

Reef 2050 Wetlands Strategy

A strategy to manage wetlands in the Great Barrier Reef and its catchments

The *Reef 2050 Wetlands Strategy: A strategy for managing wetlands in the Great Barrier Reef and its catchments (Strategy)* provides the overarching direction for wetland science, planning, coordination and management in the Great Barrier Reef (Reef) and its catchments. It promotes an integrated approach among the many government and non-government organisations, Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country, landowners and managers, businesses and industries involved in wetland and catchment management activities. It draws on the strengths of the previous Wetlands in the Great Barrier Reef Catchments Management Strategy 2016-2021 and the *Queensland Wetlands Program*.

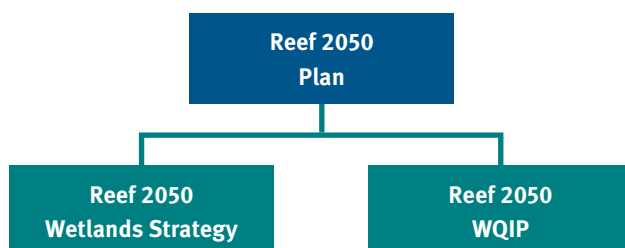
About the Strategy

The Reef is intimately connected to the adjacent Queensland landscapes. Reef catchment ecosystems play a critical role in maintaining the high biodiversity, aesthetic and cultural values of the Reef. This is particularly true for its wetlands which connect the Reef and its catchments. Some of the Reef itself is also a wetland. Wetlands play a significant role in capturing and processing pollutants from water flowing into the Reef lagoon, provide pathways for fish and other aquatic species to migrate and habitat for species, including birds and turtles. Wetlands are also valued by people for their livelihood, health, recreation and appreciation.

The Strategy supports the objectives and outcomes of the *Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan* (Reef 2050 Plan). Developing and implementing the Strategy is a key action under the Reef 2050 Plan (action 2.2) to increase effective land management practices with a focus on the values of wetlands and their catchments. It sits alongside the *Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan* (Reef 2050 WQIP) and helps drive progress towards the water quality targets.

The Strategy seeks to provide wider benefits to the environment and communities. It adopts a **whole-of-system, values-based** approach to wetland management which considers management at multiple scales, including the catchment scale, and the services and values wetlands provide. It recognises people as central to decision making and promotes management responses and practices that achieve multiple benefits.

The Strategy also assists in the implementation of many international, national, state and local policies and agreements. These include **international wetland** and **migratory bird** bilateral agreements.



Strategy structure and use

The Strategy identifies five broad themes with goals, objectives and activities to guide actions which will help achieve its vision and outcomes.

Theme 1	Improving wetlands information for decision making and action
Theme 2	Wetland planning
Theme 3	On-ground activities to protect, manage, rehabilitate, and restore wetlands
Theme 4	Engagement, education, communication and capacity building
Theme 5	Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement

The Strategy should be used to inform the development and implementation of operational and land use plans and programs, strategic planning documents, on-ground works and activities, research programs and projects and monitoring frameworks. Funding bodies should consider the Strategy when assessing proposals for projects that deliver multiple benefits including improved wetlands management.

How the Strategy was developed

The Strategy was developed collaboratively with stakeholders involved in activities related to wetlands in the Great Barrier Reef catchments. It was informed by recommendations from an independent review of the *Wetlands in the Great Barrier Reef Catchments Management Strategy 2016-2021*. Input was sought from Australian and Queensland governments, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, local governments, the Queensland Wetlands Governance Group, natural resource management groups, community groups, conservation and environment organisations, universities, scientists, the agricultural industry and ports representatives.

Independent advice was sought on Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country interests and activities. This included input from Reef Traditional Owner Steering Group members and Traditional Owner and Custodians of Country representatives.

Anticipated outcomes

The Strategy contributes towards the following outcomes:

- Wetlands that connect to the Reef lagoon are healthy, functioning ecosystems due to proactive and shared management, contributing to healthy landscapes, a sustainable economy and a healthy Reef.
- There is a community of well-connected landowners and managers across all Reef catchments, working consistently towards collective goals to protect, manage and improve the health of wetlands for the many intrinsic values and ecosystems they provide.
- Management is informed by integrated and available scientific, economic and cultural information.
- Traditional Owner knowledge informs management programs and on-ground activities, and cultural values are celebrated and managed respectfully.
- Information and knowledge informs the development of management tools and program, policy, legislation and investment decisions to ensure the wise use of resources and value for money.
- The community understand the benefits they receive from wetlands and supports wetland conservation and management.
- Improvements to the health of Reef catchments, wetlands and the quality of water entering the Reef.

Participants and reporting

This whole-of-government Strategy was developed by the Queensland Wetlands Program, which is overseen by the Queensland Wetlands Governance Group. The Queensland Wetlands Program is responsible for coordinating and reporting on its implementation.

The [Queensland Wetlands Program](#) supports projects and activities that result in long-term benefits to the sustainable management, wise use, and protection of wetlands in Queensland. The tools developed by the Program help wetlands landholders, managers and decision-makers in government and industry. The Queensland Wetlands Program is currently funded by the Queensland Government.

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