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Gidarjil Development Corporation

Report on the SEABORNE workshop for Port Curtis Coral Coast TUMRA and Gidarjil

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This workshop was conducted as a part of the **Sustainable use And Benefits for Marine** (SEABORNE) project. An Integrated Monitoring and Reporting project under the Reef Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program (RIMReP) funded by the partnership between the Australian Government's Reef Trust and Great Barrier Reef Foundation (Reef Trust Partnership). We are grateful to Michelle Dyer, Cindy Huchery, Sally Harman the TUMRA Coordinators and others at GBRMPA for their support and guidance throughout this project. We are also grateful to Kirsten Maclean and Isabelle Oude-Egberink for their thoughtful reviews of draft reports. All errors and omissions remain the responsibility of the authors.

1 Introduction

1.1 Context and background

1.1.1 Project SEABORNE

The World-Heritage listed Great Barrier Reef is beautiful, vast, and unique (Commonwealth of Australia, 2021). It contributes billions of dollars to the Australian economy and is a key part of the spiritual and cultural identity of First Nations People (Commonwealth of Australia, 2021). Despite being one of the best managed coral reef ecosystems in the world, the most recent Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report (Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, 2019) highlights the continued need for urgent and accelerated action to address threats from climate change and poor water quality from terrestrial run-off.

The Reef 2050 Long Term Sustainability Plan 2021-2025 (the Reef 2050 Plan) is the Australian and Queensland governments' overarching long term strategy for protecting and managing the Reef (Commonwealth of Australia, 2021). The Reef 2050 Plan provides a strategic framework for action to guide governments, key sectors, and individuals on actions they can take to contribute to improving the Reef's future. The Reef 2050 Plan sets out 20 objectives with supporting indicators to measure success across a selection of attributes for its objectives of *Healthy Reef, Healthy People*. The *Healthy People* outcome of the 2050 Plan emphasises the interconnectivity of the Reef to both its Traditional Owners and the communities that depend on it, by recognising that people benefit from the ecosystem services that the Reef provides. Under the Healthy People heading, the following socio-cultural and economic relevant objectives are:

Indigenous heritage

1. Traditional Owners caring for Country.
2. Traditional knowledge about the Great Barrier Reef is owned and managed by Traditional Owners and is protected and retained for future generations.
3. Traditional Owners' rights are genuinely recognised and prioritised and inform and drive how benefits are shared.
4. Local Traditional Owner land and sea management organisations are equipped to operate at the appropriate scale.
5. Country is healthy and culture is strong.

Human Dimensions

1. Uses of the Reef are ecologically sustainable as the system changes, in turn sustaining economic and social benefits.
2. People maintain or grow their attachment to the Great Barrier Reef.
3. People and communities take individual and collective action to maintain Reef resilience.

4. Intangible and tangible historic and cultural heritage and contemporary cultural values remain intact.

5. Governance systems are inclusive, coherent, and adaptive.

Focusing on two case study areas of interest for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) (Figure 1), the co-designed CSIRO, James Cook University (JCU), Central Queensland University (CQU) and Great Barrier Reef Management Authority (GBRMPA) SEABORNE project addresses the first of the human dimension objectives - *Uses of the Reef are ecologically sustainable as the system changes, in turn sustaining economic and social benefits*. Specifically, the SEABORNE project is consolidating and assessing the quality of existing data that generates insight into reef use, users and the benefits derived from use as well as the vulnerability of benefits to changes in Reef health. The SEABORNE project is also providing a framework through which existing use and benefit data can be viewed to make decision making relevant information. Further, by understanding what data exists about Reef use and benefit, and how this data generates information, knowledge gaps can be identified and filled for better decision making into the future.

1.2 The purpose of this workshop and report

As the Traditional Owners of the Land and Sea Country, several Traditional Owner groups oversee and manage the natural resources within the case study areas through a governance structure known as a Traditional Use of Marine Resource Areas (TUMRAs). One focus of the SEABORNE project, involves engaging with Reef Traditional Owners within the case study regions to ensure that:

- The database of existing information about use and benefits contains information that is useful for, and usable by, First Nations peoples in their management of Country.
- The database of existing information about use and benefits contains First Nations perspectives related to connection to the reef and surrounding Sea Country such that this can be included in GBRMPA reflections on progress towards Reef 2050 goals and in day-to-day reef management decisions.

The SEABORNE project teams' strategy for engagement with Reef Traditional Owners involved reaching out to relevant Reef Traditional Owner-led organisations and inviting each group to participate in a one day face-to-face workshop to explore these matters further. Which Traditional Owner groups to approach were determined by the spatial area of focus negotiated with the GBRMPA. We report here on engagement with participants from the four Port Curtis Coral Coast Traditional Owner groups who together manage the Port Curtis Coral Coast TUMRA supported by the Gidarjil Development Corporation.

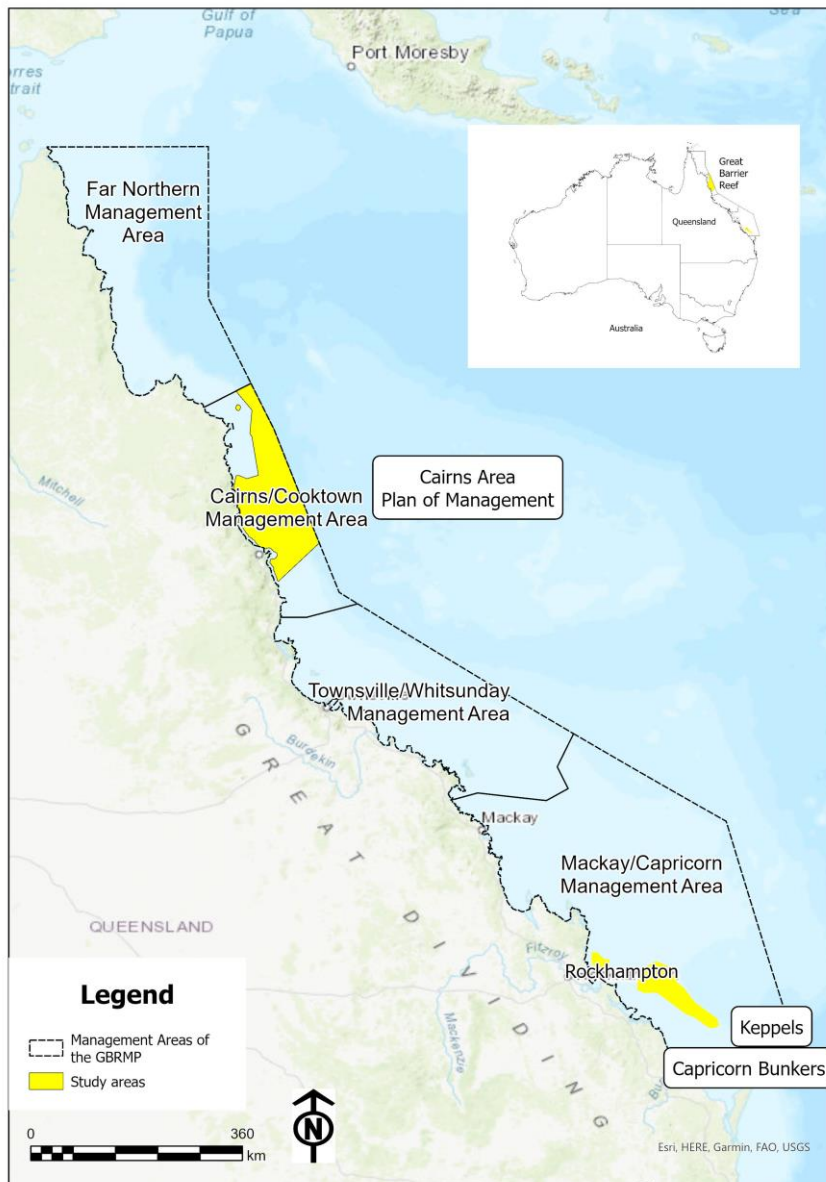


Figure 1: Map showing the identified study areas (Cairns Area Plan of Management and Keppels Capricorn Bunkers)

This workshop report relates to the workshop held with the PCCC Traditional Owner groups, the Bailai, Gurang, Gooreng Gooreng, Taribelang Bunda Peoples, supported by the Gidarjil Development Corporation Ltd in the southern study area off the coast of, and to the south of, Rockhampton.

1.2.1 Overview of the Port Curtis Coral Coast Traditional Use of Marine Resource Area

The Port Curtis Coral Coast (PCCC) Traditional Owner groups include the Gooreng Gooreng, Bailai, Gurang and Taribelang Bunda people. Native title was determined for the Bailai, Gurang, Gooreng Gooreng, Taribelang Bunda People in November 2017, and their Registered Native Title Body Corporate is First Nations Bailai, Gurang, Gooreng Gooreng, Taribelang Bunda People Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC (ORIC Indigenous Corporation Number 8650). Their traditional Country spans the Bundaberg, Gladstone and North Burnett regions, covering approx. 19,583 km² of land and 26,636 km² of sea Country (<https://www.pccctrust.com.au/about-us/our-operations/>).

Gidarjil Development Corporation Ltd (ABN 6909493586) is a registered charity, working as an agent for the PCCC Traditional Owners.

Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRA) describe how Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner groups work in partnership with the Australian and Queensland governments to manage traditional use activities on their Sea Country

(<https://www2.gbrmpa.gov.au/learn/traditional-owners/traditional-use-marine-resources-agreements>). The Port Curtis Coral Coast TUMRA (Figure 2) was accredited in August 2011, and reaccredited in April 2019 for a duration of 10 years. It covers an area of approximately 26,386km² of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The TUMRA area extends from Burrum Heads, south of Bundaberg, north to and including the waters around Curtis Island off Gladstone.

The four PCCC Traditional Owner groups have a strong continuous connection to their Land and Sea Country. The PCCC coastal and marine Sea Country is cared for by the Gidarjil Sea Rangers, who work to conserve, manage and monitor many threatened species including marine turtles, dugong and cetaceans; they also undertake numerous activities to care for threatened ecological communities connected to their sea country including mangroves, saltmarsh, seagrass and coral reefs – undertaking regular mangrove and seagrass watch surveys, managing weeds in priority coastal and riparian areas, and monitoring the health of in-shore coral reefs

(<https://www.niaa.gov.au/indigenous-affairs/environment/indigenous-rangers-working-country/gidarjil-bundaberg-land-and-sea-rangers>).

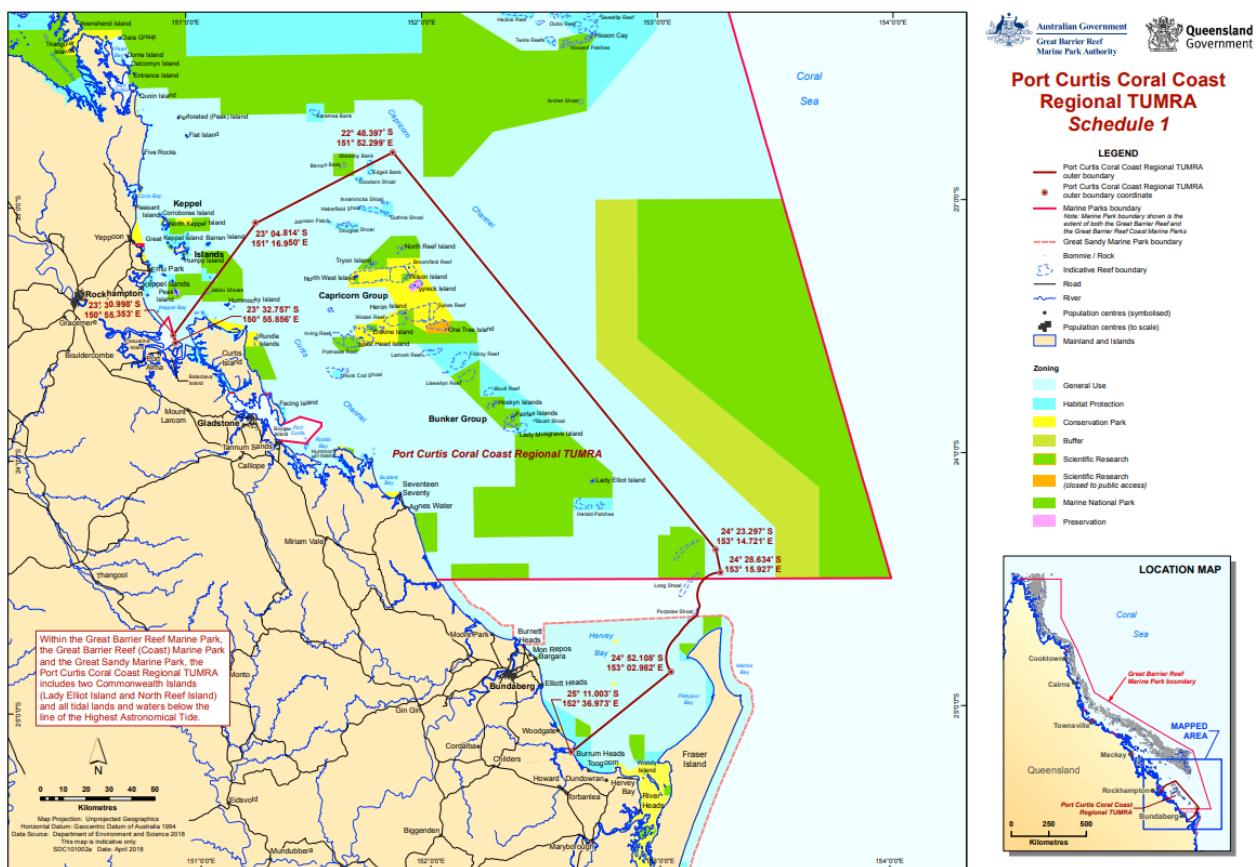


Figure 2: Map indicating location of Port Curtis Coral Coast TUMRA (accessed 15th November 2023 from <https://elibrary.gbrmpa.gov.au/jspui/handle/11017/3922>)

2 Workshop summary

The SEABORNE/Gidarjil workshop was held on 2nd November 2023, at 2 Marina Drive, Burnett Heads, on PCCC Country. A copy of the agenda is attached (Appendix 1). The research has human ethics approval from CSIRO (reference CSIRO HREC 023/23) and from JCU (Reference JCU HREC H9163). There were 17 attendees from Gidarjil, including a mix of age groups including Elders, and approximately equal male and female participants, and 2 female facilitators from JCU and CSIRO.

2.1 Workshop Objectives

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which PCCC Sea Country is used and valued.
- Learn about how PCCC Sea Country is monitored and nurtured.
- Identify information that will help to better meet TUMRA goals and monitoring needs; and
- Explore how to reflect monitoring of healthy Sea Country into Reef Knowledge Systems to support more holistic management.

2.2 Workshop Session 1: Understanding values of Sea Country

2.2.1 Method

The first interactive workshop activity was focused on understanding the values of PCCC Sea Country. Participants were asked to use the butchers' paper and sticky notes to write down all the things that are important to them about Sea Country, what they like doing and what it means to them. If they preferred, participants spoke about their ideas for the facilitators to note down on sticky notes on their behalf. The sticky notes were placed on the butcher's paper as the ideas came to the participants, with no attempts to organise or theme the ideas initially, to avoid breaking the flow of conversation. The participants self-sorted themselves into two separate, approximately equal sized groups for this activity (see Figure 3).

Question posed: What is important about caring for PCCC Sea Country? What do you value and how do you use your Sea Country? In what ways do you care for & monitor health of Sea Country?



Figure 3 Sticky notes developed by Workshop participants recording what was important about Sea Country (top) and participants engaged in this activity (below)

Following this, facilitator asked participants to come together into one group and the participants worked together to organise the sticky notes in a natural way that makes sense or grouped together similar values. The participants were encouraged to form as many or few groups as they thought was appropriate and asked to give each group an appropriate heading or name. Participants self-organised the sticky notes into four categories and gave these categories the headings of Management and protection, Culture and values, Recreation, and Educational (see Figure 6).

2.2.2 Summary of discussion

The key ideas and discussions relating to each of the themes represented by each of the groupings are discussed and illustrated in the word cloud (Figure 4) and grouped sticky notes below (Figure 5 and Figure 6).

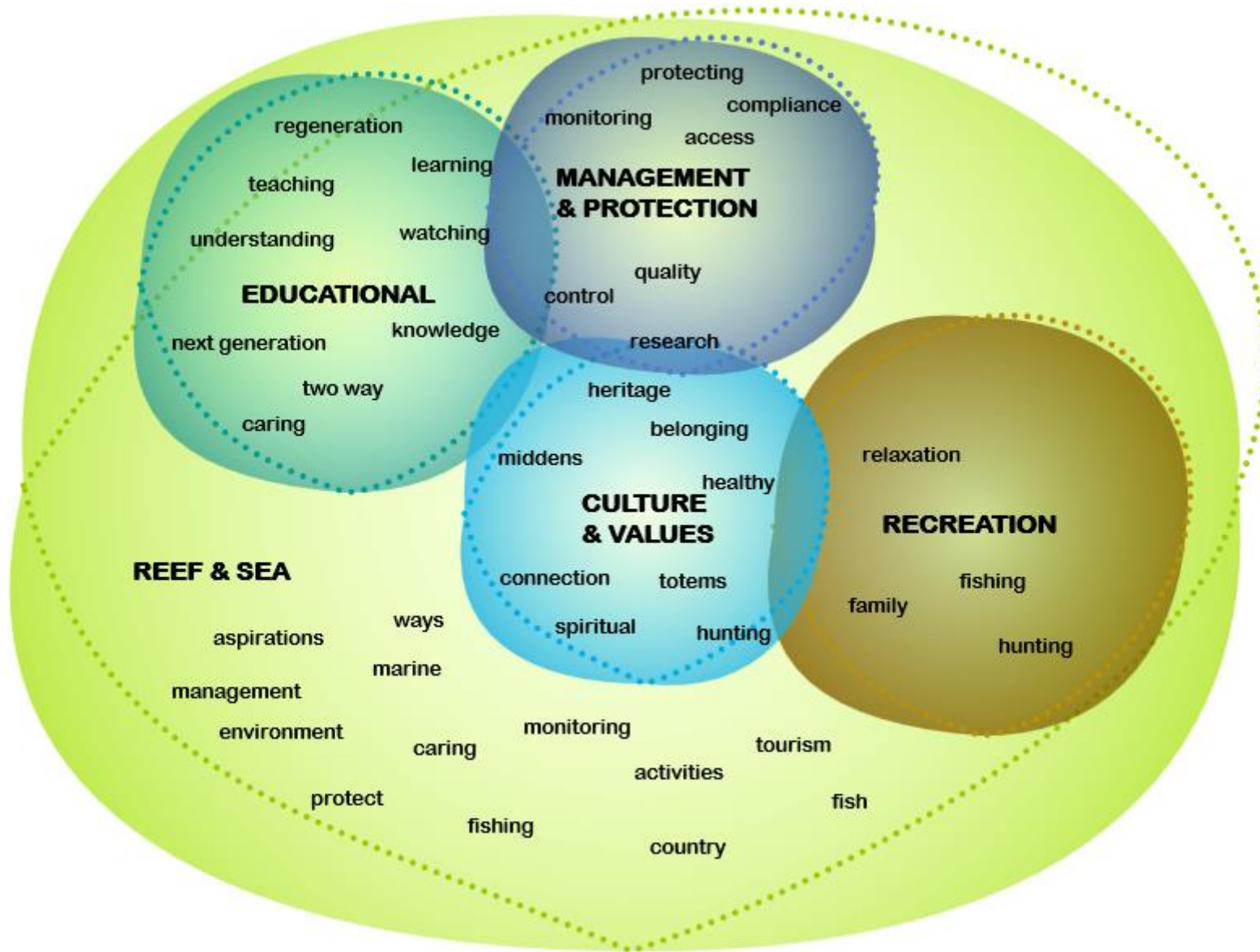


Figure 4: Word cloud generated from discussions during the workshop, highlighting the key themes described by participants.

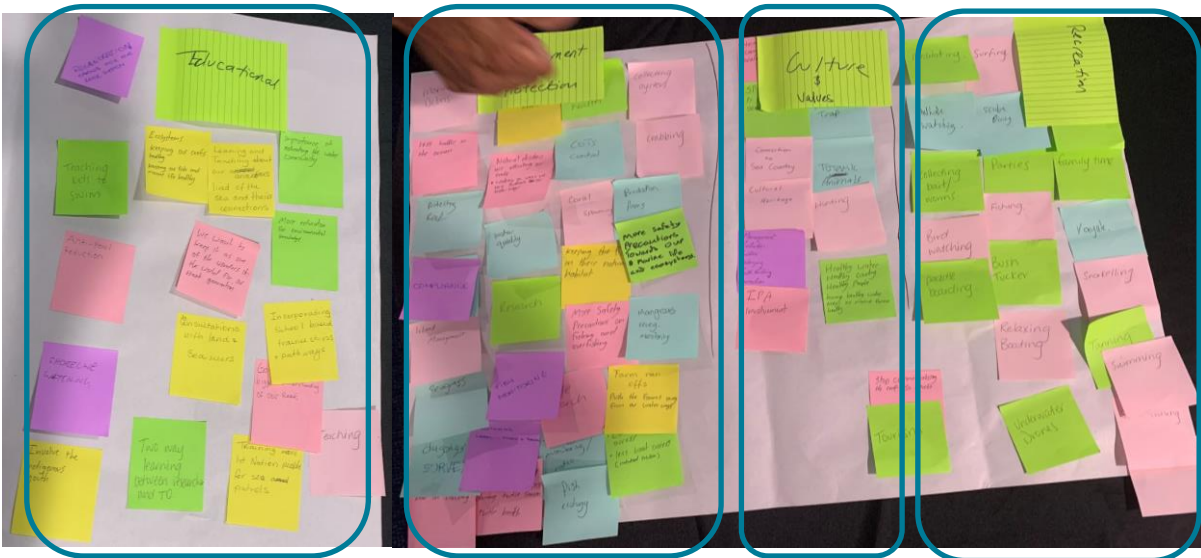


Figure 5: Sticky notes of values, activities and benefits of Sea Country, organised into four groups, each group representing a different theme: Management and protection, Culture and values, Recreation, and Educational



Figure 6: Workshop participants engaged in the task of grouping notes.

The participants chose to group the sticky notes into four different groups or themes: ‘Culture and values’, ‘Management and protection’, ‘Recreation’ and ‘Educational’. Each of these groupings is discussed in turn below.

Culture and values

The first grouping discussed was that representing the theme “Culture and values”. This grouping was initially named as “culture” but was extended during the discussions to reflect the inclusion of values as well. Dominant ideas in this group related to caring for Country in culturally appropriate ways, and the connections between healthy people and healthy Country that result from caring and protecting Country. This is illustrated in the comment made by one participant:

“ ... you connect to the sea, you connect to your people” [workshop participant]

“Hey, that we wanna keep it as one of those beautiful wonders for our children and their children” [workshop participant]

- Having time to connect to the water
- Spiritual connection to our galaxy and our ocean
- Connection to sea Country
- Cultural heritage
- Management, protection, culture, belonging, truth telling, connection
- IPA involvement
- Shell middens
- Fish trap
- Totemic animals
- Hunting
- Healthy water, healthy Country healthy people, having healthy water keeps our marine fauna healthy

Management and protection

The theme represented by the second grouping was “Management and protection”. Dominant ideas in this group related to the activities that are conducted to care for land and sea Country, thus there are links between these activities and the ‘Culture and values’ group. Monitoring activities were included within this grouping. Research and educating people about precautions needed to protect the environment were also considered management activities, indicating links between this grouping and the ‘Educational’ group¹.

- Marine debris
- Less traffic in the ocean
- Protecting reef
- Compliance
- Island management
- Seagrass
- Dugongs survey
- Stop the overfishing, ban the trawling
- Coral monitoring
- Coral health
- Natural disasters are affecting our reefs – working on ways we can sustain our waterways
- Water quality
- Research
- Fish monitoring
- Monitoring coral + turtle + dugong
- Turtle caring – no beach access during turtle season and turtle health
- Exercise mental health
- Crown of Thorns Star Fish (CoTS) control
- Coral spawning
- Keeping the fish in their natural habitat
- More safety precautions on fishing and over fishing
- Turtle research

¹ For example, Sea Country management related to anti-foul was discussed in both management and protection and education groupings.

- Turtle monitoring/rodeo
- Collecting oysters
- Crabbing
- Predation foxes
- More safety precautions towards our marine life and ecosystems
- Mangroves revegetation monitoring
- Farm run offs – push the farms away from our water ways
- Controlled beach access – less boat access (controlled pollution)
- Fish ecology
- Anit-foul reduction (for example, rangers working in coral remediation)

Discussion also focussed on included activities involving surveying and using drones.

There was much discussion around environmental issues in the region, including problems with the current management of the waters. Comments made by participants described the pollution, others referred to the specific industries causing the issues (note: tourism related issues are described as part of the third grouping below).

“Know what we don't want to have? Big boats, petrol fumes and stuff like that”
[workshop participant]

“You know, fishing overfishing here is too much” [workshop participant]

“all the farms affect us” [workshop participant]

“if we have to have fishing, it needs ... those tools and that those dirty things just ... should be banned from the Reef anyway” [workshop participant]

Recreation

The third grouping represented the theme “Recreation” which included tourism activities as well as traditional leisure activities. The grouping included:

“all natural sort of relaxation here” [workshop participant]

“family fishing, ... hunting, fishing” [workshop participant]

“the harmless recreational stuff, like sitting on the beach and not touching anything”
[workshop participant]

- Meditating
- Surfing
- Whale watching
- Scuba diving
- Parties
- Collecting bait / worms
- Bird watching
- Paddle boarding
- Bush tucker
- Fishing
- Relaxing
- Boating
- Underwater drones
- Camping
- Life guarding
- Sports and games
- Barbecues
- Family time
- Kayak
- Snorkelling
- Tanning
- Spear fishing
- Jet skiing
- Swimming

There were an additional two sticky notes which were considered to be related but also distinct from this theme and thought to be strongly related to each other. These were:

- Tourism
- Stop commercialising the reef so much.

As indicated by the ideas raised under 'Recreation' and these additional two concept, participants recognised tourism to bring both costs and benefits to the region's environment and people.

Educational

The fourth grouping represented the theme named "Educational". Dominant ideas discussed here included the need to educate others about the Reef and about how it should be used.

- Regeneration
- Caring for our river system
- Teaching kids to swim
- Anti-foul reduction
- Shoreline watching
- Involve the Indigenous youth
- Ecosystems, keeping our reefs healthy, keeping our fish and marine life healthy
- Learning and teaching about our ancestors, how they lived off the sea and their connections
- We want to keep it as one of the wonders of the world for our next generation
- Consultations with land and sea users
- Two-way learning between researchers and Traditional Owners
- Importance of educating the whiter community
- More education for environmental knowledge
- Incorporating school based traineeships and pathways
- Get a better and bigger understanding of our reef
- Training more First Nations people for sea patrols
- Teaching

As described by participants, there is a need for:

“educating the wider communities ... all about it” [workshop participant]

It was noted that the training and education flows between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, with each group learning from the other.

“They’re teaching us as well, so we teach them teaching” [workshop participant]

“Think two ways running between researchers and TOs” [workshop participant]

“We actually got a lot of research so we’re trying ... involving the Indigenous”
[workshop participant]

After the sticky notes had been organised into the four groupings, the participants considered whether some of the groupings or ideas were more or less important than others.

“Very. They’re all very important. Every little, every little word.” [workshop participant]

“Yeah, so managing ... is as important as going up recreation and enjoying, which is as important as ... sharing and learning ... Yes, so cultural.” [workshop participant]

However, when asked to consider whether the groups were all separate or related to each other, it was agreed that the group “culture and value” was central, with the other groups surrounding, interrelating and overlapping with this central group and with the other groups. That is, all the groupings are important, and all are underpinned by cultural values, practices and traditions. “it’s all cultural” [workshop participant]

“yeah, it’s everything, it’s that all” [workshop participant]

2.3 Workshop Session 2: Way of caring for Sea Country

2.3.1 Method

The second interactive activity held during the workshop focused on understanding the ways that Traditional Owners were caring for, nurturing or monitoring the values of their Sea Country. Participants were asked to talk about formal monitoring activities, and the partners they work with on these monitoring programs. The participants also talked about their data and monitoring aspirations, that is, what data they would like access to, and what they would like to do to monitor and protect Country if they had unlimited budget. Firstly, participants were requested to note their current or recent management and monitoring work on post-it notes. Secondly, participants were asked about the data collected in these monitoring programs. Finally, participants were asked about their future aspirations, with the question posed that if they had an unlimited budget to protect and monitor Country, what would they choose to do?

2.3.2 Summary of discussion

The notes on current or recent management and monitoring work revealed a number of different monitoring projects, focusing on different environmental indicators for both land and Sea Country, and involving working with a number of different organisations. The monitoring and management projects noted were as follows:

- Turtle data for Col Limpus DES threatened species
 - Told us it was about numbers, species, hatchlings,
- Marine debris – Tangaroa Blue
- Coral monitoring – GBR RC, Great Barrier Reef Report Card
- Junior ranger reports (they told us they have 16 rangers located between Bundaberg and Gladstone, 26 square km of Sea Country and 20,000 square km of land country.
- Traditional fires revegetation
- Weed management for Dept PMC
- Fox/pest management Nest to Ocean
- Water quality -> OGBR -> reef report cards

In addition to past and current activities, it was noted there are also new project coming up, such as the restoration action plan.

Given the number of different organisations mentioned when discussing monitoring, the participants were asked to list all of the different partners they currently work with. The full list of these partners for monitoring include:

- RRAP - Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program
- QPWS - Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
- Gladstone Marine Park
- Qld Boating and fisheries

- Burnett Mary Regional Group
- GBRMPA
- Various universities: Griffith, USC, CQU, UQ, Tropwater/JCU
- CMERC – Coastal Marine Ecosystem Research Centre
- Mangroves work with Tropwater/JCU
- AIMS – cultural exchange with Samoan Traditional Owners
- Various tourism partners: Lady Musgrave Tours, AB Marine Gladstone, Lady Elliott Island
- CSIRO – coral spawning work off Heron Island

When asked about the data collected in these monitoring programs, the participants revealed they would particularly like to be able to access the WQ data that they have been involved in collecting. They would like this to enable them to see change in their Sea Country as it happens; they explained how they want to get their Water Lab up and running, enabling them to be able to test salinity, Ph, dissolved oxygen, TSS, DIN, turbidity, and other nutrients in their Sea Country waters.

The participants future aspirations to protect and monitor Country, were as follows:

- Create a big, protected area – IPA – protecting coastal habitats, mangroves, oyster bed restoration
- Conflicts / contestations
 - Farming and BMP – riparian revegetation
 - Commercial use
 - Terrestrial – should have no fish zones in the rivers
 - Salty space – commercial use, fishing zones
- Access – a big issue on its own
 - Being able to access Sea Country from land – currently can't access from all places that they would like to
 - Cultural heritage sites
 - No access to some parts of river Country and Sea Country
- Compliance/regulatory function
 - They can provide eyes and ears (but not enforcement)
 - No regulatory function of their own

The aspirations for the future strongly linked to the four key themes emerging from earlier discussions. This reflected the importance of caring for and being able to connect with Country, and the challenges relating to the use of the land and Sea Country by the various industries (farming, tourism, fishing) operating within the region.

3 Conclusions, key insights, recommendations

There were four key themes that were chosen by the workshop participants to illustrate values of Sea Country. Whilst all important, 'Culture and values' were seen as central to the worldview of the workshop participants. These themes are shown in Figure 7.

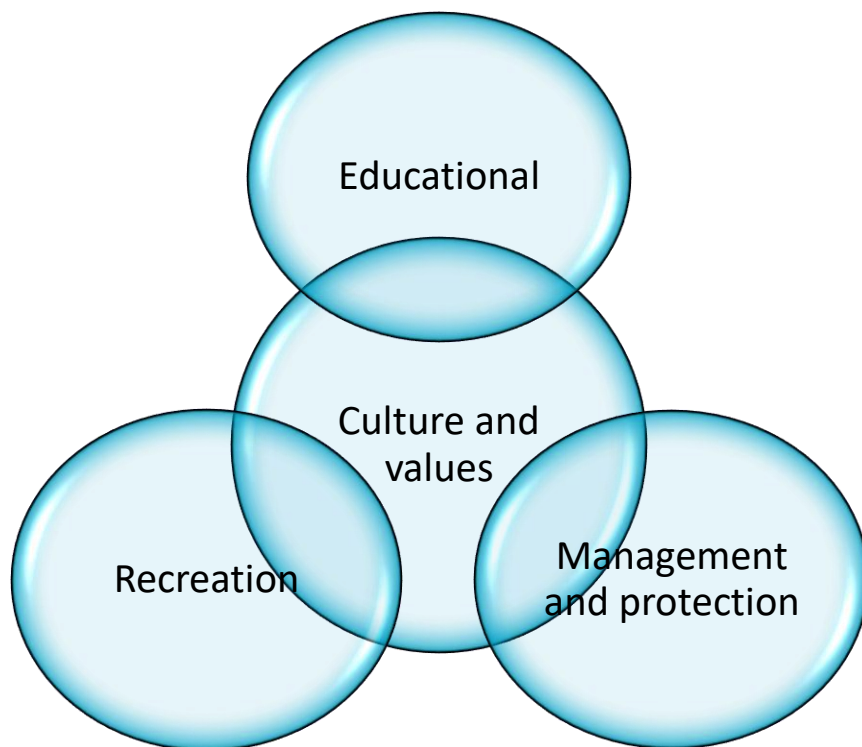


Figure 7: The four interconnected themes that emerged from the workshop discussions

Management of land and sea Country, which includes monitoring activities, and the educational and recreational activities that take place on that Country were all seen as vital components of their culture and important for caring for Country and ensuring the flow of benefits to the Traditional Custodians and owners of the region. Thus, each theme supports their culture and values which itself supports other themes with two way flows of services and benefits.

In a perfect world with an unlimited budget, the participants would create a large, protected area across their Country. This would enable them to enforce good environmental practices, and manage the tradeoffs and conflicts that arise between the different users of the region today (such as the tension between wanting less tourists/visitors to reduce damage to land and sea country whilst recognizing that without interest from tourists/visitors there would likely be reduced funding for protecting, monitoring and caring for the region). This solution would also help address the access barriers (created by farmers

and other commercial users of the region restricting access to land and sea country) that prevent the optimal use and benefits from the Reef and sea Country flowing to and being enjoyed by the Traditional Custodians and Owners of the region.

Overall, it is recommended that a sustainable two-way flow of benefits between land and Sea Country and the Traditional Owners be strengthened. This will nurture and support healthy people and healthy Country. To achieve this, Traditional Owners should be fully involved in all stages of decision making and management of their Country. This should be applied from initial consultation through to the implementation of monitoring and management (caring for Country) activities that take place on their Country and about their Country. Traditional Owners should be empowered to lead these activities, and furthermore they should have full access to the data that is collected by these activities on their Country.

4 References

Commonwealth of Australia. (2021). *Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan*. Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. Retrieved from <http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/our-work/reef-strategies/reef-2050>

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. (2019). *Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2019*. Retrieved from Townsville:

Appendix 1: Agenda

Agenda

Date: 2nd November 2023

Venue: 2 Marina Dr. Burnett Heads

Agenda item	Summary description	Presenters	Detail
Welcome 1:00 – 1.05 (~5 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome to Country Introductions 	Traditional Owner + Anthea Coggan, CSIRO	
Overview of the workshop and intro to the SEABORNE project, objectives (~5 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to the SEABORNE project Overview of the objectives of the project & workshop 	Anthea Coggan, CSIRO Diane Jarvis, JCU	
Looking after information - Ethics, privacy & consent (15 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethics, privacy, consent (recording the workshop) Sharing of workshop information, records, privacy, agreements, storage, use, attribution 	Diane Jarvis, JCU	Signed consent forms from all participants
Activity 1 13.30-14.15 (45 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to Activity 1 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion: Recognising PCCC Sea Country use and value What is important about caring for PCCC Sea Country? In what ways do you care for & monitor health of Sea Country? 	Facilitated by Anthea Coggan & Diane Jarvis	Facilitators will take notes on butcher's paper.
Activity 2 14.15- 15.00 (45 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to Activity 2 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion: What information is already collected to monitor health of Sea Country? How is information collected? Who is involved in monitoring? How does this benefit people-country? What existing information is publicly available/shareable? What else would you like to be measuring and monitoring? 	Facilitated by Anthea Coggan and Diane Jarvis, JCU	Facilitators will take notes on butchers' paper
Wrap up, next steps and reflections	Close at 15.15		Workshop reflection sheet



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