefit to the community whose language is being expropriated." She urged companies wanting to use the name to consult with the community and where possible employ or involve local indigenous people in the venture (Denholm, 2019, p. 8).

It is conceivable mainstream tour operators might wish to trademark particular tours named using the reclaimed traditional language name for a particular island or place. In principle this could be done with the approval of the relevant Traditional Owner group, perhaps with something offered in return, such as a proper acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners and/or opportunities of employment for group members.

4.3.2 Promoting Indigenous cultural attractions in tourism publications

Currently there is no easily recognisable icon used consistently to denote an Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander cultural attraction (Indigenous art centre, rock-art site, walking trail, historical site, etc.) for use in tour guides, maps, pamphlets, brochures, etc., in Queensland. The lack of such an icon can diminish opportunities for Indigenous businesses to draw visitors, particularly from the drive market. For example, two GBR visitor guides, *The Ultimate Guide to Driving the Great Barrier Reef: Nature's greatest gift to the world* (Townsville Enterprise, 2017, p. 3), and the *Southern Great Barrier Reef: Where Great Begins* (Capricorn Enterprise, 2017, p. 7) employ between them some twenty map symbol icons indicating some form of visitor activity (hiking, sailing, sightseeing) or attraction (caves, whale watching, turtle hatching, etc). Yet there is no icon to indicate an Indigenous cultural attraction in either publication.

The consequences of this are that tourists could drive past important opportunities to experience an Indigenous cultural attraction. Some of these opportunities – most of which are listed in *Connect with culture: 50 ways to experience Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture* (TEQ, 2017a), but not indicated in the above two guides – are listed below.

In both the *Ultimate GBR Drive Guide* and *Southern GBR Guide* covering Bundaberg to Yeppoon, Goolimbil Walkabout Tour (Town of 1770), the Dreamtime Cultural Centre at Rockhampton and the Woppaburra heritage of Great Keppel Island are overlooked. In the *Ultimate GBR Drive Guide*, covering the remainder of the GBR, some of the Indigenous cultural attractions that could be indicated in the following regional maps do not appear:

- Whitsundays region (from Proserpine to Bowen), Nara Inlet (Hook Island), the Ngaro cultural heritage⁷³, and the Juru Walk at Plantation Park, Ayr⁷⁴.
- Townsville North Queensland (from Home Hill to Cardwell) – the multi-award winning Mungalla Aboriginal Tours⁷⁵ (Ingham), Girringun Art Centre in Cardwell⁷⁶
- Tropical North Queensland (from Innisfail to Cape York) – UMI Arts in Cairns; the Menmuny Arts Precinct in Yarrabah; the community art centres at Wujal Wujal, Hope Vale and Lockhart River, and the Thursday Island Gab Titui Art Centre; the Quinkan rock art gallery tours and the Quinkan and Regional Cultural Centre (Laura); Kuku Yalanji Cultural Habitat Tours⁷⁷; Janbal Aboriginal Art Gallery (Mossman)⁷⁸; Kuku Bulkaway Art Gallery (Cooktown); and the Gamaay Dreaming Track (Cooktown)⁷⁹.

Omission of activities such as these from tourism publications represent potentially missed opportunities for the Indigenous owners/operators of these cultural attractions to make sales. There is also an opportunity to use pictorial indicators that distinguish between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander attractions, as a reminder that the terms refer to different groups of peoples.

However, it should also be recognised that some of the tours mentioned above are guided tours to particular sites. The use of an icon to identify such locations on a tour map may enable some tourists to access the site without a guide, which can lead to degradation of the site, and needs to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Recommendation 4: Encourage relevant authorities to work with Traditional Owners to develop appropriate signage for culturally significant locations, including travel guides, place names and clan boundaries, to improve tourist awareness of Indigenous heritage.

4.3.3 Accreditation

4.3.3.1 Authentication of Indigenous tourism

The *Queensland Ecotourism Plan 2013-2020* emphasises the importance that accreditation plays in delivering world-class experiences by contributing to the quality of ecotourism experiences and assuring visitors that ecotourism operators are committed to best practice

⁷³ See: <https://www.tourismwhitsundays.com.au/ngaro-cultural-site> and <https://www.queensland.com/en-us/attraction/nara-inlet>

⁷⁴ See: <https://www.gudjudatours.com.au/juru-walk>

⁷⁵ See: <https://www.mungallaaboriginaltours.com.au/> See also TEQ (2017a). p. 23; and Langton, 2018, p. 202.

⁷⁶ See: <http://art.girringun.com.au/> See also TEQ (2017a). p. 25.

⁷⁷ TEQ. (2018). p. 37.

⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 12.

⁷⁹ See: <https://www.tropicalnorthqueensland.org.au/listing/product/the-gamaay-dreaming-track/>

and high-quality nature-based experiences. One of the strategic priorities for implementing the Plan's vision concerns facilitating best practice and innovation, which includes a strategy to grow Indigenous opportunities. However, to do this effectively, the Plan notes the need to: "[d]evelop a certification process with Traditional Owners for non-Indigenous and Indigenous guides to retell and share Indigenous stories with visitors" (Queensland Government, 2013, p. 13).

It is apparent that the existing ecotourism and ROC certification processes (see s2.3.11) focus primarily on ensuring that the tourism industry respects and enforces Indigenous cultural heritage. What is missing here is an opportunity for Indigenous businesses to be identified as authentic Indigenous experiences, and so have their offerings distinguished from other 'interpretive' experiences. This raises the question of whether there should be, for example, a logo or other method of identification that meets national accreditation standards specifically designed to brand Queensland tourism businesses operated by Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders.

Tourism products endorsed by tourism accreditation programs benefit from increased credibility, visibility and competitiveness. Accreditation programs can help Indigenous businesses focus on aspects of the business that provide resilience through leaner times, exploit better periods and further develop consistency of quality. Being accredited allows consumers to trust that the business is a quality operation leading to potential purchasing preferences.

Further, as the TEQ guide points out:

If the tourism industry is to achieve success in the increasingly competitive national and international markets, all sectors of the industry must develop quality experiences that will meet the expectations of their customers. To achieve this goal, all businesses involved in the industry must pay close attention to their business practices to ensure that the experiences offered by them are reliable, consistent, predictable and sustainable. The accreditation process ensures these business practices are in place and results in customer confidence, which in turn leads to increased profitability (TEQ, 2017b, p. 12).

Both Traditional Owners and RTOs surveyed as part of this research expressed support to establish a system of accreditation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism businesses (sections 3.2.3.4 and 3.3.7.1). Importantly, such a system should aim to support Indigenous businesses in reaching high standards, rather than operate in a punitive way, or create yet another barrier for market entry. Consideration should also be given to making such accreditation financially viable for small businesses with low annual turnover. Suggestions for who could take responsibility for such a system varied widely within both stakeholder groups and needs further consideration.

With regard to Eco-certification for tourism businesses operating in the GBRR, Ecotourism Australia could consider including the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park* (GBRMPA 2019a) in the certification processes, given the low levels of awareness reported during the surveys (see also s3.2.2 of this report).

Recommendation 5: Develop a supportive Indigenous accreditation system and consistent logo for Indigenous businesses that provide tourism services on the Reef (and in Queensland more generally) to aid in identifying authentic and high quality Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences. This could be for branding and marketing, as well as in tourism publications to indicate and promote the availability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander attractions.

4.4 Building Meaningful Engagement and Partnerships

This section answers the question ‘how can we support the supply of Indigenous tourism experiences on the Reef through building stronger partnerships with other stakeholders?’. The objective is to identify current issues of concern and propose mechanisms to address them.

4.4.1 Improved support for locally produced Indigenous products in retail tourism

While the impact of inauthentic (or “fake”) art and craft in the style of First Nations peoples has been the subject of a recent report by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, the issue remains one of considerable ongoing concern among many Indigenous artists, art organisations and art centres along the GBR (HRSCIA, 2018).⁸⁰ The sale of fake Indigenous items continues through the many tourist souvenir shops that populate the regional cities, such as Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton and Gladstone. In Cairns, for example, while there are four retail Indigenous art/artefact galleries in the Cairns CBD, two of which are owned by Indigenous entities, they are far outweighed by the number of tourism souvenir shops. Souvenir traders occupy the best retail sites in the Cairns CBD, including the Cairns Airport at both domestic and international terminals. Indigenous artists, overwhelmingly operating as sole traders, are not in a position to compete. Interviews reveal that Indigenous artists feel that having these souvenir shops selling fake Indigenous items results in lost sales of authentic, locally-produced art works – not only depriving Indigenous artists of economic opportunity but also demeaning their cultural heritage. The Australia Council for the Arts includes a warning about “fake and imitation” Indigenous art in its report on *International Arts Tourism: Connecting Cultures* (Australia Council, 2018, p. 23).

Nevertheless, the situation is quite complex. Following the recent Federal Court judgement concerning an action brought by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission against Birubi Art Pty Ltd⁸¹ in which the latter was fined \$2.3 million for selling product lines to retailers featuring images, symbols and styles of Australian Aboriginal art about which misleading claims as to their authenticity and place of manufacture were made (ACCC, 2019), the sale of these items continued. Not only the items produced by Birubi Art, but other ‘fake’

⁸⁰ UMI Arts and the Indigenous Art Centre Alliance (representing 13 community art centres in Tropical North Queensland) both made submissions to the HRSCIA inquiry.

⁸¹ *Australian Competition and Consumer Commission v Birubi Art Pty Ltd* [2018] FCA 1595. <https://www.judgments.fedcourt.gov.au/judgments/Judgments/fca/single/2018/2018fca1595>

Indigenous items made in countries such as China, Indonesia and India are still readily available. Currently there is no law in Australia that makes the manufacture of fake art and the misappropriation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander images illegal. The offence occurs only when such items and misappropriations are passed off as being authentic or as genuine Indigenous works.

In an informal survey of the six Reef tourism souvenir shops in the Cairns CBD undertaken in June and July 2019, the majority of Indigenous items on sale were manufactured under license, with Aboriginal artists licensing their designs to manufacturers for use on a very wide range of souvenir and gift products for distribution through various retail souvenir chains. Many of these artists were from outside of Queensland, and most items bore the “Australian Made” logo. A few bore the *Indigenous Art Code* logo, and a small number bore stickers indicating that they were made in other countries. However, very few were items made with designs under license from local Indigenous artists living along or in the vicinity of the GBR, and none were manufactured directly by them.

Following a visit to the 2019 CIAF, it was evident that there are a number of local artists who produce artworks and artefacts for both the high-end collectors and gallery markets, but also items for the souvenir and gift trade. It should be possible for many of these artists to have their items also sold through local mainstream souvenir shops. However, there appears to have been no, or at best limited, direct dialogue between local GBR artists or their representative bodies (such as IACA and UMI Arts in Cairns) and retailers of souvenir Indigenous items. While processes are underway in an attempt to curtail the fake Indigenous souvenir trade in response to the HRSCIA’s report, a forum could be held (e.g. alongside CIAF) in which Indigenous souvenir makers and mainstream traders come together to discuss market opportunities.

Recommendation 6: Hold a forum in 2020 to bring together Indigenous Reef artists and souvenir makers with mainstream souvenir and gift traders to discuss mutual concerns about the selling of fake Indigenous items, and to develop mechanisms that support greater representation of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and craft makers in the souvenir trade.

4.4.2 Mitigating impacts from mainstream tourism

During the assessment surveys undertaken as part of this research, RTOs generally considered that the impacts from mainstream tourism on Traditional Owners were mostly low impact. However, this contrasts significantly with Traditional Owner experiences, who reported medium-high negative impacts on marine habitats, animals, and cultural or spiritual well-being (section 3.3.2). Variable reports on impacts on rights to take marine resources and impacts on sites of significance meant that these impacts were also high in some areas, which correlated with a negative impact on use and enjoyment of sea country. Mitigation of many of these impacts is being addressed through the *Reef 2050 Plan*, and could be further addressed through providing structured opportunities for Indigenous tourism businesses to share information about observed impacts amongst themselves as discussed above.

Negative impacts from tourism were also reported by Traditional Owners arising from efforts to erode Indigenous rights, such as lobbying to ban turtle and dugong hunting which was linked to negative tourist perceptions. These negative interactions extend to mainstream tourism advocacy bodies. For example, the only mention of Indigenous culture or tradition on the website of tourism industry body the Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators (AMPTO) is a position statement under the heading “Traditional Hunting” that refers to “hunting and killing of endangered animals at key tourism sites” as a “national disgrace”, and calls on decision makers to “legislate to prevent anyone, indigenous or otherwise” from such hunting practices (AMPTO, n.d.). Although such hunting practices are regulated (both by law and by Traditional Owner practices), a small number of adverse experiences have generated significant negative perceptions within the tourism industry, and there is an opportunity for both sides to work more closely together on this issue to avoid such tensions.

Areas that experienced numerous negative impacts from tourism, in combination with a poor relationship with their RTO, correlated strongly with a low interest in establishing an Indigenous tourism business. This can lead to a vicious cycle whereby a lack of Traditional Owner interest in Indigenous tourism contributes to a lack of RTO involvement in Indigenous tourism and vice versa. It is therefore possible that addressing some of the concerns arising from mainstream tourism impacts would have a positive effect on Traditional Owner interest in building Indigenous tourism businesses.

Recommendation 7: Assist in resolving conflicts between hunting rights and tourism perceptions through a joint meeting of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) Tourism Reef Advisory Committee (TRAC) and Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee (IRAC).

4.4.3 Cultural awareness training

Cultural awareness training must be considered an important part of the GBR tourism industry as all tourism activities take place on Traditional Owner land and sea country. From a regional perspective, RTOs are involved in making members aware of their responsibilities and obligations to Traditional Owners, and from this should flow one-on-one engagement between individual tourism operators and the Traditional Owner group(s) on whose land and sea country they operate. TTNQ, for example, recently released its *Cultural Protocols: Engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities* guidelines and, as discussed previously, cultural awareness is part of the accreditation process for businesses seeking certification from organisations like Ecotourism Australia and GBRMPA’s Master Reef Guides program (TTNQ, 2019a).

Cross-cultural training in relation to Traditional Owner culture and perspectives, in the context of actions to be undertaken for the implementation of the *Reef 2050 Plan*, is identified as an action in relation to GBRR governance when reviewing relevant agreements, policies, plans, strategies and programs to ensure they support the Plan’s outcomes (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b, p. 53). In relation to the policy background for this action, in the Traditional Owner contribution to the Reef 2050 mid-term review, it is pointed out that:

- Reconciliation cannot be achieved without understanding, recognition and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and non-Indigenous people

- Insights from accessing cross-cultural training in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures and world views will lead to stronger partnerships, stronger relationships, stronger respect, stronger understanding and stronger appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and our cultures
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and insights need to be heard (Wren et al, 2018, p. 31).

While this contribution is stated in the context of the *Reef 2050 Plan*, it also provides a policy rationale that should be more widely adopted by RTOs and tourism operators. Cross-cultural awareness training should be undertaken by the Traditional Owners themselves, or those authorised by them to undertake it on their behalf.

While Traditional Owner groups typically reported familiarity with the GBRMPA heritage assessment guidelines, many of the RTO groups surveyed were generally unaware of the guidelines and how they might apply to tourism (see section 3.2.3.3). An important component of cultural awareness training, therefore, will be to ensure that RTOs and individual tourism operators are fully aware of the GBRMPA's *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park*, their responsibilities under that strategy, and how they can contribute to its implementation (GBRMPA, 2019a).

While it is emphasised that it is important for Traditional Owners to tell their own stories, where tourism operators employ non-Indigenous tour guides, they must ensure that they are culturally aware and competent to provide accurate information about the local culture(s), history and significance of particular sites and species. While some have suggested that government might have a role in facilitating this⁸², in terms of the tourism industry, the responsibility rests most obviously with the RTOs and individual tourism operators.

Recommendation 8: Encourage Regional and Local Tourism Organisations to (continue to) work with Traditional Owners to provide cross-cultural awareness training to all mainstream local tourism business operators.

4.4.4 Strengthening relationships between Traditional Owners and mainstream tourism businesses

Another disconnect that occurred in the survey results between RTO/LTO and Traditional Owner experiences was that tourism organisations considered that mainstream tourism businesses showed respect to Traditional Owners and not only showed no bias towards including Indigenous tourism experiences but were actively interested in incorporating such experiences particularly through building partnership arrangements (section 3.2.2). On the other hand, only a small number of Traditional Owners reported positive interactions with mainstream tourism businesses, and many felt that there was a bias against including Indigenous experiences (section 3.3.2).

⁸² See, for example, submissions in JSCNA. (2018), p143

However, where Traditional Owners had been approached by tourism businesses or RTO/LTOs directly, this was generally very well received by Traditional Owner groups, and had in fact resulted in several partnerships either already being established or under active consideration. This suggests that there is much greater potential for collaboration and partnerships between mainstream and Indigenous tourism activities, but that a level of trust needs to be developed in order to provide the basis for building these collaborations.

Allying or partnering with the bigger tour companies, which take charge of booking, payment and transport arrangements, may provide a cost-effective way for smaller Indigenous-owned tourism businesses to operate. These larger companies operate daily tours, which means that they can provide a regular source of business to smaller Indigenous operators.

Some RTOs reported strong engagement with the Traditional Owners in their areas, while others reported that although they had various mentoring and other programs available to assist groups in setting up a tourism business, there had been little interest from Traditional Owner groups in participating in the RTO offerings.

Activities that were identified via the survey process as promoting successful relationships, or having the potential to improve engagement between RTOs and Traditional Owners included:

- RTOs providing training and mentoring assistance to Indigenous businesses, particularly in reaching trade-readiness
- RTOs brokering relationships between mainstream tourism businesses and Indigenous initiatives to help overcome entry barriers
- RTOs providing more opportunities to involve Traditional Owners in their work, for example in governance or advisory roles.

Recommendation 9: Encourage Regional and Local Tourism Organisations in regions with low levels of Indigenous tourism (or that have not yet established strong working relationships with Indigenous tourism businesses) to approach local Traditional Owners with a view to building trust via on-ground exchange of ideas and aspirations towards building Indigenous tourism offerings in the region, including facilitating networking and partnerships with mainstream tourism businesses.

4.5 Conclusion

This project was initiated to further develop an initial study by Marrie (2018) that exposed a paucity of literature on Indigenous coral reef tourism from both Indigenous and industry perspectives. It also links to the research priorities of a number of NESP Hubs,⁸³ and builds on

⁸³ NESP Tropical Water Quality (Theme 3.6: Explore the opportunities for citizen science and Indigenous participation to improve tropical water quality awareness and outcomes); NESP Marine Biodiversity Hub (Research Priority 1: Maximising the efficacy of

the review by the NESP Tropical Water Quality Hub of Traditional Owner aspirations surrounding engagement with the Great Barrier Reef within the frame of the *Reef 2050 Plan* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018d).

The intent of this report has been to provide new and updated contemporary information on Indigenous participation in the GBR tourism industry in order to assist in policy development, target-setting and directing on-ground action. To this end, the report includes a comprehensive literature review (**Section 1.0**), an assessment of the current policy and regulatory environment (**Section 2.0**), and an examination of the role of tourism representative and peak bodies, along with the outcomes of surveys and interviews with mainstream and Indigenous tourism stakeholders (**Section 3.0**).

The report identifies various barriers to Indigenous tourism participation as well as opportunities for both on-shore opportunities (e.g. art sales and cultural performances) as well as *in situ* Reef activities (e.g. diving), and provides recommendations to address these identified needs (**Section 4.0**). These recommendations are directed to GBR Traditional Owners and relevant Indigenous bodies and stakeholders, mainstream tourism bodies, GBRMPA and its advisory bodies, and relevant Queensland and Federal government agencies. It is hoped that implementing the recommendations outlined herein will contribute to enhancing and respecting the Traditional Owner cultural values of the Reef, as well as protecting environmental values, promoting sustainable economic use of the Reef and its resources, and deepening our understanding of how different Indigenous communities interact with and participate in Reef tourism.

managing Australia's marine environment; Research Priority 3: Improving our understanding of the marine environment, including biophysical, economic and social aspects); NESP Northern Australian Environmental Resources Hub (Research Priority C: Understanding and measuring the conditions and trends of environmental, social and economic resources in northern Australia); NESP Threatened Species Recovery Hub (Research Priority D3: Using social and economic opportunities for threatened species recovery).

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APPENDIX 1: REGIONAL AND LOCAL TOURISM

ORGANISATION INDIGENOUS TOURISM

EXPERIENCES SURVEY QUESTIONS

Section A: EXPERIENCES WITH INDIGENOUS TOURISM		
1	Are you aware of any Indigenous tourism business/operators in the regional area you cover? ☐ Yes. If yes, can you briefly describe some of them?: ☐ No ☐ Unsure <i>Comment (optional):</i>	
2	What do you think about the level of Indigenous tourism activities in your region? ☐ Too high ☐ About right ☐ Too low <i>Additional comments on levels Indigenous tourism (optional):</i>	
3	A few potential impacts of mainstream tourism on Indigenous peoples are listed below. Please indicate whether in your experience mainstream tourism has a HIGH impact (positive or negative), a MEDIUM impact (positive or negative), or a LOW impact on these activities in your region.	
3a	Impacts of tourism on Indigenous use and enjoyment of sea country	☐ HIGH positive impact ☐ MEDIUM positive impact ☐ LOW impact ☐ MEDIUM negative impact ☐ HIGH negative impact
3b	Impacts on rights to take marine resources	☐ HIGH positive impact ☐ MEDIUM positive impact ☐ LOW impact ☐ MEDIUM negative impact ☐ HIGH negative impact
3c	Impacts on sites of significance	☐ HIGH positive impact ☐ MEDIUM positive impact ☐ LOW impact ☐ MEDIUM negative impact ☐ HIGH negative impact
3d	Impacts on marine habitats (including sea-bird habitats)	☐ HIGH positive impact ☐ MEDIUM positive impact ☐ LOW impact ☐ MEDIUM negative impact ☐ HIGH negative impact
3e	Impacts on marine animals	☐ HIGH positive impact ☐ MEDIUM positive impact ☐ LOW impact ☐ MEDIUM negative impact ☐ HIGH negative impact

3f	Impacts on cultural or spiritual wellbeing	☐ HIGH positive impact ☐ MEDIUM positive impact ☐ LOW impact ☐ MEDIUM negative impact ☐ HIGH negative impact
3g	Impacts on economic wellbeing	☐ HIGH positive impact ☐ MEDIUM positive impact ☐ LOW impact ☐ MEDIUM negative impact ☐ HIGH negative impact
3h	<i>Additional comments on the impacts of tourism here (optional):</i>	
4	Do you feel that mainstream ecotourism businesses operating in your region show respect to the Traditional Owners? ☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Unsure Can you give an example of why you feel this way?:	
5	Do you perceive any bias within the mainstream tourism industry against including Indigenous tourism experiences/products within the range of tourism products available in your region? ☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Unsure If yes, or sometimes, what sort of bias?:	
6	Does your organisation engage with local Traditional owners and Indigenous tourism businesses? ☐ Yes. If so, what engagement initiatives have you put in place?: ☐ No. If so, why not?: ☐ Unsure	
7	How would you rate your level of engagement with local Traditional Owners and Indigenous tourism businesses? ☐ Excellent ☐ Very Good ☐ Good ☐ Could be better ☐ Poor <i>Comment (optional):</i>	
8	Would you like your organisation's involvement with local Traditional Owners and Indigenous tourism businesses to be: ☐ More ☐ About the same ☐ Less <i>Comment (optional):</i>	
9	Do you include Indigenous tourism experiences/products as part of your brand for marketing purposes? ☐ Yes. If so, how many Indigenous products d you have, and how are they marketed to customers: ☐ No. If so, is there a reason why not?:	
10	How does your organisation acknowledge the Traditional Owners within your region?	
11	Thinking about mainstream tourism (i.e. not just Indigenous) businesses in your region, please consider the list of potential obstacles below, and indicate whether they form a HIGH, MEDIUM or LOW barrier for tourism operators in your region:	
11a	Finding appropriate staff	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low

11b	Lack of training (e.g. in areas such as first aid, digital literacy, etc), including uncertainty about the nature and level of training required	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
11c	Uncertainty about market demand	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
11d	Costs of insurance	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
11e	Lack of communications infrastructure (e.g. Internet access, mobile coverage, EFTPOS, etc)	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
11f	Lack of physical infrastructure (e.g. camping facilities, boat ramps, etc)	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
11g	Lack of support services (e.g. medical)	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
11h	Costs of equipment and finding necessary finance	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
11i	How to make and manage bookings and their payments	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
11j	Remote operational costs (e.g. issues of road and air access)	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
11k	Short tourism period due to seasonal conditions	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
11l	Economic environment (e.g. fluctuating visitor numbers, \$AUD exchange rate)	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
11m	Competition with mainstream tourism ventures	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
11n	Competition with other Indigenous tourism ventures	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
11o	Competition with other types of business (e.g. competing with the mining industry for accommodation)	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
11p	Meeting government regulations (e.g. getting permits)	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
11q	Marketing/awareness/advertising issues	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
11r	If you would like to expand on any of the barriers to participation, please do so here:			

Section B: GOVERNANCE

12	How are Traditional Owners currently included in the governance process for your organisation?		
13	Have you, or would you consider any of the following options:		
13a	TO participation in RTO governance at board level?	☐ Already doing	☐ Would consider ☐ No
13b	TO participation in executive management team/group	☐ Already doing	☐ Would consider ☐ No

13c	Establishing an Indigenous tourism advisory committee	☐ Already doing	☐ Would consider	☐ No
13d	Appointing an Indigenous champion or mentor	☐ Already doing	☐ Would consider	☐ No
13e	Employing Indigenous staff members	☐ Already doing	☐ Would consider	☐ No
14	Do you think there should be a special membership category for those Registered Native Title Body Corporates (RNTBC) and land trusts that oversee/manage the interests of the Indigenous land holders in your region? ☐ Yes. If so, how might that work?: ☐ No. If so, why don't you think that would work?: ☐ Unsure			
15	Would your RTO's constitution require amendment to enable inclusion of TOs in the governance process, or can the constitution currently accommodate such inclusion? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure <i>Comment (optional):</i>			
16	Do any of your staff have specific responsibility for consulting with TOs, local Indigenous tourism businesses and other local Indigenous organisations about participation in the tourism industry? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure <i>Comment (optional):</i>			
17	Can you think of any mechanisms through which TOs could be more involved in the work of your RTO?			
18	Can you think of any barriers to more active inclusion of TOs in the operation of your RTO?			
19	Do you think TO heritage visibility could be improved in your RTO region, and would this impact on the popularity of Indigenous tourism?			
20	From the following list of potential measures to increase visibility, please indicate whether in your experience these would have a HIGH, MEDIUM or LOW impact on Indigenous tourism in your region:			
20a	Signage identifying the Traditional Owners of the country being travelled on	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
20b	Including local Traditional Owner names for places on signs alongside "whitefella" names	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
20c	Including the traditional names for places in tourism brochures and travel guides	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
20d	Putting up information boards outlining the significance of a place/site to traditional owners	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
20e	Public art works by Traditional Owner artists	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low

20f	Indigenous art and culture/heritage trails	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
21	Do you think a Reconciliation Action Plan negotiated with TOs, Indigenous tourism businesses and local Indigenous organisations would have an impact on your organisation's level of engagement with the Indigenous community? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure <i>Comment (optional):</i>			
22	Is your organisation aware of the GBRMPA's <i>Traditional Owner Heritage Assessment Guidelines</i> ? ☐ Yes. If so, do you promote these guidelines to your members? How? ☐ No ☐ Unsure <i>Comment (optional):</i>			
23	Do you think it would have an impact if your RTO, in conjunction with the relevant TOs, provided cultural awareness training to your members to promote awareness of how to respect Indigenous heritage values of their land and sea country? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure <i>Comment (optional):</i>			

Section C: TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

24	Are you aware that TA, TEQ and QTIC are actively promoting Indigenous cultural experiences, particularly in relation to ecotourism, in both the domestic and overseas tourism markets? ☐ Yes. If so, are you contributing to this strategy? How?: ☐ No. ☐ Unsure <i>Comment (optional):</i>
25	Has your RTO carried out/commissioned market research to assess the level of demand for Indigenous tourism products/experiences within your region? ☐ Yes. If so, can you summarise your findings?: ☐ No <i>Comment (optional):</i>
26	Do you have a marketing strategy that specifically includes Indigenous products/experiences? ☐ Yes. If so, do you target particular markets (e.g. domestic, Chinese, American, 'grey nomads', etc.)?: ☐ No <i>Comment (optional):</i>
27	Do you encounter any barriers to supporting indigenous tourism businesses? ☐ Yes. If so, what are they?: ☐ No <i>Comment (optional):</i>
28	What opportunities for improvement in indigenous tourism businesses do you see?

29	Can you identify any opportunities to leverage other visitor traffic for indigenous tourism businesses (e.g. cooperative ventures, shared resources, information hubs)?
30	Can you identify any opportunities to defray operational costs in bulk (e.g. internet and other infrastructure, marketing, location accessibility, weather insurance)?
31	Do you think there should be a system of accreditation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism experiences in place to help guarantee their quality? ☐ Yes. If so, who do you think should be responsible for the accreditation? ☐ No. If so, why not?
32	Are you able or willing to provide training and mentoring assistance to Indigenous tourism businesses/operators in your area if requested (by such a business)? ☐ Yes ☐ No <i>Comment (optional):</i>
33	In principle, do you think your RTO would support the introduction of a Traditional Owner tourist levy to help build the capacity of local TOs, on whose traditional lands and sea country tourism activities are taking place, to participate in the tourism industry? ☐ Yes ☐ No <i>Comment (optional):</i>

If you have any additional comments or suggestions for consideration of the researchers, please provide them here:

APPENDIX 2: TRADITIONAL OWNER INDIGENOUS TOURISM EXPERIENCES SURVEY QUESTIONS

Section A: EXPERIENCES WITH TOURISM		
1	What do you think about the level of mainstream (non-Indigenous) tourism activities in your “sea country”? ☐ too high ☐ about right ☐ too low <i>Additional comments on mainstream tourism (optional):</i>	
2	Do you have any particular concerns about mainstream reef-related tourism activities in your country? ☐ No ☐ Yes. If yes, please indicate what your concerns are:	
3	A few potential impacts of tourism on Indigenous peoples are listed below. Please indicate whether in your experience tourism has a HIGH impact (positive or negative), a MEDIUM impact (positive or negative), or a LOW impact on these activities in your country.	
3a	Impacts of tourism on Indigenous use and enjoyment of sea country	☐ HIGH positive impact ☐ MEDIUM positive impact ☐ LOW impact ☐ MEDIUM negative impact ☐ HIGH negative impact
3b	Impacts on rights to take marine resources	☐ HIGH positive impact ☐ MEDIUM positive impact ☐ LOW impact ☐ MEDIUM negative impact ☐ HIGH negative impact
3c	Impacts on sites of significance	☐ HIGH positive impact ☐ MEDIUM positive impact ☐ LOW impact ☐ MEDIUM negative impact ☐ HIGH negative impact
3d	Impacts on marine habitats (including sea-bird habitats)	☐ HIGH positive impact ☐ MEDIUM positive impact ☐ LOW impact ☐ MEDIUM negative impact ☐ HIGH negative impact
3e	Impacts on marine animals	☐ HIGH positive impact ☐ MEDIUM positive impact ☐ LOW impact ☐ MEDIUM negative impact ☐ HIGH negative impact
3f	Impacts on cultural or spiritual wellbeing	☐ HIGH positive impact ☐ MEDIUM positive impact ☐ LOW impact ☐ MEDIUM negative impact ☐ HIGH negative impact

3g	Impacts on economic wellbeing	☐ HIGH positive impact ☐ MEDIUM positive impact ☐ LOW impact ☐ MEDIUM negative impact ☐ HIGH negative impact
3h	<i>Additional comments on the impacts of tourism here (optional):</i>	
4	Does your organisation have its own ranger service to “care for country”? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure	
5	Do you feel that mainstream ecotourism businesses operating on your country show respect to the Traditional Owners? ☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Unsure Can you give an example of why you feel this way?:	
6	Do you perceive any bias within the mainstream tourism industry against including Indigenous tourism experiences/products within the range of tourism products available in your area? ☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Unsure If yes, or sometimes, what sort of bias?:	
7	Do mainstream tour operators/businesses approach you as a TO about conducting their tourism activities on your traditional country? (E.g. they may have asked permission to conduct activities, asked how to acknowledge you, invited your involvement in their business, etc.) ☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Unsure If yes, or sometimes, what sort of approaches have you experienced?:	
8	Are you aware of any mainstream tourism operators including information about local Indigenous culture and history in their tours without your TO group’s permission? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure If yes, can you provide any details?	

Section B: TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

9	Does your sea country have any specific local activities or landmarks related to the reef that you think could be a particular draw-card for tourists? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure <i>If yes, can you indicate what these draw-cards are? (optional):</i>	
10	Does your organisation have a tourism business at the moment? ☐ Yes → IF YES GO TO QUESTION #11 ☐ No → IF NO GO TO QUESTION #16	
11	Can you provide some details about what your tourism business involves?	
12	Does your tourism business include any of the following activities?	
12a	Cultural guide or ambassador with a mainstream tourist operator?	☐ Yes ☐ No
12b	Cultural habitat or sacred site tours?	☐ Yes ☐ No

12c	Sacred ritual experience (e.g. smoking ceremony, ochre anointment)	☐ Yes	☐ No
12d	Ancient remedy experience (e.g. bush medicine)	☐ Yes	☐ No
12e	Artist gallery or art experience	☐ Yes	☐ No
12f	Indigenous dancing	☐ Yes	☐ No
12g	Bush tucker or bushfood restaurant	☐ Yes	☐ No
12h	Indigenous storytelling	☐ Yes	☐ No
12i	4WD tours	☐ Yes	☐ No
12j	Fishing tours	☐ Yes	☐ No
12k	Specific Indigenous festivals or celebrations	☐ Yes	☐ No
12l	Accommodation	☐ Yes	☐ No
12m	☐ Other activities. If so, please indicate what (optional):		
13	What business model do you currently have? Please select from the following options, or provide details if it does not fall under any of these categories. ☐ As a TO-run business as part of your land-holding body (RNTBC, land trust, etc) ☐ As a TO-run business but independent of your land-holding body ☐ Partnering/collaborating with a mainstream tourism operator ☐ As part of the TO ranger program? ☐ Other? If so, what?		
14	Did you make use of any government support in establishing or running your business? ☐ Yes. If so, what was the nature of the support? ☐ No. If so, why not?		
15	Do you have a marketing strategy? ☐ No. If so, why not? ☐ Yes. If so, does your strategy target particular markets? Which ones? (examples might include domestic, international, Chinese, American, off-road travellers, 'grey nomads', eco-tourists, fishing tours, etc.)		
16	Is your organisation interested in establishing or expanding into a new tourism business? ☐ Yes → IF YES GO TO QUESTION #17 ☐ No → IF NO GO TO QUESTION #19 in Section C.		
17	What sort of tourism activity/activities do you think you will be interested to incorporate into your business?		
18	From the following list of activities, please indicate if your interest in incorporating them into your new business is HIGH, MEDIUM, or LOW.		
18a	Cultural guide or ambassador with a mainstream tourist operator?	☐ High	☐ Medium ☐ Low
18b	Cultural habitat or sacred site tours?	☐ High	☐ Medium ☐ Low
18c	Sacred ritual experience (e.g. smoking ceremony, ochre anointment)	☐ High	☐ Medium ☐ Low
18d	Ancient remedy experience (e.g. bush medicine)	☐ High	☐ Medium ☐ Low

18e	Artist gallery or art experience	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
18f	Indigenous dancing	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
18g	Bush tucker or bushfood restaurant	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
18h	Indigenous storytelling	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
18i	4WD tours	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
18j	Fishing tours	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
18k	Specific Indigenous festivals or celebrations	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
18l	Accommodation	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
18m	<i>If you would like to expand on the activities you are interested in incorporating, please do so here (optional):</i>			
→ PLEASE GO TO QUESTION #20 in Section C.				

Section C: BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

19	Can you give some reasons why your group is not interested in establishing a tourism business?			
20	Can you identify any obstacles or opportunities for your group in wanting to establish a tourism business?			
21	From the list of potential obstacles below, please indicate whether they form a HIGH, MEDIUM or LOW barrier for your group:			
21a	Finding appropriate staff	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
21b	Lack of training (e.g. in areas such as first aid, digital literacy, etc), including uncertainty about the nature and level of training required	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
21c	Uncertainty about market demand	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
21d	Costs of insurance	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
21e	Lack of communications infrastructure (e.g. Internet access, mobile coverage, EFTPOS, etc)	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
21f	Lack of physical infrastructure (e.g. camping facilities, boat ramps, etc)	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
21g	Lack of support services (e.g. medical)	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
21h	Costs of equipment and finding necessary finance	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
21i	How to make and manage bookings and their payments	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
21j	Remote operational costs (e.g. issues of road and air access)	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
21k	Short tourism period due to seasonal conditions	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
21l	Economic environment (e.g. fluctuating visitor numbers, \$AUD exchange rate)	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low

21m	Competition with mainstream tourism ventures	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
21n	Competition with other Indigenous tourism ventures	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
21o	Competition with other types of business (e.g. competing with the mining industry for accommodation)	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
21p	Meeting government regulations (e.g. getting permits)	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
21q	Marketing/awareness/advertising issues	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
21r	If you would like to expand on any of the barriers to participation, please do so here:			

Section D: ENGAGEMENT WITH RTOS

22	Are you aware of a Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) responsible for promoting tourism in your area? ☐ Yes → IF YES GO TO QUESTION #23 ☐ No → IF NO GO TO QUESTION #24 ☐ Unsure → IF UNSURE GO TO QUESTION #24
23	How would you rate your level of engagement with the area's RTO? ☐ Excellent ☐ Very Good ☐ Good ☐ Could be better ☐ Poor In what way(s) have you engaged with your RTO?:
24	How much would your group like to be involved with your area's RTO? ☐ More ☐ About the same ☐ Less
25	Do you think your RTO could help you more with Indigenous tourism in your country? ☐ Yes. If so, how? ☐ No

Section E: POLICY ENVIRONMENT

26	Do you think there should be a system of accreditation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism experiences in place to help guarantee their quality? ☐ Yes. If so, who do you think should be responsible for the accreditation? ☐ No. If so, why not?
27	Is your group aware that both the federal and state governments have put in place policies that specifically promote Indigenous tourism – particularly in relation to ecotourism products and experiences? ☐ Yes ☐ No Comment (optional):

28	Is your group aware that both the federal and state governments have put in place support packages to encourage Indigenous people to enter into the industry? ☐ Yes ☐ No <i>Comment (optional):</i>			
29	Do you think Traditional Owner heritage visibility could be improved on your traditional country and would this impact on the popularity of Indigenous tourism in your area? ☐ Yes ☐ No <i>Comment (optional):</i>			
30	From the following list of potential measures to increase visibility, please indicate whether in your experience these would have a HIGH, MEDIUM or LOW impact on Indigenous tourism in your region:			
30a	Signage identifying the Traditional Owners of the country being travelled on	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
30b	Including local Traditional Owner names for places on signs alongside "whitefella" names	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
30c	Including the traditional names for places in tourism brochures and travel guides	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
30d	Putting up information boards outlining the significance of a place/site to traditional owners	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
30e	Public art works by Traditional Owner artists	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
30f	Indigenous art and culture/heritage trails	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
30g	☐ Other	<i>Please provide details:</i>		

If you have any additional comments or suggestions for consideration of the researchers, please provide them here:

