

IRRG STATEMENT

Quality assurance review of RRAP Intervention Risk Assessment for the Pilot Deployments Program

The Intervention Risk Review Group's quality assurance review of the Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program's (RRAP) *Intervention Risk Assessment of the base configuration of the Pilot Deployments Program* (ecological dimensions) has been completed. The IRRG found that application of the *RRAP Intervention Risk Assessment – Approach and methods* was done to a high standard, and the risk assessment and its findings are valid. The *RRAP Pilot Deployments Program 2025 – 2030* was found to pose a Low ecological risk to the environment and biodiversity values of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The IRRG concur with the detailed findings presented in the Assessment report and the overall low ecological risk profile for the

The Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program (RRAP) proposes to undertake a program of pilot deployments of new reef restoration actions (interventions). These interventions, when operationally deployed at scale, aim to help the Great Barrier Reef withstand and adapt to the effects of climate change. Pilot deployments of two of these reef intervention methods (Slick Collection and Release, and Conservation Aquaculture) are proposed in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (Marine Park) from 2025 to 2030. RRAP has undertaken a comprehensive Intervention Risk Assessment of the proposed activities in the Pilot Deployments Program 2025-2030 to identify and manage any potential negative risks of these intervention trials to Marine Park values. These activities are described in a defined 'base' configuration for the Pilot Deployments Program 2025-2030 and involve deployments at selected reefs in up to three regions of the Great Barrier Reef. This Intervention Risk Assessment has focused on the ecological dimensions of the Pilot Deployments while plans for the social, economic, cultural and heritage dimensions of the Pilot Deployments are finalised.

A quality assurance review of the *RRAP Intervention Risk Assessment of the Pilot Deployments Program* (Assessment Report) has been undertaken by the Intervention Risk Review Group (IRRG). The IRRG is an independent body established by the RRAP Board to assist it in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities in relation to the management of risks associated with interventions. The IRRG works under its own Terms of References with secretariat support from RRAP. Senior officers from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority attend meetings of the IRRG as observers to provide advice on their priority information needs on intervention risks and on the policy, regulatory and management setting for the Great Barrier Reef. Independent quality assurance of RRAP's Intervention Risk Assessment by the IRRG will provide decision makers with an informed assessment of the extent of risks associated with intervention deployment proposals.

The IRRG reviewed a) the application of the *RRAP Intervention Risk Assessment – Approach and methods* to the risk assessment of the defined base configuration activities of the *Pilot Deployments Program*, b) the procedures used for a few steps where alternative methods were used, and c) the validity of the detailed findings and the overall conclusions of that risk assessment process. IRRG discussed and provided feedback on the proposed interventions

with RRAP at each stage of the risk assessment process and completed an in-depth review of the Assessment Report.

The Assessment Report assessed the overall risk of the *Pilot Deployments Program* to the environment and biodiversity values of the Marine Park as Low. The IRRG concluded that the risks have been appropriately characterised and that the assessment of the overall ecological risk of the Pilot Deployments Program as being Low is valid, based on the design of the Pilot Deployments, the scientific knowledge base underpinning the proposals and the rigour of the Intervention Risk Assessment process conducted.

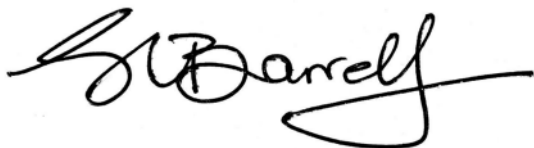
Through the application of the Intervention Risk Assessment and quality assurance review process, several elements of this 'Risk Review' process have been identified that could be improved upon, especially as future novel interventions and/or scaled up deployments are considered. These elements in no way affect the assessment of Low risk for the Pilot Deployments.

Importantly, members have noted the value of rigorous monitoring and reporting on the Pilot Deployments, to ensure that lessons learnt can be captured and reflected in future research and intervention deployment plans. The IRRG will conduct a quality assurance review on the Intervention Risk Assessment of the social, economic, cultural and heritage dimensions of the Pilot Deployments Program as that process is finalised.

In conclusion, IRRG's quality assurance review of the Assessment Report found that application of the *RRAP Intervention Risk Assessment – Approach and methods* was done to a high standard, and the overall risk assessment finding that the base configuration activities of the Pilot Deployments Program 2025 – 2030 have a Low ecological risk to the environment and biodiversity values of the Marine Park is valid. The IRRG concur with the detailed findings presented in the Assessment Report and have no further risk mitigation advice regarding the Pilot Deployments Program at this time.

Further information on the Intervention Risk Review Group (IRRG) is available [here](#).

Further information on the RRAP Pilot Deployments Program is available [here](#).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Barrell', with a stylized, flowing script.

Dr Sue Barrell AO FTSE, Intervention Risk Review Group Chair, 5 April 2025