

FINAL

Reef Water Quality Protection Plan audit report 2010

FINAL REPORT

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Reef Water Quality Protection Plan Audit Report 2010

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

AGLC	Australian Government Land and Coasts
BMP	Best management practice – methods or techniques to achieve ongoing minimisation of an activity’s environmental harm through cost effective measures assessed against the measures currently used nationally and internationally
CAG	Coordination and Advisory Group, Paddock to Reef Integrated Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting Program
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
Delbessie Agreement	Queensland’s Rural Leasehold Land Strategy
DEEDI	Queensland Government, Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (includes the former Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries)
DERM	Queensland Government, Department of Environment and Resource Management (includes the former Department of Natural Resources and Water and Environmental Protection Agency)
DEWHA	Australian Government, Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (now the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities)
DIP	Queensland Government, Department of Infrastructure and Planning
DPC	Queensland Government, Department of the Premier and Cabinet
DSEWPaC	Australian Government, Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population, Arts and Community
ERMPs	environmental risk management plans

FBA	Fitzroy Basin Association – NRM body for the central Queensland region
FMS	farm management system
GBR	Great Barrier Reef
GBRMPA	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
GRASP	Goal, Resources, Action Plan, Support Group and Purpose
HowLeaky	A tool designed by the Agricultural Production Systems Research Unit for use in exploring the impact of land use on water quality and water balance
IOC	Intergovernmental Operational Committee
ISP	Independent Science Panel
JSIP	Joint Strategic Investment Panel
Land Management Agreement	Required under the Delbessie Agreement for all new and renewed state rural leasehold land leases; negotiated between the leaseholder and the Minister; documents land condition assessment and agreed measures to improve land condition.
LGAQ	Local Government Association of Queensland
MCA	multi-criteria analysis
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NRM	natural resource management
NQ Dry Tropics	NRM body for the dry tropics region
Paddock to Reef Program	An integrated monitoring, modelling and reporting program designed to measure and report on Reef Plan progress towards its goals and targets.
PC	Partnership Committee
QFF	Queensland Farmers Federation
Reef catchments	Drainage basins (catchments) adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef, from Cape York in the north, to Burnett-Mary in the south
Reef Catchments	NRM body for the Mackay Whitsunday region

Reefocus Summit	Held in October 2008, the forum sought stakeholder views on the revision of Reef Plan 2003
Reef Plan	Reef Water Quality Protection Plan, a joint initiative of the Australian and Queensland Governments
Reef Protection Package	A key component to the Queensland Government’s contribution to Reef Plan; includes Reef regulations to reduce the impact of agricultural activities on the quality of water entering the Great Barrier Reef and contribute to achieving the targets under Reef Plan, and extension and research activities to support the regulations.
Reef regulations	The <i>Great Barrier Reef Protection Amendment Act 2009 (Qld)</i> introduces regulations to improve the quality of water entering the Great Barrier Reef. It applies to sugarcane growing and cattle grazing properties in the Burdekin Dry Tropics, Wet Tropics and Mackay-Whitsunday catchments and is part of the Reef Protection Package, a key component of the Queensland Government commitment to Reef Plan.
Reef Rescue Program	A key component of the Australian Government’s Caring for our Country initiative, its main objective is to improve the water quality of the Great Barrier Reef by increasing the adoption of land management practices that reduce nutrient, pesticide and sediment run-off from agricultural land through a major investment of \$200 million for incentives over five years (2008-13).
R&D	research and development
R,D&I	research, development and innovation
Terrain NRM	NRM body for the Wet Tropics region
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of an independent Audit of the 2009 Reef Water Quality Protection Plan (Reef Plan). Reef Plan is a joint commitment of the Australian and Queensland governments and defines actions that aim to halt and reverse the decline in water quality flowing to the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) as a result of broad-scale agriculture. Originally established in 2003, the Plan was updated in 2009 and is a more concise, targeted plan of action to address the decline in water quality entering the GBR lagoon. A key feature of the 2009 Reef Plan is the improved accountability and smaller number of key actions to deliver on its goals.

In 2005, the first independent audit of Reef Plan (2003) to the Prime Minister and the Premier of Queensland was undertaken. Findings were published and a government response to the audit's recommendations was developed.

From October 2010 to January 2011, a second audit of Reef Plan was conducted on the revised (2009) version.

This report summarises the findings of the 2010 Audit, in particular, progress in implementation of Reef Plan with respect to:

- governance and oversight;
- program monitoring and reporting; and
- delivery of the Plan by Accountable agencies.

Additionally, this report presents findings regarding achievement of the recommendations from the 2005 Audit Report.

This report is based on an independent assessment of:

- the experience of representatives from Queensland and Australian governments, industry, NRM bodies and community groups in managing and participating in Reef Plan implementation as expressed through interview;
- information and reports provided to the Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Council, the Intergovernmental Operational Committee, the Partnership Committee and the Independent Science Panel as well as other documents produced as part of implementing and reporting on Reef Plan actions; and
- information and data on communications and consultation activities undertaken by government agencies, industry and NRM bodies with stakeholders and the wider community regarding Reef Plan.

Key Findings

1. Reef Plan continues to be a critically important and innovative approach to address the environmental challenge of protecting the health of the Great Barrier Reef.
2. Reef Plan 2009 was uniformly judged as an improvement on Reef Plan 2003. In particular, it had:
 - a more targeted and concise list of actions and deliverables;
 - greater clarity of accountabilities for lead and supporting organisations; and
 - significantly increased levels of resources for implementation.
3. The government-community-industry partnerships which are central to Reef Plan were found overall to be working well and supporting implementation. This was the result of long-term effort and processes to build constructive engagement with key partners.
4. The Australian Government's Reef Rescue program was found to be well received with high levels of support from NRM bodies and buy-in and uptake from industry at the peak and regional levels. The Queensland Government's Reef Protection Package, while experiencing strong resistance to the introduction of a regulatory approach from some stakeholders, has had good levels of industry compliance and growing levels of acceptance.
5. Progress in implementation of Reef Plan 2009 by all Accountable entities is clear. While not all Reef Plan actions with milestones due on or before 30 June 2010 had been achieved by that date, progress was evident and in several cases, deliverables have been subsequently completed. This is consistent with expectations for such a complex, partnership-focused initiative.
6. As at January 2011, of the 11 actions and associated 33¹ deliverables:
 - Twelve deliverables had been completed;
 - Progress of ten deliverables was considered to be on track to deliver or on-going;
 - Eight were progressing with, in some cases, delays or outstanding issues to be resolved; and
 - Three were not yet due.
7. Of the 21 deliverables due on or before 30 June 2010, 14 had been completed or were on track (with on-going components) and a further six were completed during the period of the Audit. The delayed delivery of some actions reflects the complexity of tasks and the time required to define the issues relevant to the practicalities of implementation.

¹ While acknowledging the complexity of deliverables under Action 10 Paddock to Reef Integrated Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting program, this has been treated as one deliverable for the purposes of this figure.

8. Governance arrangements of Reef Plan, including the Intergovernmental Operational Committee, Partnership Committee, Independent Science Panel and Reef Secretariat, were established and continuing to mature in their operations. Specific aspects that were identified as important included the independence of the Partnership Committee Chair and the greater engagement, on the whole, of industry and NRM bodies compared with Reef Plan 2003.
9. Commitment to achieving Reef Plan goals was evident from all organisations engaged in implementation and leadership was reported as present and continuing to emerge across the different spheres of Reef Plan.
10. Positive working relationships between key individuals were, on the whole, well established and this fostered and enabled communication and the resolution of critical issues that arose during implementation. Not unexpectedly for such a complex initiative, some aspects of communication were identified for improvement.
11. Acknowledging the significant advances since the commencement of Reef Plan 2009, the Auditors identified two additional areas of implementation that required attention and focused effort:
 - the extension initiatives require a much higher level of resources, attention and collaborative effort, akin to the collective effort provided to the Paddock to Reef Integrated Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting program; and
 - on-going efforts by Australian and Queensland governments to provide clarity around Reef Plan's scope and boundaries to address reported uncertainties, in particular the relationship with the Reef Rescue program delivered by the Australian Government in partnership with NRM bodies and industry.

1 INTRODUCTION

This draft Report presents the findings of the independent Audit of the 2009 Reef Water Quality Protection Plan (Reef Plan) implementation. The Audit has been undertaken by Lloyd Consulting and was commissioned by the Reef Secretariat in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC). The structure of this draft Report is as follows:

- Section 1:** provides background on Reef Plan and the 2005 Audit findings and outlines the terms of reference for the 2010 Audit and the DPC's objectives;
- Section 2:** presents the methods used in undertaking the Audit;
- Section 3:** provides details of the Audit findings regarding progress for each deliverable by accountable agencies, their engagement of supporters and any issues or impediments recorded;
- Section 4:** provides details of the Audit findings regarding governance and oversight;
- Section 5:** provides details of the Audit findings regarding program monitoring and reporting;
- Section 6:** provides details of achievements of the recommendations from the 2005 Audit report; and
- Section 7:** presents conclusions from the Audit.

A list of contributors to the Audit is included in **Appendix A**. A list of attendees at the joint Partnership Committee and ISP workshop on 10 December 2010 is provided in **Appendix B**.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 2003 Reef Plan

In 2003, the Australian and Queensland governments developed a Reef Water Quality Protection Plan (Reef Plan) to address the decline in water quality entering the Great Barrier Reef lagoon. The 2003 Reef Plan primarily built on existing government and community programs and activities and sought to encourage a more coordinated and cooperative approach to improving water quality.

A comprehensive review of the evidence available at the time, '*Summary Statement of the Reef Science Panel regarding water quality in and adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef*' was prepared by a taskforce of experts led by Dr Joe Baker. This report brought together a significant body of evidence showing a decline in water quality in the Great Barrier Reef.

1.1.2 2005 Audit findings

In 2005, following nearly two years of implementation of Reef Plan, an independent audit and report was undertaken for the Prime Minister and the Premier of Queensland by Howard Partners. This report provided an assessment of the progress achieved to date in implementing Reef Plan and identified challenges and potential future improvements. Three key points emerged and are summarised as:

1. Positive partnership arrangements between Australian and Queensland governments and with industry and NRM bodies had been developed;
2. Progress in delivery against milestones was consistent with expectations for such a complex engagement-focused initiative; and
3. The need for high level political support for Reef Plan.

The 2005 Audit Report made the following recommendations to both governments to ensure that Reef Plan would meet the original goals:

1. recommit to the ten-year timeframe for Reef Plan, recognising that long-term actions are required and that improvements in water quality will not be immediately obvious;
2. improve consultation and communication with key stakeholders and the wider community about the objectives, achievements and implementation processes of Reef Plan;
3. develop more effective partnerships with industry sectors, NRM bodies and the wider community in the implementation of Reef Plan;
4. identify in partnership with stakeholders those actions that are the key drivers to success of Reef Plan and give priority to those actions for investment and reporting;
5. update actions and milestones to incorporate new knowledge and scientific information and to reflect developments in policy;
6. improve monitoring of land condition and the uptake of sustainable land use practices; and
7. publicly launch the updated Reef Plan².

² Howard Partners (2005), Audit of the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan, p.4

1.1.3 Reef Plan review

In 2008, mid-way in Reef Plan's ten-year implementation timeframe, a review of the 2003 Summary Statement and where appropriate, more recent scientific evidence and knowledge was undertaken by a taskforce of scientists. The resulting Scientific Consensus Statement on Water Quality in the Great Barrier Reef concluded that water discharged from rivers to the Reef continued to be of poor quality in many locations and reaffirmed the evidence of a causal link between water quality and coastal and marine ecosystem health, concluding that existing management interventions were not effectively solving the problem.

Despite significant progress made in some areas, for example in the substantial work undertaken, particularly by the previous Reef Water Quality Partnership, Regional Implementation Group and Scientific Advisory Panel, information from partnership workshops and annual reports indicated that there remained an urgent need to improve the scale and speed of uptake of improved land management practices and their measurement in Reef-adjacent catchments to achieve the objectives of Reef Plan.

Significant collaborative effort led by the conservation sector, NRM bodies and later agricultural industry peak bodies was at the start of the call to increase efforts to protect the Reef. This call was subsequently picked up during the 2007 Federal election and resulted in the launch of Reef Rescue – a dedicated funding program for incentives, partnerships, monitoring and research in early 2008 as part of the Australian Government's Caring for our Country program.

The *Reefocus Summit* in October 2008, almost a year later was a pivotal event in the timeline of Reef Plan history. Presentations from State and Commonwealth Ministers, leading scientists and representatives from a range of sectors were given to a forum of participants from industry, NRM bodies, State and Australian agencies, local government, scientific sector and environment groups. The key message was a call for urgent action. The Queensland Government's position to develop regulations on agricultural activities was stated clearly at this forum for the first time.

Developed by a stakeholder working group which included industry, conservation and NRM body representatives to work with the Australian and Queensland governments, Reef Plan 2009 adopts a more strategic and adaptive approach, involving fewer actions (11 as opposed to the earlier 65), with a clear focus on outcomes underpinned by clear and measurable targets, improved systems for accountability and comprehensive monitoring, evaluation and reporting in order to measure progress. Reef Plan 2009 also incorporates and recognises industry and community initiatives and takes into account new policy and regulatory frameworks.

Reef Plan has two objectives: first, to reduce the load of pollutants from non-point sources in the water entering the Reef; and secondly, to rehabilitate and conserve areas of the Reef catchment that have a role in removing water-borne pollutants.

The Plan identifies three priority work areas and sets out specific actions and deliverables to be completed between September 2009 and 2013. Work is focused in the highest priority areas and Implementation Plans are to be developed for each work area.

Accountability is clearly specified with lead entities identified to drive implementation of actions, working with nominated 'supporters' to deliver outcomes.

Quantitative water quality and improved land management practice adoption targets, contributing to the achievement of desired outcomes, are to help measure progress in meeting Reef Plan's objectives, and thus its goals. The Paddock to Reef Integrated Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting Program is a significant component of the 2009 Reef Plan's approach to coordinate and enhance existing monitoring and reporting programs to provide a clear picture of progress toward Reef Plan targets. In its approach, the Paddock to Reef program acknowledges that adoption of improved management practices can be expected to be evident before actual improvements in water quality and utilises modelling tools to foreshadow likely improvements in water quality based on evidence of practice change.

1.2 Terms of reference

The objectives for the 2010 Audit were to independently assess progress in implementing Reef Plan 2009, specifically as it relates to:

- a. Governance and oversight;
- b. Program monitoring and reporting; and
- c. Delivery by Accountable agencies.

Further, the Audit was to assess achievement against the recommendations outlined on page 4 of the 2005 *Reef Water Quality Protection Plan 2005 Report to the Prime Minister and the Premier of Queensland*.

As stated in the project terms of reference, the Audit team was required to provide a draft and final report to the IOC which had:

- Considered the collective performance of Reef Plan Implementers, as well as their individual performance, for the period from September 2009 to present;
- Reported on progress in the implementation of each of the actions and deliverables outlined in Reef Plan 2009;
- Assessed for each Action and Deliverable whether the Accountable Implementers have engaged the Supporters;
- Specifically assessed and reported on the extent to which implementation of actions due on, or before, 30 June 2010 are complete;
- Identified any impediments to the successful implementation of the Plan;

- Reported on response to recommendations in the *Reef Water Quality Protection Plan 2005 Report to the Prime Minister and the Premier of Queensland*; and
- Informed the 2010 Evaluation Report to the Prime Minister and the Premier of Queensland.

2 METHODS

2.1 Progress in implementing Reef Plan 2009

The audit approach used multiple lines of evidence to review current progress against Reef Plan 2009. Qualitative and quantitative evidence was collated through two key activities including:

1. Structured interviews with targeted Reef Plan implementers to confirm progress in delivery, the operation of program monitoring and evaluation and appropriateness of oversight and governance; and
2. Review and analysis of key project and program documents.

In addition to the above activities, initial findings were presented to the joint meeting of the Partnership Committee and ISP and a workshop session discussed the potential limiting factors to the success of Reef Plan (see section 2.1.3).

2.1.1 Structured interviews

Fifty-one interviews took place, representing approximately 62 hours of interview time in total across the various implementation and stakeholder groups. The majority of interviews (30 of the 51) were held face-to-face with the remainder conducted by telephone. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in Brisbane, Canberra and Townsville. In addition to interviews, a small number of stakeholders responded to targeted, emailed questions to clarify or expand on specific points arising from the Audit's initial findings. Two individuals provided written responses and in three cases, informants who had received questionnaires responded by providing a telephone interview in relation to the specific questions. These are included in the interview numbers.

In all cases, appropriate protocols were established and agreed prior to commencing interviews to protect individuals' privacy and ensure that permission for interview was based on informed consent. Informants interviewed up until mid-November 2010 were given the opportunity to review notes taken by the Audit team following interviews.

At the start of the Audit, a number of interviews with key informants were conducted in the principal agencies with accountabilities for Reef Plan implementation in order to understand the approach and distribution of responsibilities across various organisations and programs.

At these interviews, the Audit team requested names of individuals with key responsibilities for implementation or other important perspectives so that these individuals or organisations could be approached for interview. In many cases, interviewees offered names of individuals who they felt could make important contributions to the Audit.

In general, key informants included senior managers and/or program managers from accountable agencies and supporter organisations. As a priority, key informants were drawn from the membership of the Partnership Committee, IOC and ISP. Where possible and feasible, informants also included others involved in specific aspects of Reef Plan 2009 implementation or with experience of previous implementation arrangements under Reef Plan 2003. Queensland Government officers, including policy, planning and operational staff, scientists and modellers, featured strongly in interviews as their departments are responsible for implementing 27 of the 33 deliverables.

Interviews assisted in identifying areas of progress in achieving outputs and milestones and were critical in determining details of oversight and governance arrangements established by the accountable agencies. In particular, an assessment of the quality and appropriateness of processes employed (transparency, responsiveness, accountability) were probed through the interview process.

Results from interviews were used to populate the Audit's results database which set out progress by accountable agencies against Reef Plan 2009 actions and deliverables and the assessment of governance and oversight arrangements and program monitoring and reporting.

2.1.2 Document review

The document review utilised information and reports provided to the Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Council, IOC, the Partnership Committee and ISP as well as others produced as part of implementing and reporting on Reef Plan actions. Hard copy and on-line publications were reviewed and assessed for relevance and alignment with Reef Plan actions.

Where particular deliverables have been achieved, the document review confirmed this, whether through single sources (such as 'annually report on the implementation of conservation agreements and covenants in high priority Reef catchments') or more dispersed information (such as 'Reef Plan objectives incorporated into existing statutory regional plans, planning policies and Coastal and Water Resource Management Plans by June 2010 and into new plans as they are developed') which required piecing together information from numerous sources.

These documents also confirmed the completion of Implementation Plans where they exist and detailed the arrangements for implementation of actions.

The review and analysis of performance reports against Implementation Plans provided an indication of progress against milestones, suggested reasons for delays or slow progress and identified where more targeted investigation was required through interviews or the workshop with the Partnership Committee and ISP.

Findings from the document review were used to populate the Audit's results database.

2.1.3 Limiting factor analysis

To assist in highlighting key impediments to the successful implementation of Reef Plan, a 'limiting factor analysis' was conducted against each deliverable. This analysis assessed whether current conditions were likely to prevent optimal achievement of Reef Plan objectives. This method³ brought together consideration of a number of aspects of institutional capacity; science; resourcing; and policy, legislation and regulations to better understand and manage the factors influencing the achievement of actions. This process also helped ensure the Audit's terms of reference were fully achieved in terms of 'identifying any impediments to success' of Reef Plan.

A joint workshop with the Partnership Committee and ISP was held on 10 December 2010. In preparation for this workshop, a discussion paper outlining the methods and suggested focus points was developed by the Audit team and circulated to members for their perusal prior to the workshop.

At the workshop, the Audit team presented an overview of the preliminary results and answered questions of clarification. Following the presentation, the Audit team facilitated an interactive, discussion session to gain input and clarity on the nature and relative importance of the factors in potentially lowering achievement levels.

2.2 Achievement of 2005 Audit recommendations

Overall, interviews and document reviews provided source information for reporting progress against the 2005 Reef Report recommendations. Recommendation 2: *'improve consultation and communication with key stakeholders and the wider community about the objectives, achievements and implementation processes of the Reef Plan'* however, required additional, targeted investigation, research and data collation to independently assess its achievement.

The Audit team undertook an assessment of the nature and quantity of communications material available to stakeholders and the wider community since 2005.

³ Based on Gullison and Hardner, 2009

The approach taken included:

1. A review of the results from the GBRMPA survey *Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority – Community Perceptions of Climate Change and the Effect on the Great Barrier Reef Survey 2010*⁴; and
2. Direct contact with organisations involved in Reef Plan implementation to determine the extent of communications material including websites traffic, production and circulation of fact sheets and newsletters, public displays, presentations at conferences.

To address point 2 above, the Audit team contacted a number of government departments and non-government organisations to document the extent and nature of community engagement activities. Further, websites were accessed to determine the availability and extent of information on-line. These included:

- Government departments – DPC, DERM, GBRMPA, DSEWPaC;
- Individual NRM bodies – Terrain NRM, NQ Dry Tropics, Reef Catchments, FBA, Burnett Mary Regional Group;
- Regional Groups Collective;
- Regional NRM;
- Industry groups – AgForce, Queensland Farmers Federation (QFF), Canegrowers Association, Queensland Dairy Organisation, Growcom;
- World Wildlife Fund;
- eWater; and
- Reef and Rainforest Research Centre.

Information that was obtained from the search includes the following parameters:

- Website traffic for Reef Plan at sites that have links to Reef Plan;
- Newsletters and fact sheets (including numbers and targeted demographic) that contain information regarding Reef Plan;
- Media releases relating to Reef Plan (limited to website information and not including news related corporations such as The Courier-Mail);
- Programs that have been implemented relating to Reef Plan; and
- Community and government involvement including field days, expos, conferences and educational activities.

⁴ The question of how to define ‘wider community’ for the purposes of the 2010 Audit was taken to the 29 October 2010 IOC meeting. At that meeting, it was recommended that the Audit team follow up with the GBRMPA representative regarding the recent community attitudes survey.

2.3 Limitations and assumptions

The 2010 Audit was conducted during the period mid-October 2010 to January 2011. As interviews were a critical source of information, the strength of the Audit Report was reliant in part on key people being available during this period. Overall, individuals contacted for interview readily made themselves available to the Audit team or suggested alternative names. However, personal contact was made with the representative of one accountable agency, the Department of Infrastructure and Planning (DIP) very late in the Audit process and as a result, limited time was available to make follow up contact with organisations related to DIP's business and deliverables. In particular, one supporter organisation, Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) was unable to be contacted during the Audit period. Two senior executives of the Australian Government were interviewed in January 2011 to assist in obtaining a stronger understanding of their views and complement the views already recorded.

As noted by many during the Audit, Reef Plan is a 'busy space'. As a result, changes occurred during the conduct of the Audit after contact was made with informants that might not be fully reflected in the results presented in this Report. Every attempt has been made to follow up events and identify outcomes and incorporate these into the results presented here, however, this might not have been comprehensive in all cases.

One specific aspect of the Audit – the assessment of improvements in communication and consultation with the wider community (2005 Audit recommendation) – was undertaken using surrogate data. No detailed assessment of the impact of communication activities or any structured process to assess stakeholder and community engagement by implementers was able to be undertaken during the Audit due to time and resourcing constraints. The findings presented here (refer section 6) could be augmented in future by a dedicated process to investigate the direct impact of communication activities on representatives of the wider community, rather than use the quantum and type of communications activities as a surrogate measure.

3 DELIVERY BY ACCOUNTABLE AGENCIES

3.1 Comparison with 2003 Reef Plan

The 2005 Audit of the 2003 Reef Plan was clear in reporting that a strength of Reef Plan was that it aimed to generate momentum in constructive engagement both across and outside government. The 2005 Audit's recommendation was to communicate this innovative aspect more widely across the two governments involved and between government, industry and civil society. Reef Plan 2009 was seen by many as having built on the strengths of the 2003 Reef Plan and 'made operational' the much-needed, cross-sector approach to engagement of stakeholders on water quality and Reef health matters.

From the outset, Reef Plan has been focused on making people aware of the significant threat to Reef health posed by declining water quality and the need to coordinate efforts to alleviate this threat. In general, Reef Plan 2003 was seen as a compilation of mainly government initiatives that were likely to contribute to improving water quality entering the Reef. While Reef Plan 2003 did succeed in raising awareness across some sectors, there was a lack of mechanisms and limited additional resourcing to support implementation. Initiatives with dedicated funding were reported as being well implemented, while unfunded ones were reported as lacking similar level of progress.

Both NRM bodies and industry groups noted that Reef Plan 2009 is far more relevant to them compared to the original 2003 Reef Plan. A significant increase in resources for implementation was acknowledged as a driver behind this, with dedicated funding and resources through Reef Rescue program and more recently, the Reef Protection Package.

In contrast to the 2003 Plan, there was a greater clarity of accountability in Reef Plan 2009 which represents a significant improvement. Reef Plan 2009 has a clear statement of desired outcomes which have clear and measurable targets. It designates key organisations with responsibility for actions as well as 'supporting' organisations to assist in implementation. Overall, under Reef Plan 2009, formalised governance arrangements were overseen by more effective and engaged committees, driven by motivated individuals.

Whereas Reef Plan 2003 looked at a wide range of activities which might have impacts for the Reef, Reef Plan 2009 identified three priority work areas logically sequenced and focused in the most critical catchments. A targeted approach which has seen a reduction from 65 to 11 actions was evident.

An administrative, ‘traffic light’ reporting process for tracking progress was used under Reef Plan 2003, but a comprehensive monitoring and reporting strategy was lacking. Quantitative targets in Reef Plan 2009 made it easier to assess progress and the oversight committees have been clear about what constitutes an adequate level of progress and reporting.

While many current structures, processes and relationships have been developed from lessons learned during Reef Plan 2003 (and arguably from other initiatives such as the SEQ Healthy Waterways), it was generally conceded that under Reef Plan 2003, whole-of-reef partnerships had become stalled in process. Despite good engagement processes underway, particularly through the Reef Water Quality Partnership Committee, Reef Plan was not progressing across the whole of the GBR. Thinking was reported as being focused at an individual region or industry basis. This has now changed, as evidenced through both the approach organisations have adopted, as well as reporting in relation to targets for the whole of GBR. The additional resourcing by both governments has had a strong positive influence. DPC has also taken a more active leadership role in implementation, conveying ownership and importance of actions and deliverables to all accountable agencies and supporters.





Another significant change reported from the previous Reef Plan was the level of coordination which has taken place within individual organisations’ operations in order to meet their implementation responsibilities. The complexity of this challenge, including sourcing specialist personnel, was evident in the different timelines organisations took to secure commitment and achieve internal coordination.

Despite significant advances since the commencement of Reef Plan 2009, there remained some confusion around its scope and boundaries in particular the relationship with the Reef Rescue program delivered by the Australian Government in partnership with NRM bodies and industry. Well-engaged participants have reported uncertainties about what is and what is not included in Reef Plan (see section 6.2 Improved communications).

3.2 Status of Reef Plan Actions


The following section summarises the progress of the Reef Plan actions and deliverables. Information presented has been sourced from interviews and documents including the 2010 Progress Report on implementation (October 2010). For each deliverable, a status rating and details of progress, engagement with supporters and any issues or impediments identified are noted.

The status ratings are:

-  Completed Deliverable has been completed
-  On track Progress is on track for delivery, or on-going
-  Satisfactory Progress has been delayed, issues may still need to be resolved but there is evidence of progress and delivery is likely
-  Not yet due Deliverable milestone has not yet been reached

3.2.1 Action 1

Develop, implement and maintain a Research, Development and Innovation (R,D&I) Strategy for agreed reef water quality priorities.

Deliverable: A three year R,D&I Strategy for agreed reef water quality priorities by September 2009	Status:  Completed
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Progress

The R,D&I Strategy was published in October 2010 and is available on the Reef Plan website. The Strategy establishes the process, criteria and consultation arrangements for identifying which knowledge gaps are most critical to fill in order to provide long-term solutions for declining water quality entering the Reef. This strategy advocates that end users of research, development and innovation, such as Reef managers, landholders, NRM bodies and conservation groups identified the most important questions to ensure that activities are focused on achieving practical results and outputs that can be widely adopted and supported. Providers of research, development and innovation will play a different, but equally important role in determining how those questions can best be answered by filling specific knowledge gaps. The focus of investment is strongly directed at solving the problem, rather than further defining it, in recognition of, and to build upon, the previous extensive work.


Guiding principles for the Strategy include a focus on end-user needs, synthesised information and knowledge across programs and data and findings shared to maximise return on investment, building partnerships and collaboration and promoting innovative management practices, research techniques and new technologies that can improve water quality.

Engagement with supporters

Supporters were well engaged through the development of the R,D&I Strategy, which was prepared in consultation with the Partnership Committee and endorsed by key government agencies through IOC.

Impediments/issues

An issue related to this deliverable, raised by the science community, has been the lack of access to relevant unpublished reports that can assist in avoiding duplication of work and studies already done and be readily available as a resource for those involved. A call for an information ‘hub’ to collect and store relevant material was proposed by some in the science community.

Deliverable: An updated R,D&I Plan by July each year	Status:  Satisfactory
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Progress

The 2010-11 R,D&I Plan was completed and is available on the Reef Plan website.

The 2010-11 Plan is intended to be used by the Australian and Queensland governments when making investment decisions regarding research, development and innovation related to Reef water quality improvement. The Plan has been designed to influence activities and guide partners, research and development providers and other potential investors in the priority areas for new work so that they can tailor their activities towards these priorities.

Engagement with supporters

The 2010-11 R,D&I Plan was developed in consultation with the ISP and the Partnership Committee, as well as the IOC.

Participants identified the top research priorities for 2010-11 from existing Reef water quality science research gaps and needs together with R&D knowledge gaps which needed to be filled for continual improvement of the Paddock to Reef Integrated Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting Program.


Impediments/issues

The process used to determine the priorities in the 2010-11 R,D&I Plan was reviewed by a joint meeting of ISP and the Partnership Committee in early December 2010 due to some dissatisfaction with the prioritisation procedure.

As a result, a number of potential options were proposed for improving the process in 2011-12 including wider canvassing of priority questions for Reef Plan, tighter description and justification of the key questions, serial ranking of questions against criteria of ‘importance’ and ‘urgency’ with increased discussion and explanation.

3.2.2 Action 2

Coordinate and integrate agreed R&D priorities into programs of work.

Deliverable: An evaluation report outlining the extent of uptake of R&D priorities by research providers by July each year	Status:  Not yet due
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Progress

The first evaluation is due to be undertaken by July 2011 and will evaluate uptake of the 2010-11 R,D&I priorities.


Impediments/issues

The evaluation of the uptake of R&D priorities may be somewhat complicated by the perception that there are two separate R&D plans for Reef: a Reef Plan R,D&I Strategy and a Reef Rescue R&D document. The Audit found a pervasive confusion over this issue amongst the stakeholders interviewed. In reality, the Australian Government prioritised Reef Plan research themes according to Reef Rescue investment objectives, primarily identifying and responding to the needs of land managers and other users of Reef water quality research to help them achieve Reef Rescue objectives.

Funding decisions for Reef Rescue R&D projects have now been made by the Australian Government Ministers. However, the delay has raised concerns as to whether sufficient time still remains for the results of research to inform Reef Rescue and in turn, Reef Plan initiatives.

3.2.3 Action 3

Prioritise and align investments for reef water quality based on catchment scale and reef-wide risk assessments of key pollutants and source areas.

Deliverable: Reef Rescue investment for 2009–2010 and onwards is delivered based on a multi-criteria analysis	Status:  Completed
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Progress

Regional investments under Reef Rescue in 2009-10 were informed by a multi-criteria analysis (MCA) to help prioritise Reef Rescue water quality grants to accelerate the uptake of improved agricultural land management practices.


For 2010-11 and future years, the MCA will build on the previous prioritisation process and identify any gaps where Reef Rescue funding may need to be targeted in future years.

Engagement with supporters

For each of the six reef NRM regions, this process examined the value of assets, magnitude and immediacy of threats and the feasibility and availability of effective solutions to address threats. The MCA process involved extensive engagement with reef scientists and other stakeholders.

Impediments/issues

Most interviewees believed the final process requires minor fine-tuning only.

Deliverable: The Queensland Integrated Waterway Monitoring Risk Assessment is used to inform cooperative agreements and other water quality monitoring activities for 2009–2010	Status:  Completed
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Progress

The risk assessment for prioritising integrated waterway monitoring in Queensland has been completed as part of a state-wide assessment. The two stage determination of relative risk from agricultural activities which may contribute diffuse pollution to deteriorating water quality in the Reef, undertaken through the Australian Centre for Tropical Freshwater Research, was more specific for Reef catchments. These reports are available on-line at:


- www.reefwise farming.qld.gov.au/pdf/actfr-stage-1-report.pdf
- www.reefwise farming.qld.gov.au/pdf/actfr-stage-2-report.pdf

Engagement with supporters

The risk assessment was undertaken in consultation with key Queensland Government agencies as well as GBRMPA.

Impediments/issues

None identified.

Deliverable: A prioritisation process to guide investment in future water quality initiatives (other than Caring for our Country) is agreed by September 2009 for funding 2009–2010 and beyond	Status:  Completed
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In December 2009, Queensland Government approved investment priorities for the ‘Q2 Coasts and Country’ funding program. The process involved the identification of priorities against existing government NRM policy drivers and the six key investment areas of biodiversity, wetlands, water quality, coastal risk, sustainable agriculture and weeds and pest management.

Engagement with supporters

DERM engaged with other Queensland Government agencies such as DEEDI and DPC as part of the development of the prioritisation process.

Impediments/issues

None identified.

Deliverable: A Reef Plan Investment Strategy is developed and implemented by September 2009 to coordinate investments across programs while acknowledging the different objectives of the various programs	Status:  Completed
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Progress

The Reef Plan Investment Strategy has been completed and is available on the Reef Plan web-site. The Strategy provides details on the level of investment committed to Reef Plan activities and how this investment contributes to Reef Plan goals and objectives, including incentive programs such as Reef Rescue, but also research, extension, education, monitoring, regulations and enforcement initiatives.

Engagement with supporters


The Investment Strategy was developed in consultation with the Partnership Committee and supporting government agencies through IOC.

Impediments/issues

None identified.

3.2.4 Action 4

Identify improved land management practices to maximise reef water quality improvements.

<p>Deliverable: Improved land management practices for high risk catchments are identified based on best available knowledge by September 2009</p>	<p>Status:</p>  <p>Completed. Some issues still being resolved</p>
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Progress

DEEDI, with input from industry groups and NRM bodies, compiled a detailed listing of all available programs (such as BMP/FMS) and tools to assist primary producers to implement and maximize the use of improved management practices. These programs were developed by government and industry based on best available knowledge.

However, the development and validation of improved management practices is also ongoing through Reef Rescue, the Reef Protection Package and through industry programs. The shift of responsibility in recent years for identifying, validating and promoting improved land management practices from State agencies to industry associations has significantly complicated the compilation of information, instigating further research and collaboration. Agreement on improved land management practices across the different industries had not been uniformly successful.


Engagement with supporters

DEEDI worked closely with stakeholders including industry bodies to compile the list of existing programs and practices.

Impediments/issues

Improvements in land management practices can be assessed against a range of environmental, social or economic criteria. The identification of programs containing key practices for improving water quality has proven a challenge for some industry sectors.

There is no agreed management practice standard for grazing and this has been an issue of contention for the industry.

Deliverable: Improved land management practices are revised based on new information and made available to all land managers by June 2010	Status:  Satisfactory. Some issues still being resolved
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Progress

Improved land management practices for maximising Reef water quality have been revised and verified for Horticulture and Sugarcane industries and improvements made available for incorporation into their respective industry’s BMP standards. A Grains BMP has also been developed.

In addition, regional industry working groups in the Reef catchments, in conjunction with their technical working groups, determine the appropriate parameters for Reef Rescue funding incentives for the adoption of improved land management practices and make this information available to land managers.


Engagement with supporters

DEEDI ran a series of workshops with industry and scientists to identify the key practices that have significant water quality benefits. This list of key practices will be used as the basis for future cost benefit analyses.

Development of a Grains BMP was a joint initiative between the regional growers, Fitzroy Basin Association (FBA), AgForce and Primary Industries within DEEDI. The BMP was also developed in partnership with a Grower’s Steering Committee.

Impediments/issues

At the time of the Audit, a BMP standard for grazing was still to be agreed.

Deliverable: Evaluate the actual costs and benefits of adopting improved land practices that have been identified and promoted to landholders by June 2011 and June 2013	Status:  Not yet due, but action progressing
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Progress

Although this deliverable was not due until mid-2011, the Audit enquired into progress given its close due date. Cost benefit studies and data collection were progressing.

Within DEEDI economic research was focused on determining the circumstances under which adoption of sustainable land management practices was profitable and the nature of the support that was likely to be most cost effective.

Engagement with supporters

DEEDI engaged with the Partnership Committee and IOC on initial project planning, but had not yet engaged on details of implementation.


Impediments/issues

The evaluation of costs and benefits is complicated by several factors: differences across industries and variations in production methods and conditions across regions; and inadequate monitoring of the outcomes of past and current investments.

Monitoring past and current investments would indicate whether the strategies used to restore land condition worked within the intended time frames and whether the land returned to its original state or stayed at some level of productivity below its original potential. This information is important to support the assumptions used in modelling and to determine the economics of land restoration. Trials under the Paddock to Reef program will need to compensate for the absence of evaluation of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of past investments.

3.2.5 Action 5

Implement improved land management practices that maximise reef water quality improvements as part of property level management systems.

<p>Deliverable: Landholders implement improved land management practices</p>	<p>Status:</p>  <p>Satisfactory</p>
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Progress

Landholders were implementing improved practices as a result of a number of drivers – with support from Reef Rescue funding, in order to comply with the Reef regulations or voluntarily.

The Reef Rescue program has been well subscribed and in most regions, there are waiting lists for subsequent years' funding.


Engagement with supporters

Industry (QFF, Canegrowers, Growcom and AgForce) are accountable for this action and have been engaged with governments in terms of implementing improved practices. Canegrowers who did not wish to be associated with the development of Reef Protection Regulations have however been well engaged in the Reef Rescue program. Notwithstanding this, compliance with the regulations in the cane industry has been reported as high.

Impediments/issues

Two issues were noted:

1. For land managers on the waiting lists for Reef Rescue funding, production constraints may affect their financial ability to participate when their turn arrives, as the program typically requires the recipient to contribute 50% of total project funds in cash or in-kind. This may have an impact on the continued uptake of Reef Rescue funding in the future.
2. The sugarcane industry has documented a large improvement in land management practices through uptake of its BMP as a result of improved technology. More recent data challenges the assessment of BMP uptake. Since the introduction of Reef Protection Regulations with nutrient management practices based on Canegrowers’ BMP ‘6 Easy Steps’, there has been a 19-fold increase in reports of soil testing, a requirement to satisfy the first two of the ‘6 Easy Steps’. This suggests that adoption of 6 Easy Steps may not have been as wide-spread as previously estimated.

<p>Deliverable: Report annually by industry sector on uptake of improved land management practices as part of industry-led property level management systems</p>	<p>Status:</p>  <p>Satisfactory. Some issues still being resolved</p>
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Progress

Reporting of practice adoption was led by industry with support from NRM bodies. Reporting by industry sector had been more difficult for some industries (sugar cane and grazing) than for others. Horticulture and grains, as smaller industries, had data on activities by members through their BMP/FMS systems respectively, but the broad industry base was less well captured. No figures for adoption of BMP existed for grazing at the time of the Audit.


Engagement with supporters

Industry (QFF, Canegrowers, Growcom and AgForce) are accountable for this action and have engaged primarily with the Australian Government, responsible for Reef Rescue, with whom they had contracts to deliver work, as well as with NRM bodies. Engagement with the Paddock to Reef Program (through the practice adoption program leader) has occurred more recently in regard to the need for the more detailed information required for modelling.

Impediments/issues

Three issues were noted:

1. Difficulties were encountered where data appropriate for Reef Rescue program reporting needs did not have the spatial detail needed for modelling water quality improvement for the Paddock to Reef Integrated Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting program. Additional data collection had to be negotiated.
2. It was clear to those stakeholders well-engaged in implementation, that the collection and collation of management practice adoption information required dedicated leadership. This was originally lacking but is now being addressed by the relevant government agencies.
3. There were also additional sensitivities and complexities, such as protecting individual property owners' data, determining who owns the data and the most compatible format in which to collect and store data.

Deliverable: Develop and implement a strategy to coordinate improvement of water quality management on public land in Reef catchments by December 2009	Status:  Completed
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Progress

The '*Strategy to coordinate improvement of water quality management on public land in reef catchments*' document undertook a review of land management strategies and relevant legislative instruments, identified water quality threats to the Reef and made recommendations for improvements to land management documents.

Initial progress was delayed due to the need to resolve the scope of the Strategy and as a result, the September 2009 deadline was not met, however, the Strategy is now completed and awaiting publication on the website.

Engagement with supporters


DERM is accountable for this action. The project engaged with a range of relevant stakeholders including DEEDI, Department of Defence and local government.

Impediments/issues

While some local governments were engaged, in particular those involved in the Reef Guardian Council program run by GBRMPA, many of the local governments in the Reef catchments were unable to participate in the study, and therefore assessment of land management strategies at the local scale was not able to be undertaken for these areas. As the outputs of this deliverable rely on voluntary uptake, the resources and capacity of some supporters, in particular some local governments, were found to be an impediment to full uptake.

3.2.6 Action 6

Provide coordinated education and extension services to landholders to assist with uptake of land management practices that maximise reef water quality improvement.

<p>Deliverable: Undertake education and extension services targeting water quality improvement on an ongoing basis</p>	<p>Status:  On track</p>
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Progress


Extension activities continue to be delivered by all providers, and, as discussed above (Action 4), work continues to determine improved land management practices for maximising benefits for Reef water quality.

Engagement with supporters

DEEDI is accountable for this action and continues to engage with industry, NRM bodies and DERM about ongoing extension services.

Impediments/issues

None identified.

<p>Deliverable: Review extension and education services with recommendations for improvement and resourcing by December 2009.</p> <p>Review recommendations and implement appropriate changes to the extension and education program by June 2010.</p>	<p>Status:</p>  <p>Completed</p>
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Progress

During 2009, DEEDI undertook a review of extension and education services. The review identified barriers to performance and identified real-time extension success in the adoption of current BMPs and innovative farming systems.


Outcomes of the extension review guided the development of the Education and Extension Strategy.

Engagement with supporters

DEEDI actively engaged a wide variety of stakeholders, including the Partnership Committee and government agencies, when undertaking the review.

Impediments/issues

None identified.

<p>Deliverable: Develop an education and extension strategy for coordination of activities across different programs and agencies by December 2009</p>	<p>Status:</p>  <p>Completed</p>
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Progress

The Education and Extension Strategy, developed in consultation with stakeholders, was published in October 2010 and made available on the Reef Plan website. The Strategy guides appropriate changes to extension and education programs and aims to reset the framework for extension and education to accelerate the adoption of best management practices that maximise Reef water quality improvements.

It addressed gaps in current reef-wide coordination and resourcing requirements and proposed a framework to strengthen existing relationships and service delivery networks.

A two year pilot program for the Strategy has commenced in the Herbert and upper Johnstone Rivers, with combined DEEDI and DERM funding. As the Strategy identified extensive needs but limited funding and qualified personnel, the pilot program will enable agencies to map out a system of coordination and support, bring together existing and new deliverers of extension and determine the most effective delivery mechanisms.

Engagement with supporters

The Education and Extension Strategy was developed through a collaborative process conducted throughout 2009, engaging the full range of stakeholders and recognising that NRM bodies, industry groups, Queensland Government agencies such as DERM and training organisations also have key roles in the delivery of education and extension services.


Impediments/issues

Given the extensive consultation during the development of the Strategy in its draft form, industry groups with interest, commitment and resources invested in their industry’s education and extension have voiced disappointment with the lack of communication in the transition of the draft Strategy into a pilot study without what they perceive as sufficient advice and consultation.

In December 2010, a joint meeting of the Partnership Committee and the ISP agreed that the Strategy needs as much focus, effort and rigour brought to its progress as the Paddock to Reef Integrated Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting Program has been given. This included a reconsideration of the resources available, capacity building needs and how to bring better integration across existing programs using available personnel.

3.2.7 Action 7

Review existing, and develop and implement new regulations and policies for improving reef water quality and the conservation and protection of wetland and riparian areas with emphasis on property level planning and action

<p>Deliverable: Implement the following new or amended regulations:</p> <p>Reef regulatory package to be developed by mid-2009 and implemented by 2010.</p>	<p>Status:</p>  <p>Completed</p>
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Progress

The *Great Barrier Reef Protection Amendment Act 2009 (Qld)* commenced on 1 January 2010. The prioritisation process involved in the development of Reef Regulations focused attention on the highest priority Reef catchments and identified the practices to target. Details are available and further information can be accessed from:

- www.reefwisefarming.qld.gov.au

Engagement with supporters

DERM is the accountable agency for this deliverable and engaged with industry groups, NRM bodies, World Wildlife Fund and other agencies (Queensland and Australian governments) during the preparation and implementation of the Reef Regulatory package. An Industry Implementation Taskforce as well as a stakeholder working group (all groups represented) were established to enable discussion and debate around issues arising from the draft regulations and the associated extension and research components.

While the consultation period was extremely short, about 5,000 people attended training workshops run in three catchments and 260 separate meetings.

Impediments/issues


The speed and timing of Reef Regulations was a concern to many who otherwise welcomed the regulations. Announced at the time of the *Reefocus Summit* (October 2008), some informants reported that they believed this stifled discussions at the forum, surprised allied government departments who believed they should have been forewarned, and in some organisations disrupted existing, hard won collaborative arrangements.

The regulations themselves created considerable angst amongst many producers, who felt their efforts to date to upgrade management practices were not being acknowledged. It was clear to many, however, that the rate and scale of change required to achieve the Reef Plan goals, which were to have commenced with Reef Plan 2003, were insufficient.

Amongst cane productivity service providers and independent consultants, there was some agreement that regulations have provided a tool to support their promotion of good practices. After the initial concerns largely subsided, growers have shifted from hostility and anger into a greater level of acceptance, seeing that there may be associated benefits for growers.

Introduced as a staggered process, with nutrient management from 1 January and Environmental Risk Management Plans (ERMPs) to be submitted by September 2010, some industry groups struggled to provide clear and definitive information to their constituents and some have delayed modifying their education and extension information until they are certain they can communicate the correct information.

The Audit found some anxiety and disappointment with the Queensland Government's uneven application of the regulations across industry groups. However, while many noted the negative impacts that resulted from the adoption of a regulatory approach by the Queensland Government to the level of Reef Plan support, those interviewees also reported that they believed this initial phase was coming to a close and that most were successfully 'moving through all that'.

<p>Deliverable: Implement the following new or amended regulations:</p> <p>Wetlands regulation implemented in priority areas by December 2009.</p>	<p>Status:</p>  <p>On track</p>
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Progress

The *Temporary State Planning Policy: Protecting Wetlands of High Ecological Significance in the Great Barrier Reef Catchments* commenced in April 2010 and will be in place for twelve months after which time consideration will be given as to whether it should be made permanent. The temporary State Planning Policy seeks to ensure that development in or adjacent to wetlands of high ecological significance in Great Barrier Reef catchments is planned, designed, constructed and operated to prevent the loss or degradation of wetlands and their values.


A draft State Planning Policy – to ensure ongoing protection of wetlands beyond the life of the temporary State Planning Policy – was prepared and released for public consultation on 10 December 2010. The draft State Planning Policy included the catchments covered by the temporary instrument as well as the southern GBR catchments in Wide Bay-Burnett region.

Engagement with supporters

DERM engaged with other Queensland agencies through its Interdepartmental Committee involving DEEDI, DIP, DPC and Treasury. Key stakeholders such as AgForce, Canegrowers, LGAQ, Urban Development Institute of Australia and World Wildlife Fund were also consulted throughout the process. Letters and fact sheets were also posted to all affected landholders with requests for submissions.

Impediments/issues

None identified.

<p>Deliverable: Implementation of Land Management Agreements commences by September 2009 in high priority Reef catchments where leases trigger the Delbessie Agreement requirements</p>	<p>Status:</p>  <p>On track</p>
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Progress

The Delbessie Agreement (also known as the State Rural Leasehold Land Strategy) is a framework of legislation, policies and guidelines supporting the environmentally sustainable, productive use of rural leasehold land for agribusiness.

Land management agreements are a negotiated agreement between the leaseholder and the Minister, that:

- identify and describe the natural and physical characteristics of the lease land;
- record the condition of the lease land at a point in time;
- contain agreed measures that will improve or maintain lease land in good condition;
- identify any land degradation issues;
- establish the management outcomes for any identified issues and agreed measures to address them;
- identify measures to protect known Indigenous and other cultural heritage values, and any identified significant environmental values; and
- establish a monitoring and reporting program.

Implementation of Land Management Agreements has commenced in all Reef catchments, with ten 'in principle approvals' and a further nine registered on title as a result of lease renewal. Delbessie Agreement requirements were reported as progressing as renewals come up. A further 80 leases were due for renewal between the Audit period and the end of 2013.

Engagement with supporters


Signed in December 2007 by the Queensland Government, AgForce Queensland and the Australian Rainforest Conservation Society at Delbessie, a property near Hughenden, the agreement is the product of more than a decade of review and negotiations.

In collaboration with key stakeholders, DERM developed a suite of practical measures to achieve sustainable land management, including guidelines for assessing rural leasehold land condition that build on the principles of the *Land Act 1994*, including the statutory duty of care and provisions relating to land degradation.

Impediments/issues

None identified.

The Audit noted reporting takes place across all Reef catchments, not just high priority catchments as specified in the deliverable of Reef Plan.

Deliverable: Annually report on the implementation of conservation agreements and covenants in high priority Reef catchments	Status:  On track
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Progress

Annual reporting on the implementation of conservation agreements and covenants in all Reef catchments has begun.


During the 2009-10 year, the number of Nature Refuges in Reef catchments increased by fifteen, increasing the area of Nature Refuges in Reef catchments by 209,616 ha. There were a total of 236 Nature Refuges within the Reef catchments, totalling 562,282 ha.

Engagement with supporters

Not required.

Impediments/issues

None identified.

Deliverable: Reef Plan objectives incorporated into existing statutory regional plans, planning policies and Coastal and Water Resource Management Plans by June 2010 and into new plans as they are developed	Status:  Satisfactory
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Progress

Reef Plan objectives are reflected in the Far North Queensland Regional Plan 2009–2031 and have been included in the Draft Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan which is currently out for public consultation.

The Draft State Planning Policy for Healthy Waters 2009 and the State Planning Policy Guideline for Healthy Waters were approved in October 2010 and will become effective from 28 February 2011. The State Planning Policy for Healthy Waters supports the objectives of Reef Plan by ensuring that stormwater and wastewater from developments are effectively managed to protect environmental values.

Sustainable management under the *Water Act 2000* requires that water be allocated for the wellbeing of the people of Queensland and the protection of the biological diversity and health of natural ecosystems, within limits that can be sustained indefinitely. Water resource plans that are out in draft form included those for Baffle Creek and the Fitzroy and Boyne Rivers, both of which were reported by DERM officers to have reflected Reef Plan objectives.

Engagement with supporters


DIP, the accountable agency, engages regularly with supporting agencies, providing advice to natural resource agencies and facilitating, where appropriate, implementation of Reef Plan objectives through the State’s planning and development system. The planning area of DIP regularly engages with LGAQ.

Impediments/issues

DIP has no forward program as yet for the development of statutory regional plans and as a result, incorporation of Reef Plan objectives will likely be opportunistic as new planning processes commence. It is also noted that there is a time lag between the incorporation of Reef Plan objectives into regional statutory plans and when they are reflected in local councils’ planning instruments.

3.2.8 Action 8

Develop, review and implement non-regulatory policies and incentives for improving reef water quality and the conservation and protection of wetland and riparian areas.

Deliverable: Reef Rescue investment strategies are updated annually	Status:  On track
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Progress

Regional investments under Reef Rescue have been reviewed on an annual basis in line with the prevailing Caring for our Country Business Plan and science-based investment prioritisation. In the first two years of the initiative (2008 – 2009 and 2009 – 2010), 1,480 land managers in priority areas received funding to deliver on-ground works to improve water quality over an area of 500,000 hectares. More than 2,000 land managers have received training in water quality management under the Reef Rescue program over this period.


Engagement with supporters

AGLC is the accountable agency for this deliverable and has engaged effectively with industry groups, NRM bodies and other agencies.

As the nature of threats and the feasibility and availability of effective solutions have changed, Reef Rescue investment strategies appropriate for each of the six reef NRM regions have been updated in collaboration with Reef Rescue operatives, the Australian Government’s Reef Rescue team and the CEO of each NRM body.

Impediments/issues

None identified.

Deliverable: Reef Rescue outcomes and targets met by June 2013 with annual reporting on progress	Status:  On track
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Progress


Reef Rescue projects are reported regularly against milestones and progress against targets by the NRM bodies.

Engagement with supporters

AGLC is the accountable agency for this deliverable and engaged with industry groups, NRM bodies in collecting and confirming progress against milestones and targets and prepared annual reports on progress which are available to JSIP and the IOC.

Impediments/issues

The direct reporting of progress to the Australian Government represented a change from the joint reporting arrangements under the 2003 Reef Plan and Natural Heritage Trust programs. The Audit encountered concerns about the perceived loss of formal mechanisms to inform the Queensland Government about Reef Rescue program outcomes. Reef Rescue reporting information is provided through the joint Paddock to Reef Integrated Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting project, although this appears to be poorly known or understood.

Deliverable: New cooperative agreement and NRM program for 2009–2013 agreed by September 2009	Status:  On track
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Progress

Projects funded under Reef Rescue in 2009-10 were jointly considered by the Australian and Queensland governments through JSIP. There are three mechanisms currently for funding disbursement:

1. Transitional Arrangement and Financial Agreement – this dealt with Q2 Coasts and Country funded projects including catchment-scale Paddock to Reef projects, all Caring for our Country Reef Rescue projects up to June 2010 and Caring for our Country base funding to NRM bodies.

2. Caring for our Country Head Funding Deed (Deed of Variation), which deals with the Reef Rescue-funded paddock-scale Paddock to Reef projects, received Ministerial endorsement on 23 November 2010.
3. Australian Government directly contracting with proponents.

Engagement with supporters


AGLC engaged with Queensland Government primarily through DERM in developing funding arrangements.

Impediments/issues

None identified.

3.2.9 Action 9

Develop and implement a Reef Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of the Reef Plan.

Deliverable: A Reef Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy is endorsed by September 2009	Status:  Completed
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Progress

The Reef Plan Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Strategy, first published in August 2010, is available on the web. It outlines the scope, principles and management questions for Reef Plan monitoring and evaluation, building on the agreed actions and deliverables in the 2009 Reef Plan. The M&E Strategy enables partners to evaluate and continuously improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Reef Plan implementation and report on progress towards the Reef Plan goals and objectives.


The M&E Strategy provides for measuring Reef Plan outcomes (monitoring water quality and Reef Plan targets) and for monitoring Reef Plan implementation (reporting on progress against Reef Plan actions).

Engagement with supporters

DPC engaged with other government agencies through IOC and with stakeholders through the Partnership Committee when developing the Strategy.

Impediments/issues

None identified.

Deliverable: Reef Plan targets are monitored, reported and reviewed annually	Status:  On track
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Progress


Monitoring was underway but reporting against targets will not commence until 2011.

Engagement with supporters

Monitoring coordination occurs through the Paddock to Reef Coordination and Advisory Group (CAG) which involves Queensland and Australian governments as well as external researchers and universities.

Impediments/issues

Significant effort to date has been needed to determine baseline information.

Deliverable: Reef Water Quality Report prepared to report annually on implementation of Reef Plan and water quality and associated ecosystem health	Status:  Not yet completed, progress satisfactory
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Progress

The First Report Card has been prepared and was being finalised in late 2010. It is expected to be released in early 2011. Establishing the baseline this first year has required a significant search for available data and a synthesis of the information available. From this data search, gaps have been identified and Paddock to Reef trials have been designed to address these information and knowledge gaps.

Subsequent Reef Water Quality Report Cards will report on changes brought about by incentives, regulations and/or voluntary uptake.


Engagement with supporters

DPC is the accountable agency and has engaged directly with a range of other agencies and organisations.

The First Report Card represents a significant collaborative effort, with individuals and organisations responsible for particular pieces of information, brought together to produce a comprehensive report.

Impediments/issues

Sourcing data on improved practice adoption from various industries has created significant delays. Despite delays in its preparation, the Report has been completed and submitted for endorsement by the relevant Ministers prior to its release in early 2011.

Deliverable: Independent audit and evaluation report undertaken by June 2010	Status:  Not yet completed, progress satisfactory
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Progress


The audit process was underway and is expected to be completed by early 2011.

Engagement with supporters

The Partnership Committee was involved in setting the Terms of Reference for the independent audit. Members of the Partnership Committee, IOC and ISP as well as others involved in the science and research areas and regional implementation have been engaged in the Audit investigations.

Impediments/issues

None identified.


Deliverable: Undertake further independent audits prior to June 2013 as necessary	Status:  Not yet due
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Progress

This deliverable is not yet due.

3.2.10 Action 10

Develop and implement an integrated and coordinated paddock to Reef monitoring (modelling) and reporting program as part of the Reef Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy

Deliverable: Integrated paddock to reef monitoring and reporting Program designed and implemented by September 2009	Status:  On track
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Progress

The Paddock to Reef Integrated Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting Program has been designed to measure Reef Plan outcomes and implementation is ongoing. The design framework, published in November 2009, involves monitoring and modelling a number of attributes at a range of scales including management practices, water quality at the paddock, at sub-catchment and catchment levels and in adjacent marine areas. This approach provides the ability to link the monitoring and modelling outputs at each scale and across scales to enable reporting against the Reef Plan goals and targets in the short to medium term.

Information about the program is available on the Reef Plan website.

Engagement with supporters


DPC engages with its supporters through the Paddock to Reef Coordination and Advisory Group (CAG) which involves key government agencies and research organisations. The CAG provides technical advice and coordination to ensure an integrated monitoring and modelling program.

Partnership Committee and the ISP are also involved in providing advice to IOC on the reporting framework and improvements over time.

Impediments/issues

Time-critical processes within the delivery of the Paddock to Reef Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting program, and the multi-scale information flows between regions, across themes and between disciplines make this collaborative task highly challenging. Additionally, it was acknowledged that conceptually, the program is a complex undertaking and involves chains of models linked together to build a whole-of-reef systems picture. Some science commentators have raised concerns regarding the possibility of unexpected errors and uncertainties from dynamic biophysical and socio-economic systems, with inherently long time scales and significant time lags. This continues to be discussed within the Paddock to Reef program officers and ISP.

The Paddock to Reef program is underpinned by the principle of continuous improvement. The program utilises best available science and information however a number of gaps exist in the program that can be improved over time. In November 2010, a workshop between Paddock to Reef operatives and the ISP reviewed the program. Overall, implementation of the program in the first year was seen to be successful despite challenges in establishing coordination and delivery arrangements. Areas that could benefit from improved coordination were identified and will be addressed in 2011.

<p>Deliverable: Integrated paddock to reef monitoring and reporting Program designed and implemented by September 2009 including the following components:</p> <p>Monitoring of uptake of improved management practices</p>	<p>Status:</p>  <p>Satisfactory, some issues still being resolved</p>
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Progress

One of the challenges being resolved at the time of the Audit included collection of management practice information for each industry and each region in order to determine the extent of real change in land management practices which lead to water quality improvement over time.

Practice change can occur in response to Reef Rescue incentives, Reef Regulations and voluntarily, with challenges for data collection accuracy and detail.


Engagement with supporters

Discussions have begun with NRM bodies on how to arrange confidentiality agreements with modellers. The appointment of a DEEDI program leader, dedicated to resolving data collection issues for management practice adoption, is expected to resolve current difficulties.

Impediments/issues

Challenges in collecting accurate and sufficiently detailed management practice adoption data in ways which do not violate producer anonymity vary across industries, being more straightforward for grains and horticulture, and variable by region and district for sugarcane. Improved methods for sugarcane and grazing were in the process of being resolved. Collecting data on voluntary adoption remains challenging regardless of the industry.

Additional challenges included linking the various scales of models from management practice change through catchment monitoring and modelling to marine monitoring with paddock-scale monitoring and modelling.

<p>Deliverable: Integrated paddock to reef monitoring and reporting Program designed and implemented by September 2009 including the following components:</p> <p>Paddock scale water quality monitoring and modelling to measure effectiveness of management practices</p>	<p>Status:</p>  <p>On track</p>
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Progress


Paddock scale monitoring and modelling provides information on the water quality changes related to specific management practices. Monitoring at the paddock scale is underway and ongoing through the NRM bodies. Paddock models such as Agricultural Production Systems Simulator, ‘HowLeaky’ and ‘GRASP’ are used to corroborate this information.

Engagement with supporters

NRM bodies are accountable for this action and engage with DPC and DERM in relation to monitoring requirements.

Impediments/issues

None identified.

<p>Deliverable: Integrated paddock to reef monitoring and reporting Program designed and implemented by September 2009 including the following components:</p> <p>Catchment and sub-catchment water quality and land condition monitoring and modelling program</p>	<p>Status:</p>  <p>On track</p>
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Progress


The objective of catchment monitoring and modelling activities is to improve the ability to measure water quality change at sub-catchment and end of catchment scales. Pollutant load monitoring is conducted at 27 sites across the Reef catchments in order to assess water quality entering the Reef lagoon from catchments, identify potential source areas of contaminants, and link to plot and paddock scale and receiving water monitoring and modelling. In addition to catchment load monitoring, catchment condition monitoring is being undertaken. Monitoring, modelling and remote sensing activities at the catchment scale are underway and ongoing as part of the Paddock to Reef Program.

Engagement with supporters

DERM engages regularly with other government agencies and researchers through the CAG in order to ensure integration with other parts of the monitoring program.

Impediments/issues

None identified.

<p>Deliverable: Integrated paddock to reef monitoring and reporting Program designed and implemented by September 2009 including the following components:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Wetland mapping</p>	<p>Status:</p>  <p>On track</p>
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Progress

Wetland mapping has been completed from 2001 to 2005 and an assessment of change in wetland extent incorporated into the First Report Card. Data from 2009 updates will inform next year’s Report. Reporting addresses the extent of wetlands; at this point, it was not possible to report on wetland condition.


A further update to the wetland mapping will be available from early-mid 2011.

Engagement with supporters

DERM engages regularly with other government agencies and researchers through the CAG in order to ensure integration with other parts of the monitoring program.

Impediments/issues

None identified.

<p>Deliverable: Integrated paddock to reef monitoring and reporting Program designed and implemented by September 2009 including the following components:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Marine water quality and ecosystem health monitoring and modelling</p>	<p>Status:</p>  <p>On track</p>
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Progress

Monitoring of marine water quality has been established for a number of years under GBRMPA’s program and continues under the Paddock to Reef program. Work on receiving water quality models for the Reef catchments is underway.

Engagement with supporters


GBRMPA engages regularly with other government agencies and researchers through the CAG in order to ensure integration with other parts of the monitoring program.

Impediments/issues

None identified.

3.2.11 Action 11

Improve data and information management to support data sharing, assessment and reporting.

<p>Deliverable: A scoping document on information management needs and a review of existing systems by September 2009</p>	<p>Status:  Completed</p>
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Progress


Initial scoping of data and information management needs has been undertaken and a detailed project proposal developed. The project, under development since October 2009, was approved by DERM in September 2010 and full funding committed.

Engagement with supporters

DERM undertook initial scoping in consultation with the ISP and the Partnership Committee.

Impediments/issues

Early delays have now been resolved.

<p>Deliverable: Improved information management system implemented by December 2009</p>	<p>Status:  Not yet completed. Progress satisfactory</p>
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Progress

Work on an information management system is underway in consultation with a large number of data custodians, such as GBRMPA who cover marine areas.

The information management system's purpose was to support Paddock to Reef reporting and to align and secure data capture. The system will preserve current models, their results and metadata so that when new information is available, the models can be used to extend results. Knowledge management, security, transparency and repeatability were identified as being important.

Engagement with supporters

Originally focused on DERM information, the database system for Reef Plan was to serve as a broader data repository. Acting on recommendations for a wider User Reference Group including industry groups such as CSIRO, sugar industry representatives, QFF, will ensure a whole of Reef initiative.

Impediments/issues

Two issues were noted:

1. Agreement on the scope of the project took a significant time and funding for the project to cover the amended scope also took time to secure
2. Recruiting appropriate specialist skills was also identified as a significant challenge.

4 GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT

4.1 Definition and rationale

Governance in a multi-stakeholder initiative is a primary means of maintaining oversight and accountability and relates to processes for consistent leadership, cohesive policies, processes and decision-making rights in various areas of responsibility. The Audit used contemporary concepts of governance as comprising a range of attributes such as commitment, leadership, clarity and transparency, accountability and responsiveness for assessment of Reef Plan governance.

Reef Plan 2009 identified particular responsibilities and designated entities to be accountable for coordinating implementation and reporting progress against each Deliverable. The accountable entity was responsible for driving implementation of the action and working with the identified Supporters to deliver outcomes. Appropriate structures, processes and relationships supported the various Government departments and non-government organisations to deliver on their allocated responsibilities.

4.2 Governance arrangements for Reef Plan 2009

The key decision-making body is the Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Council, which considers various sources of information related to Reef Plan implementation. The Reef Plan Heads of Agencies⁵ was established to oversee Reef Plan implementation at a strategic level and reports to Ministerial Council.

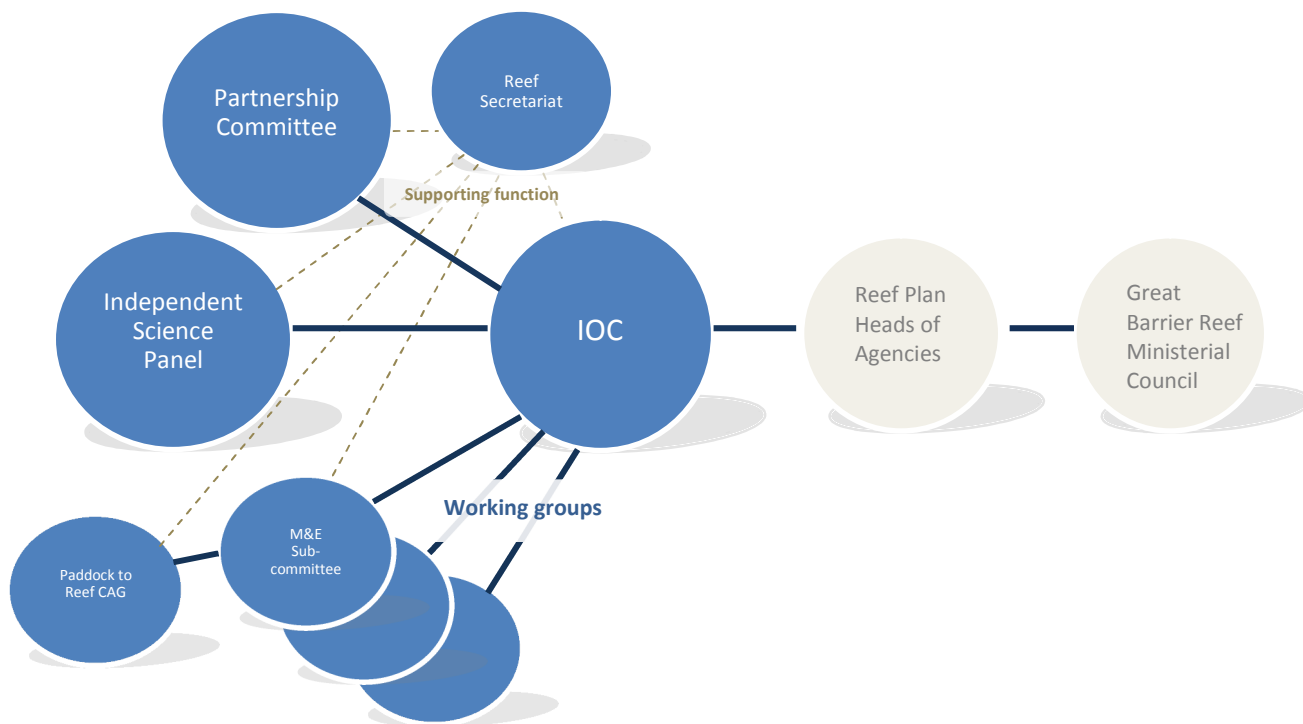
A number of committees have been established to ensure a coordinated approach, the appropriate commitment of resources and access to stakeholder and expert science views during implementation. These included IOC, the Partnership Committee and ISP. These committees are supported by the Reef Secretariat based in DPC. Other groups have been established to address the monitoring, evaluation and reporting roles and functions, including the Monitoring and Evaluation subcommittee of IOC and the various groups associated with the Paddock to Reef Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting program (such as the CAG and Program Leaders Group). Terms of reference and methods of operation have been established and described the responsibilities and relationships between these committees. Figure 1 depicts the key groups and their reporting and support relationships for Reef Plan 2009 implementation and strategic overview.

⁵ In practice, the Reef Plan Heads of Agencies have not met recently, although there have been indications that individual members wish to rectify this situation.

Agencies and organisations accountable for Reef Plan Actions report progress to these overseeing committees.

The Audit team looked at the structures (committees) established and the attributes and relationships which have been developed to deliver good governance.

Figure 1: Committee structure supporting the implementation of Reef Plan 2009



4.3 Structures

4.3.1 Partnership Committee

The Partnership Committee primarily consists of stakeholders from industry groups, conservation organisations, NRM bodies and government officials lead by an independent Chair. It oversees and drives implementation of Reef Plan by contributing to the development of implementation plans and monitoring appropriate progress against actions. The role of the Partnership Committee is to provide advice to IOC on the operational aspects of Reef Plan while the Chair can report directly to the Ministerial Council ensuring independence of stakeholder feedback.

Both the position and person of the independent Chair was acknowledged by all as a key strength of the Partnership Committee. The independent Chair’s direct line of communication to the Ministerial Council is considered by many to be important in the governance arrangements. The Partnership Committee is seen as an important source of energy in the Reef agenda, driving change that is needed.

Many stakeholder representatives have a long history of working together, including on Reef matters and this was generally seen as a strength of the arrangements.

The Partnership Committee is an important forum for engagement of industry, which was not previously well engaged under Reef Plan 2003.

Having only met since April 2010, the details of the Partnership Committee's role is still being negotiated and resolved as the committee develops and matures in these early phases of establishment. Some gaps in trust and respect around the table were reported, beyond what would ordinarily be expected in new associations given the history of working relationships with many engaged at Partnership Committee. A number of non-government members reported a perception that government was directing the agenda and expressed a desire for a more open agenda-setting process. It has been acknowledged that the hands-on involvement during the early, start-up phases of the groups may need to change as the groups mature.

4.3.2 Intergovernmental Operational Committee

The IOC comprises nominated senior officers from Queensland and Australian government departments and is the key decision-making body on operational matters⁶.

IOC members are senior representatives of their departments, which enables hard issues to be discussed and resolved. IOC is considered by its members as a constructive forum with transparent processes. However, IOC is perceived by some non-members as removed and not fully transparent.

Working across two levels of government that have different approaches and priorities for Reef Plan has presented challenges. This was reported as being addressed by members.

Not unexpectedly, the level of human resources available to each level of government differed as a result of preferred delivery methods and implementation responsibilities of the respective programs, with numbers of engaged Queensland Government personnel outweighing Australian Government personnel. This had implications for agenda setting, attendance and representation at meetings and the ability to keep fully informed of diverse aspects and details of planning and implementation.

⁶ In theory, IOC takes direction from and reports to the Reef Plan Heads of Agencies group, however the latter group has not met in recent times and so was not operational in the governance arrangements at the time of the Audit.

Together with a high rate of staff movement, multiple and competing responsibilities of AGLC and DEWHA (now DSEWPaC) representatives meant a variable and inconsistent representation at times by senior officers at forums such as IOC at the Co-Chair level. As a result, additional time had been spent understanding the other party's positions and operational approaches.

Across other agencies, DIP representation and attendance had also been irregular although this fact had not drawn particularly strong comment from other members. DIP see themselves as a 'support player' at the IOC table given that the major focus of Reef Plan is on NRM matters. In this regard, DIP considers itself as having a support role to the central and NRM agencies through the State's planning and development system.

4.3.3 Independent Science Panel

The ISP was established to provide independent and strategic scientific advice to IOC.

Headed by an independent Chair, the five-member panel encompasses relevant scientific expertise including agronomic and landscape processes; marine and freshwater biochemistry, ecology and modelling; resource management, water quality and ecosystem health target-setting and monitoring; information integration, synthesis, reporting and communication; and social and economic methodologies.

The ISP has a targeted focus and brings an important strategic perspective to Reef Plan implementation. A principal role is to review and provide comment on material on an 'as needs' basis to the IOC, or other sub-committees and working groups.

The ISP replaced the previous group of science advisors – the Scientific Advisory Panel. The former Panel, while representing expertise regarding every aspect of water quality management, was challenged by its large size. Under the previous advisory arrangements, there had been some concerns over potential conflicts of interest between its advisory roles and promotion of research interests.

The current arrangements with the ISP are generally considered to be more productive and to represent an improvement with the more realistic role of reviewing key material. To date, ISP's key focus has been on the 2010 RD&I Plan and the Paddock to Reef program. During the period of this Audit, the ISP had participated in joint meetings with the Paddock to Reef program operatives including the CAG (November 2010) and the Partnership Committee (December 2010), which satisfied an expressed concern for better integration with other committees. As the group has become established, there is a concern that the socio-economic research capacity requires further strengthening.

The ISP is the forum within the governance arrangements that is in a strong position to ask the 'big, unaskable' questions, such as critical questioning of core assumptions that underpin Reef Plan and associated initiatives.

Given the commitment to and focus on delivering the current, substantial number of actions and outputs, some resistance to diverting attention and considering these questions has been reported. Incorporation of reflection sessions within the work programs of the overseeing groups that allow for ‘big picture’ questions to be considered would address this concern.

4.3.4 Reef Secretariat

The Reef Secretariat, with responsibility to support the Reef Plan implementation committees, is a small efficient group that is seen as playing a critical role in coordination of governance and delivery. The Secretariat was acknowledged for taking a helpful, hands-on approach, rather than being at arm’s length to implementation. At the same time, this efficient and pro-active management of the meeting process welcomed at the beginning of committee formation has initiated some concern over ‘controlling’ the agenda as the committees mature.

4.3.5 IOC – Partnership Committee relationship and communication

There had been little or no direct interaction between the Partnership Committee and the IOC, with the exception of the participation of the ‘common members’. This limited interaction was reported by some as a degree of disconnection between the two committees. An improved process is now in place for communications, so that Partnership Committee meetings are reported to the IOC which in turn elicits a formal written response. A call for greater responsiveness and transparency from the IOC has been noted by IOC members. Trust in the communication and relationship between the two groups is still being built.

Partnership Committee and IOC have four common members – representatives from DERM, DEEDI, AGLC and GBRMPA – representing those organisations responsible for both strategic oversight and implementation roles. Early in the implementation, this led to some confusion over the common members’ responsibilities for communication across the committees, but this was reported as having been resolved.

4.4 Attributes

Modern governance strives to achieve a range of attributes such as commitment, leadership, clarity and transparency, accountability and responsiveness. Interviews with Reef Plan informants explored issues from a range of organisations including government departments, industry, NRM bodies and conservation organisations.

In general, the Audit found evidence of good governance practices supporting the implementation of Reef Plan. A description is provided below as to how well the existing arrangements are delivering against these desired attributes.

4.4.1 Commitment and buy-in

Government departments

Strong commitment and buy-in is evident from both levels of government. The Prime Minister and the Premier of Queensland have taken high profile positions in responding to Reef health issues and committed significant resources to delivering their programs and ensuring stakeholders are engaged.

Reef Plan 2009 is notable for the strong leadership and hands-on approach shown by DPC and the Reef Secretariat. Almost all government departments accountable for implementing Reef Plan actions have reorganised and reallocated resources in order to respond to their assigned responsibilities and established internal responsibilities, communication and reporting arrangements.

One exception was DIP, which considered itself only a supporting player with little mandate for, or core role in, natural resource or water quality management within its three main areas of responsibility of planning for growth management, local government and infrastructure development. DIP's role to date had been to ensure Reef Plan objectives were incorporated into statutory regional plans as they are developed through planning for growth management.

Across other Queensland departments, the challenges and timelines for reorganising and reallocating resources in order to respond to Reef Plan requirements has varied with many identifying times when appropriately skilled, specialist personnel have been in short supply.

DERM has the largest buy-in to Reef Plan with 39 full-time equivalents across 62 individuals involved across the State reflecting its core role in the Queensland Government for water quality and wetland management, policy, planning, operational and science matters.

External stakeholders reported recent machinery of government changes challenged earlier coordination efforts in a number of departments, particularly DEEDI. In addition, more than a decade of shifting responsibility for extension out of government meant that extension experience in current DEEDI staff was reported as being limited.

NRM bodies

NRM bodies are strongly committed to Reef Rescue and to the success of the Paddock to Reef program, attending design workshops and providing Reef Rescue related management practice adoption data together with output data to support Paddock to Reef modelling. Individuals within NRM bodies have contributed significantly to the intellectual underpinnings of these initiatives and continued to play an important role in the implementation phases.

Reef Plan in general and Reef Rescue program in particular have had a significant focusing impact for a number of NRM bodies. Regional groups are involved in delivering multiple NRM outcomes, including responsibilities for management practice adoption information. The result has been significantly increased work-loads, supported by additional funding.

While NRM bodies engage with a range of stakeholders over Reef Plan issues, they have established and embedded good working relationships with regional industry groups and growers/graziers in their catchments. They provide support to regional industry working groups and technical groups to support industry and adapt BMPs to local conditions and production methods and assist landholders to understand and apply for Reef Rescue funds.

Conservation organisations

WWF were a key party to catalysing ownership, engagement and involvement in Reef Plan and the original Reef Rescue proposal. WWF considers their role primarily in terms of program oversight, but also have an understanding of the technical content and participate in reviewing some of the more detailed aspects of implementation.

Industry organisations

In general, there was good but variable commitment from industry groups, primarily with a strong interest in the Reef Rescue program. Clearly, industry buy-in had shifted in recent years and there was significant acceptance amongst most groups about the need for action. Some industry groups saw Reef Rescue as a tool to allow their constituents to make management practice improvements that they would like to do but could otherwise not afford.

Despite the fact that Reef Rescue is part of the broader Reef Plan program, Reef Plan has not been as well embraced by some industry groups because of its strong association with the regulations. At the State level, some industry organisations were reluctant to be seen by their stakeholders to be supporting the introduction of regulations.

At the regional level, industry working groups in both sugarcane and grazing are particularly well engaged, working in partnership with NRM bodies and others to specify regionally appropriate improved management practices and recommend applications for funding through Reef Rescue.

Industry organisations have had to respond to a wide range of issues and policy agenda of government and often have limited numbers of personnel available to devote to Reef initiatives. Some representatives expressed concerns over their capacity to deliver in 'such a busy space' – such as the high number of meetings reported and associated travel for non-Brisbane based staff. As an example during the drafting of the Reef Protection Package, they provided feedback to the Queensland Government on their draft regulations, attended taskforce meetings, consulted on changes, liaised with their constituents, provided briefings on environmental issues and also the Reef Regulations themselves to their constituents. These activities were seen by some as diverting industry organisations from their principal roles.

Industry bodies varied greatly with their ability to provide extension and outreach and convey relevant information to their members.

4.4.2 Leadership

While judgements were mixed over whether a Reef Champion would increase adoption of improved management practices to benefit the Reef, significant leadership is present and emerging in different spheres of Reef Plan governance.

Most interviewees identified leaders from within their own organisations and sometimes more broadly who they believe are working to implement a vision of conservation of the Reef for future generations.

Some who were identified by others as leaders themselves credit the committed mix of individuals at the helm in other sectors for the success of their efforts.

Others raised the issue of leadership (and arguably success of the arrangements) as being closely linked with the individuals involved and the implications of that for the long-term nature of the arrangements should key people change roles or no longer be involved.

In some areas of implementation, insufficient leadership was proposed as the main barrier to moving beyond historically contentious issues.

4.4.3 Clarity and transparency

For many who were involved in Reef Plan, Reef Protection Package and Reef Rescue, roles under Reef Plan and timeframes and structures for reporting were clear. However, some expert stakeholders and industry peak bodies expressed confusion over the broader picture as to 'how it all works' under the umbrella of Reef Plan.

According to some informants, Reef Rescue as a Caring for our Country initiative, although conferring benefits for the Reef, is not interpreted as being part of Reef Plan. This is a point of contention and tension that exacerbates the lack of clarity of Reef Plan as a holistic approach to addressing Reef health issues.

By comparison with Reef Plan 2003, more time is spent doing and less in conferring; as a result some participants expressed a concern over their diminished awareness of progress in other Reef Plan activities in which they do not have a direct role.

Some industry participants reported that the staged roll out of the Reef regulations over 2010 had left them feeling unclear regarding the specifics details of the regulation's requirements and timeframes.

A minority, non-government view took the stance that implementation of Reef Plan should be led by an independent Commission; believing that as long as Reef Plan committees were convened by government, Reef issues will be subject to political imperatives and lack full transparency. The view was expressed that the proposed Commission should have an independent and science-based Board to coordinate the monitoring, prepare the annual Reef Health Report Card, set terms of reference for and hire and oversee the independent auditors.

4.4.4 Accountability

Accountable entities are generally clear about their responsibilities for delivering of actions, engaging with Supporting entities, meeting milestones and the required reporting mechanisms.

Industry groups and NRM bodies are also clear about what they are accountable for under Reef Rescue and the Reef Protection Package, primarily because of direct contractual arrangements.

4.4.5 Responsiveness and adaptive management

Overall, the players within the Reef agenda recognise they were working within an evolving and learning space.

A clear example is the central role of the Paddock to Reef Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting program. Participants were aware that this project is leading edge world-wide for such a complex mix of monitoring and modelling. As a result, adaptive management strategies are in place in each theme, and each group has time set aside for reflection and analysis to think about potential improvements (e.g. whole of program reflections at the November 2010 workshop).

Some of the early implementation results are challenging the ‘received wisdom’⁷ on established practices and changing ideas of management priorities. At the operational level, a more explicit effort to learn from monitoring data is recommended, echoing the concerns described in section 3.2.4, where inadequate monitoring of the outcomes of past investments prevents an accurate prediction of the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of current investments. It should be noted that cost effectiveness using a metric such as ‘dollars invested per tonne of sediment retained’ is not explicitly required by Reef Rescue as a criterion for prioritising investment, although from Year 2, NRM bodies are required to provide estimates of load reduction in their funding proposals. Where cost effectiveness has been applied as one of several criteria for prioritising funding, the attractiveness of projects under consideration has been significantly altered. As estimates of cost effectiveness of specific projects become more feasible and available funding grows tighter, a calculation of cost effectiveness would ensure the best use of available funds.

An adaptive approach is not unique to the science and knowledge components of Reef Plan. Industry partners and NRM bodies have demonstrated willingness to trial new approaches and assess for effectiveness.

Government partners have also shown a strong willingness to assess, evaluate and adapt governance arrangements and implementation approaches as the Reef Plan delivery and associated oversight committees mature.

4.5 Relationships

Implementing a program as multifaceted and complex as Reef Plan highlighted the need for strong systems for communication and collaboration. Section 6.2 discusses some of the new collaborative/partnership relationships that have developed since conduct of the 2005 Audit. This section briefly looks at some of the aspects of established systems for working together where it has been recognised that systems working well can improve delivery and their absence, can impede it.

While the Paddock to Reef Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting program explicitly seeks to connect activity at the paddock scale to impacts at the Reef receiving waters, some of the activities under other Actions of Reef Plan have tested communication and collaboration systems between sectors, levels of government, and geographic and administrative boundaries.

⁷- traditional; widely accepted as true or worthy; sum of conventional views on a topic; often used in the context of knowledge shared from one generation to the next in family-based rural enterprises

During this Audit, interviewees highlighted the difficulty in maintaining linkages between central and regional offices to ensure local intelligence was used to input into policy development or inform central office activities. This was equally significant for government departments as for industry groups.

Some informants noted experiences of poor information flows to on-ground areas and slippages in communication between central and regional offices regarding priorities and associated dedication of resources.

The engaged science community was clear that the multiple and intertwined science relationships could not possibly be formally coordinated because of their multiple linkages, but that they succeeded because people are dedicated to the program.

Outside the science community, relationships between levels of government had often been commented upon, although on-going maturing of the oversight arrangements and increased familiarity are thought to resolve these difficulties.

In addition, by comparison with other large collaborative NRM initiatives, some score the delivery of Reef Plan 2009 very highly in terms of collaboration and stakeholder engagement. In particular, Reef Plan represented a unique new way of doing business through strong partnerships with industry.

5 PROGRAM MONITORING AND REPORTING

5.1 Definition and rationale

Program monitoring and reporting enables partners to determine, evaluate and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Reef Plan implementation and report on progress towards Reef Plan goals and objectives. Program monitoring and reporting also provides the basis to evaluate and report on progress towards targets and to audit the effectiveness of delivery of funded actions. Well-functioning, user-friendly systems for program monitoring and reporting can be considered as tools of good governance.

5.2 General description of program monitoring and reporting

Reef Plan 2009 and the Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy set out the necessary reporting requirements. The latter builds on the agreed actions and deliverables within the 'Measuring Success' focus area of Reef Plan 2009. The Strategy includes two interrelated components: measuring Reef Plan outcomes, such as monitoring of water quality and Reef Plan targets; and monitoring Reef Plan implementation, that is, reporting on progress in delivery of actions and associated outputs.

Measuring Reef Plan outcomes, such as monitoring of water quality and Reef Plan targets, is the responsibility of the Paddock to Reef Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting program (refer Section 3.2.10)

Program monitoring and monitoring and evaluation of performance, including whether contracted actions or outputs have been met, is required under a range of government funded programs, against Reef Plan actions. This chapter reports on two aspects of program reporting which have arisen during the Audit: Reef Plan reporting systems and reporting Plan implementation progress.

5.3 Reef Plan reporting systems

5.3.1 Reporting arrangements

Overall, reporting against deliverables and milestones under Reef Plan 2009 has been improved with the greater clarity regarding responsibilities and timeframes compared with Reef Plan 2003.

Reporting has been streamlined for the Reef Rescue program as has industry reporting against milestones in the use of Reef Protection Package funds to support industry compliance.

There remain some sensitivities from an industry and NRM body perspective around sharing of information as part of the reporting arrangements, in particular the need to protect individual landholders' privacy of data which has been heightened with the introduction of the regulations.

For contracted Reef Rescue projects, NRM bodies regularly report against milestones and progress against targets to the Australian Government. This represents a change from the joint reporting arrangements under the 2003 Reef Plan and Natural Heritage Trust programs, which was underpinned by a Partnership Agreement. While streamlining reporting for Reef Rescue provides a number of clear benefits (efficiency, effectiveness), some interviewees interpreted the change as a loss of access to information and a lost opportunity for synergies in data collection. Agreements are now in place to ensure that information is provided through the Paddock to Reef Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting program to monitor overall performance.

5.3.2 Attribution

The Audit found an issue regarding the need of Accountable entities to be able to separate and attribute outcomes to different funding programs under the umbrella of Reef Plan. For some activities, differently funded activities were so intertwined in their implementation that accurate reporting against targets for each different funding source was highlighted by some to be problematic.

5.3.3 Use of reporting information at the local level

At the local level, there were issues around promoting an understanding of progress against Reef Plan deliverables. Some stakeholders reported a need to tell a more comprehensive story of successes and lessons learned in order to improve local ownership of Reef Plan. Regional industry groups were aware that figures are being collected by NRM bodies against Reef Rescue funding to document contributions to improved water quality as a result of projects undertaken, but in general had yet to access this information to inform their constituents. If not acted upon, this could be a lost opportunity to build greater awareness and ownership of a healthy Reef as a public good outcome from their activities.

5.4 Reporting Reef Plan implementation progress

This section should be read in conjunction with Section 3.1 Comparison with 2003 Reef Plan and Section 4.4.4 Accountability.

Reef Plan 2009 designates an Accountable organisation that is responsible for coordinating implementation and reporting progress against each Deliverable. It is that organisation's responsibility to drive implementation of the action and work with identified Supporters to deliver outcomes. The Partnership Committee oversees and drives implementation of the Reef Plan by contributing to the development of implementation plans and monitoring progress against actions. It is assisted in its implementation oversight role by the IOC and the ISP with support from the Reef Secretariat.

The Audit has found that progress has been reported regularly and reviewed and assessed using a traffic light designation of performance status. There is general agreement that the oversight committees have been diligent in carrying out their oversight responsibilities, clear about what constitutes an adequate level of progress and reporting, and willing to take steps to correct poor quality or inadequate performance.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2005 AUDIT REPORT

6.1 Introduction

The 2005 Audit Report made the following recommendations to both governments to ensure that Reef Plan would meet the original goals:

1. recommit to the ten-year timeframe for Reef Plan, recognising that long-term actions are required and that improvements in water quality will not be immediately obvious;
2. improve consultation and communication with key stakeholders and the wider community about the objectives, achievements and implementation processes of Reef Plan;
3. develop more effective partnerships with industry sectors, NRM bodies and the wider community in the implementation of Reef Plan;
4. identify in partnership with stakeholders those actions that are the key drivers to success of Reef Plan and give priority to those actions for investment and reporting;
5. update actions and milestones to incorporate new knowledge and scientific information and to reflect developments in policy;
6. improve monitoring of land condition and the uptake of sustainable land use practices; and
7. publicly launch the updated Reef Plan.

Since the release of the 2005 Audit Report, a number of significant events and changes have occurred in the Reef Plan arena including the review of Reef Plan and release of the 2009 version. This review and improvement process has addressed recommendations 1, 5 and 7 and in part, recommendations 2, 3 and 4.

An assessment of achievement for several of the remaining recommendations has been addressed as part of 2010 Audit of progress in Reef Plan 2009 implementation, specifically:

- improved communication and consultation with key stakeholders (refer sections 3.1, 4.5, 4.3.5);
- development of more effective partnerships with key stakeholders (refer sections 3.1, 4.3.1);
- identification in partnership with stakeholders those actions that are the key drivers of success of Reef Plan (refer section 3.2.3); and
- improved monitoring of land condition and the uptake of sustainable land use practices (refer sections 3.2.10 and 3.2.5).

However, achievement against improving communication and consultation and developing more effective partnerships with the wider community in recommendations 2 and 3 remain to be addressed. This aspect of the 2005 Audit Report recommendations was included as a separate consideration in the 2010 Audit investigations and findings are presented below.

6.2 Improved consultation, communication and partnerships with the wider community

Key points have emerged from interviews which were relevant to the assessment of this recommendation of the 2005 Audit. In particular, many noted the 'busy space' that Reef-related communications operates within and that while this is a challenge for those involved in Reef Plan operations, the wider community is largely disengaged and remain on the whole, poorly informed. Reef Plan is still thought by many to be a poorly recognised brand within the community.

There are some exceptions, notably GBRMPA's Reef Guardian program which continues to grow and strengthen communications with regional communities. Over the past five years, GBRMPA has engaged (and re-engaged more meaningfully) with schools and school children programs and more recently with local councils.

To address the general issue of communications, a Reef Plan Communications Strategy has been developed. While primary audiences target those organisations with a key implementation role, the wider community is included as a secondary audience and key messages for the community have been identified. As this Strategy has recently been completed, future communications will likely be improved.

Reef Plan communications approval process has been noted by one informant as being overly cumbersome under current arrangements requiring more levels of approval than previously. This affects the timeliness of communications with the general public around reef related issues.

There is an on-going issue regarding integration of communication messages, linked to the need for separate program 'badging'. This is of greater importance if the communications focus was on increasing awareness of Reef Plan as a product and arguably of lesser importance if the critical message is about governments and non-government groups working together to solve the problems facing the Reef.

A recent survey of community attitudes has been conducted by GBRMPA. The results of this survey were investigated for applicability to this Audit. The findings are summarised below.

6.2.1 Results from 2010 GBRMPA community attitudes survey

Colmar Brunton Social Research on behalf of GBRMPA undertook a survey, *Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority – Community Perceptions of Climate Change and the Effect on the Great Barrier Reef Survey 2010*, involving a total of 801 residents including Queensland coastal communities and three Southern capital cities. The Queensland coastal regions included Cape York, Far Northern, Northern, Central and Southern Queensland regions. The three Southern capital cities consisted of Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney.

A portion of the research was undertaken to develop an understanding of the communities' opinions of threats to the Great Barrier Reef and the changes in perceptions of the threats compared with data from the survey undertaken in 2007.

The 2010 survey found the following results:

- Respondents perceived that shipping and water pollution are the greatest threats to the Reef in 2010.
- A low number of coastal region respondents perceive that agriculture is a threat to the reef (4%), while that figure was higher for the southern capitals (16%).
- Since 2007, there has been a decrease in awareness that activities or issues at work impact on the Reef including the use of pesticides and fertilizers for both coastal region respondents and the southern capitals.
- All respondents perceived climate change to be less of a threat to the Reef when compared to 2007.
- The majority of all respondents agree that the community has a role to play in the protection of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.
- TV news is the most recognised and used source among survey participants, with newspapers and internet also frequently used sources.
- The respondents that are satisfied that the Great Barrier Reef is being protected compared with other natural areas at a global scale were 41% in coastal regions and 27% in the southern capitals.

The results of the survey indicate that the perception of risk to the Reef through farming including use of pesticides and fertilisers has decreased over the past three years. This may be due in part to the grounding of the coal carrier, ShenNeng 1 earlier in April 2010 which was topical in people's minds at the time of the survey. The major source of public information is television, in particular the evening news broadcasts. Results also identify that coastal communities are more satisfied that the Reef is being protected than those located in the southern capital cities.

6.2.2 Summary of available community information

An assessment was made of the publicly available information that the wider community could access regarding Reef Plan and Reef health issues.

There appeared to be numerous websites that contain information regarding Reef Plan and the Reef Rescue program. In general, most groups that post information and links to their websites related to reef health matters identified an increase in the generation and availability of material over the 2005-2010 period. Website traffic targeted at Reef Plan decreased significantly from 2005 to 2010 on the GBRMPA website, with a noticeable increase in interest in the websites of NRM bodies. The reasons for this decrease were not known, however, the increase in traffic to the NRM body websites was likely to be related to interest in funding opportunities through primarily the Reef Rescue program.

In addition, organisations reported numerous activities such as displays at regional shows, community exhibitions, public information days and school workshops. Most larger NRM bodies and industry groups had newsletters published monthly or quarterly with information regarding the Reef Rescue initiative, funding available, case studies as well as information on accessing funding.

6.2.3 Future reporting issues identified

Assessment of the success of the communications, consultation and partnership activities with the wider community has been difficult without a direct, randomised survey of individuals (from a nominated pool/geography) to gauge their levels of awareness. In this report, the Audit team has presented an assessment of the communication message output – quantity and nature – as it relates to Reef health issues as these were unable to be discerned from the more specific Reef Plan focus.

While the wider community may have had a greater array of information to access regarding Reef related matters, the amount of available information and the number of web hits do not necessarily translate to levels of awareness or support.

Some groups that were carrying relevant information were not set up to monitor or quantify the information that they have released to the public on specific topics.

Further, from an industry perspective, other emerging issues such as the advent of coal seam gas exploration appeared to be overshadowing information relating to Reef Plan. As a result of the shift in growers and graziers' concerns, the demand for information regarding Reef Plan may be affected in future years.

7 CONCLUSIONS

Overall, significant progress is reported in implementation of Reef Plan 2009. There was a general sense by those interviewed that a lot has already been achieved. People and organisations are positive, engaged in the process and committed to achieving Reef Plan goals. Important improvements, compared with the 2003 Reef Plan arrangements and implementation were noted, in particular greater availability of resources, higher level of clarity regarding tasks and accountability and advances in the whole-of-system monitoring and reporting. A responsive and adaptive management approach underpins the current Reef Plan arrangements, in recognition of the need to ‘learn from doing’ and in seeking continuous improvement.

Governance and oversight is progressing well and the Audit found that groups were established and settling into good working arrangements. Terms of reference and operating processes are in place and in some instances, are still being refined. There is recognition of the changing nature of the groups. In their early stages, there was a need for more support and guidance (from Reef Secretariat), however, now as they mature, they have become more self-directing. Also, the need to establish some additional communication linkages has emerged and these are underway with several examples. Significant leadership is present and emerging across the different spheres of Reef Plan governance.

For each of the groups, specific issues have emerged that were reported as needing to be addressed to maximise the effectiveness of the groups and the arrangements overall.

Within the IOC, the on-going challenge of working across two levels of government was raised. The implications of this issue were evident in the governance, reporting and communication spheres of Reef Plan. A high rate of staff movement as well as multiple and competing responsibilities of AGLC and DEWHA (now DSEWPaC) representatives meant a variable and inconsistent representation at times by senior officers at the Co-Chair level. As a result, additional time had been spent understanding the other party’s positions and operational approaches. On the whole, however, members reported the IOC to be a constructive forum, enabling representatives from the two levels of government to resolve difficult issues. Greater levels of transparency have been sought by non-members who perceive the IOC processes and decision-making as somewhat removed and not fully transparent. Additionally, on-going efforts by Australian and Queensland governments to provide clarity around Reef Plan’s scope and boundaries to address reported uncertainties, in particular the relationship with the Reef Rescue program delivered by the Australian Government in partnership with NRM bodies and industry is required. Collectively, these issues are understood and mechanisms to address them are being sought.

Within the Partnership Committee, the independent Chair (both the position and person) is acknowledged by all as a key strength of this group and its operations. The independent Chair's direct line of communication to the Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Council is considered by many to be an important feature for transparency. The Partnership Committee is an important forum for the engagement of industry groups which were not previously well engaged under Reef Plan 2003. Some gaps in trust and respect between members, and the role of the Partnership Committee are still being resolved. Due to the representation of a broad range of interests, the Partnership Committee is considered by many to be an important source of energy in the Reef agenda, driving the change that is needed.

The ISP, a five-strong panel with a targeted focus and strategic perspective, is considered to be operating well. Their role of reviewing key material is considered to be a more realistic one. Further strengthening of the socio-economic research capacities may be required in the future.

The ISP is the forum within the governance arrangements that is in a strong position to ask the 'big, unaskable' questions, such as critical questioning of core assumptions that underpin Reef Plan and associated initiatives. Incorporation of reflection sessions within the work programs of the overseeing groups that allow for 'big picture' questions to be considered would address this concern.

Reef Secretariat is a small, efficient group that plays a critical role in coordination and support for the governance and implementation processes. It has been acknowledged that the hands-on involvement during the early, start-up phases of the groups may need to change as the groups mature.

Overall, delivery of the 2009 Reef Plan has brought about a general shift from thinking at individual regions and industries to a 'whole of GBR' approach. All agencies have been required to reorganise and respond to the new arrangements and levels of commitment needed. While the speed and nature of the response has varied across agencies, all have now demonstrated the commitment and internal organisational arrangements to continue to deliver on their actions.

Some organisations with low numbers of staff dedicated to Reef Plan delivery have expressed concerns regarding capacity to respond and deliver in this 'busy space'. This was evident for both specific government agencies and non-government groups. Despite the challenges, industry has demonstrated a greater level of buy-in than previously, especially to Reef Rescue.

Communications within and between partners and with the wider community emerged as an issue. It has been acknowledged that given the size and complexity of Reef Plan activities, communications would need on-going attention to facilitate better sharing of information. Some specific actions have been identified for the future to address the key areas where this is believed to manifest, particularly at the Partnership Committee and with the Partnership Committee-IOC relations.

The 'limiting factors' discussion conducted at the workshop of the joint Partnership Committee and ISP meeting helped to analyse potential impediments to the full and successful implementation of the Plan. Delivery of extension services emerged as an important aspect of Reef Plan delivery that was causing concern and some participants in the workshop advocated (with general agreement) that this area of implementation required a much higher level of resources, attention and collaborative effort (akin to the collective effort provided to the Paddock to Reef Integrated Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting program).

APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B

JOINT WORKSHOP OF THE PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE
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