



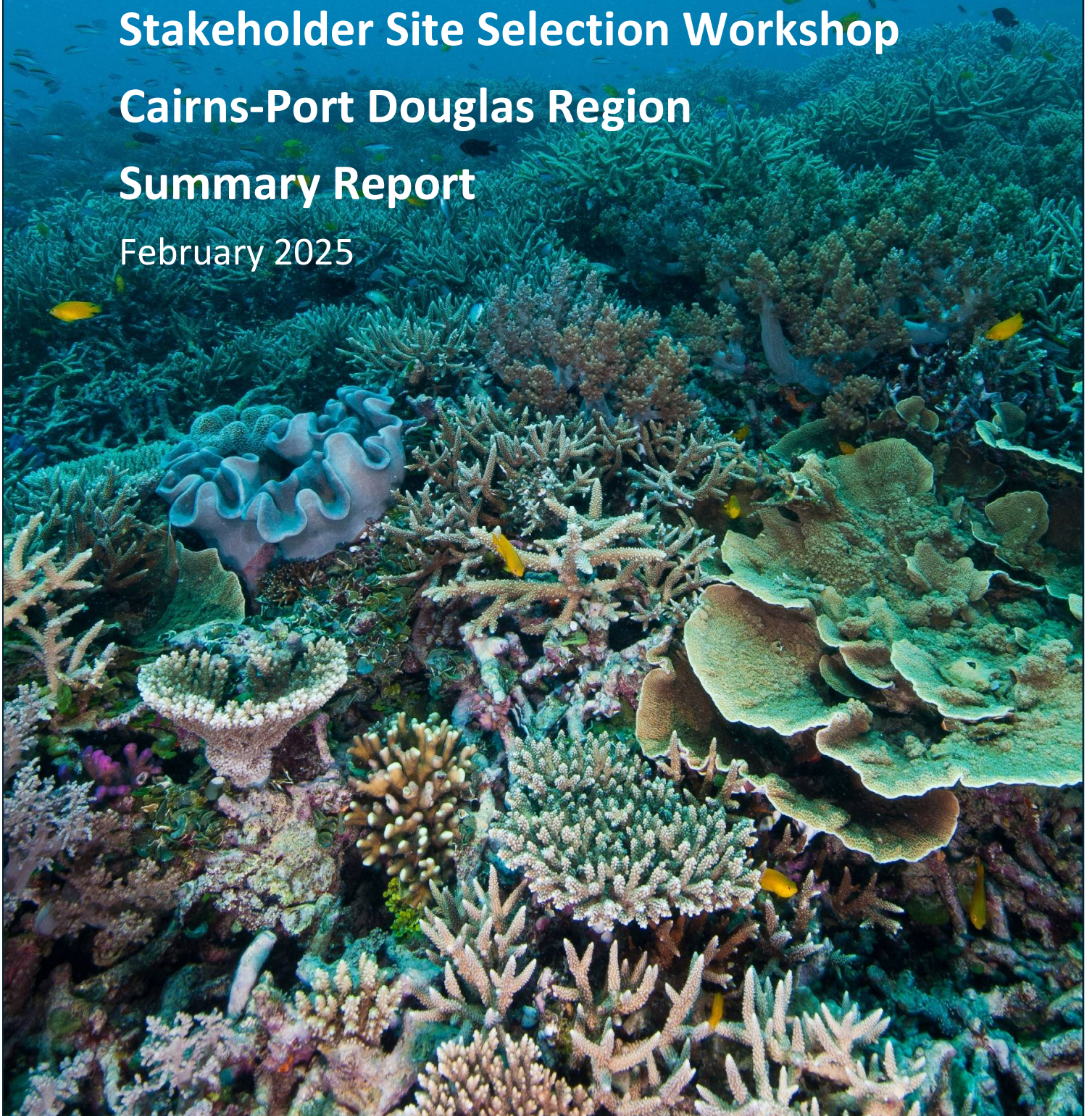
REEF  
RESTORATION  
& ADAPTATION  
PROGRAM

## Stakeholder Site Selection Workshop

### Cairns-Port Douglas Region

### Summary Report

February 2025



# Stakeholder Site Selection Workshop Cairns-Port Douglas Region - Summary Report

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Cover Images: Coral Reef, Credit: Gary Cranitch, Queensland Museum

## This report should be cited as

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## Acknowledgement

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The RRAP partners acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the first marine scientists and carers of Country. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the places where RRAP works, both on land and in sea Country. We pay our respects to elders; past, present, and future; and their continuing culture, knowledge, beliefs, and spiritual connections to land and sea Country.

The workshop was held at the Ideas lab, James Cook University, Cairns, Nguma-bada campus, on Yirrganydji country.

## Contributors to this report and the workshop

The following RRAP and PDP team members contributed to the design and/or delivery of the workshop: Bruce Taylor, Michael Marinovich, Jane Adcroft, Matt Curnock, Samantha Stone-Jovicich, Rana Dadpour, Takuya Iwanaga, Ben Moshirian, Stewart Lockie, Gillian Paxton, Mark Gibbs.

Thanks to Carolyn Roche, Abbi Scott and Katie Chartrand for assistance with engaging participants through the Cairns and Douglas LMACs and Cairn Port Douglas Reef Hub.

We gratefully acknowledge the workshop participants who generously gave up their time and shared their expertise and knowledge to collaborate on this important process.

## Use of this report

The information contained in this report does not represent the final outcomes of the decision-process on selection of sites for pilot deployment in the Cairns region. It is a record of the workshop process, and the information shared on the day by participants, as an important input into that decision process.

The report is intended mainly as a record for workshop participants but there are no restrictions to sharing the report.

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# 1 Background

## 1.1 Pilot deployments in the region

The mission of the Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program (RRAP) is to develop and test novel interventions and make those available to managers to help the Great Barrier Reef and other coral reefs survive in the decades ahead, as global warming is gradually arrested.

Pilot deployments of RRAP interventions, under the 2025-2030 Pilot Deployments Program (PDP), represent a critical step on the path to adoption and scaling of these solutions.

The Program allows us to trial and improve the feasibility, efficacy, cost, scalability, safety and acceptability of interventions - from planning to production, deployment and monitoring.

Through this integration of ecological and technological elements with governance and regulation, the Program aims to deliver a robust and credible model for future large-scale implementation.



In its first few years, the Pilot Deployments Program will focus on coral-centric interventions developed in RRAP's first phase: Conservation Aquaculture (CA) and Slick Collection and Release (SCR).

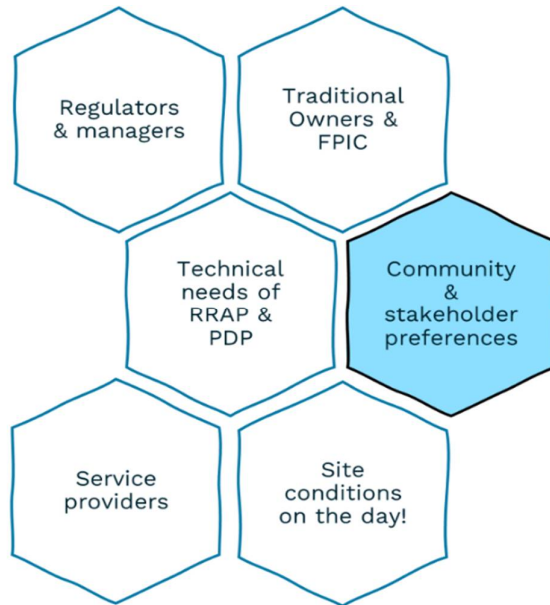
The Pilot Deployments Program aims to deploy over one million corals on devices with CA and SCR over its first three years, and three million corals with SCR, proposing:

- At a rate of 5 coral devices per square meter, the total deployment would cover an area of 35 hectares across the Great Barrier Reef
- For the Cairns region, around 378,000 devices would be deployed and Coral Slicks in pools released, equivalent to an area of 13 hectares
- In 2025/26, around 100,000 coral devices and coral larvae from SCR pools would be deployed across a few reefs offshore from the Cairns-Port Douglas region.

## 1.2 Selecting sites for pilot deployment

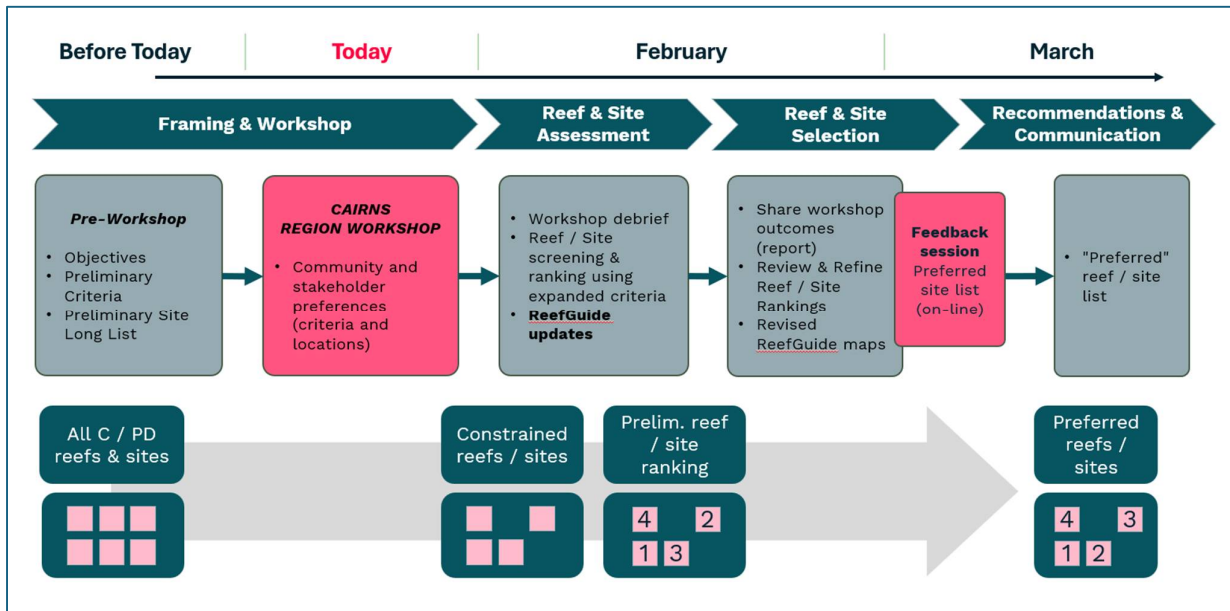
To help guide the workshop discussions, facilitators described that the workshop, seeking community input and preferences on potentially suitable or unsuitable sites, is one important input into a broader decision process that will also need to account for, the needs and rights of reef managers and regulators, Traditional Owners (TO) of sea Country in the region, the environmental and engineering requirements of the PDP, the interests of commercial service providers supporting deployment operations, and the on-water conditions at the time of deployment itself.

**Workshop scope:** Focus on stakeholder preferences as part of a broader decision process

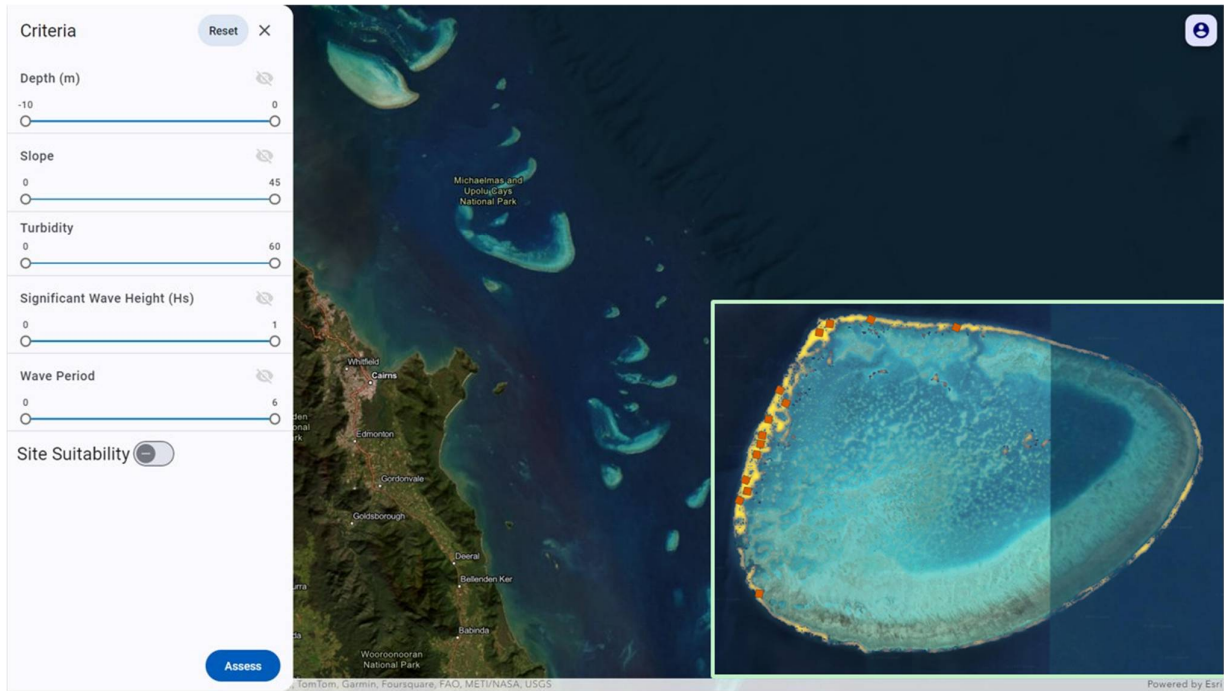


The decision process presented at the workshop, is summarised in the figure below. It follows typical steps used in structured decision-making and conservation management processes. This includes an initial scoping and framing (which included the workshop activities described in further detail below), followed by assessment, selection and recommendation phases. The output from stakeholders in the framing phase is a crucial component in the later phases, where stakeholder preferences (and constraints) are combined with other considerations. Once these additional considerations have been incorporated, a reduced list of reefs/sites considered suitable for deployment will be identified and shown to the workshop participants in an online briefing, followed by recommendations on the preferred reef / site list which will be taken forward into the PDP program.

**Slide from the workshop showing the Reef & Site Selection Decision Process**



The RRAP team also presented information about tools such as ReefGuide help identify suitable locations for Deployment, by layering relevant geospatial information such as depth, wave height, slope and other characteristics to feed into engagement and decision processes.



*Slide from the workshop showing the ReefGuide tool that is helping to identify suitable locations*

### 1.3 Purpose of the workshop

The site selection process presents an opportunity for RRAP researchers to seek input from stakeholders in region about where the intended work might happen, and what are some important factors in decision-making about selecting those locations. The overarching aim of the workshop process was to help identify reef locations that ‘work’ for regional stakeholders, and ‘work’ for the program. The workshop covered the following topics:

- Session 1: RRAP & Pilot Deployment teams provided **background information**, via presentations and fact sheets, on the reef intervention methods to be piloted, and, process and criteria for selecting reefs (sections 1.1 and 1.2 above)
- Session 2: Discuss and **identify other criteria or important considerations** that participants believed RRAP should take into account in decisions when selecting locations
- Session 3: Undertake a participatory group mapping exercise to **identify reefs or locations** considered suitable or unsuitable (would ‘work’ or ‘not work’) as sites for pilot deployment in the region
- Session 4: Review what the workshop had achieved and discuss **next steps** in the consultation and decision-making process.

### 1.4 Participants

Invitations to the workshop were distributed through key forums and networks in the region including the Cairns Port Douglas Reef Hub (via the Hub coordinators); the Cairns and Douglas Local Marine Advisory Committees (via the Reef Authority); and members of the Cairns Port Douglas Community Panel, formed by the RRAP Engagement Sub-program. The intent here was to engage groups or individuals with potential

interests in the pilot deployment program and site selection, but also with extensive personal or professional experience and knowledge of reefs in the region.

In total, 29 people participated with diverse backgrounds and experience including coral restoration practitioners and NGOs, dive club representatives, citizen science organizations, marine tourism business operators, charter boat operators, marine industry professionals, coral aquaculturalists, Indigenous sea rangers, sailing, kayaking, snorkeling interests, university and industry researchers and marine parks staff. A member of the Reef Authority attended in an observer and advisory capacity. Ten members of the RRAP and PDP teams were also present on the day from the Australian Institute of Marine Science, CSIRO, James Cook University and Adaptus. The RRAP and PDP team members provided background and technical presentations at the workshop and provided workshop facilitation.

### **1.5 Informed consent**

In addition to being a practical step in the broader decision process for site selection, the workshop is also part of research activities about stakeholder involvement in large scale reef restoration and adaptation conducted through the RRAP Engagement Sub-program. It has been approved (#215/24) by CSIRO's Social Science Human Research Ethics Committee in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2023).

The *Participant Information Sheet*, describing the research and the role of participants was circulated with the workshop invitation, and supplied on the day at the workshop. A copy is attached in Appendix B. At the start of the workshop, participants were reminded the process was part of a broader research exercise and were reminded that the workshop was not intending to gather information from participants that was personally, commercially or culturally sensitive.

# 2 Identifying considerations for selecting sites

## 2.1 What we did

The purpose of this session was to better understand participants perspectives on the critical considerations for selecting sites in the region for pilot deployment in the coming summer of 2025-25. To do this people were organised into five small discussion groups of 5-7 members with a facilitator, recording the discussion. Groups reflected on questions such as: *What makes a good site - why would we work at a reef or site?* (e.g. features, qualities, character, likely opportunities or benefits), and, *What's important to consider in the decision? Are there reasons we shouldn't work somewhere?* (e.g. risks to values at sites, methods not appropriate, poor accessibility, safety etc).

Time - 10.50-12.30

**Session 2:**  
**What's important when selecting sites?**


**Aim:**  
To hear a range of views on things important to consider when selecting locations

**How:**  
Small group discussions, report back

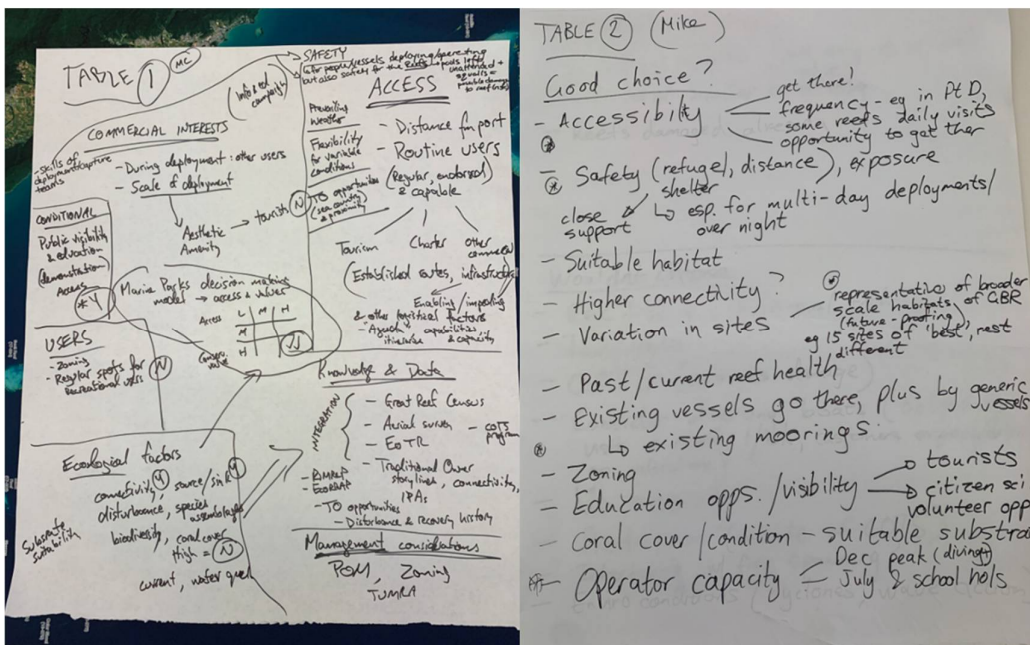
- What makes a good site/reef choice?
- Why wouldn't we choose a site/reef?
- Things that are important to know?
- Reasons to avoid places?

**Examples to get you thinking:**

- existing restoration projects
- tourism activity and infrastructure
- Citizen science opportunity
- Ease of access
- Special location (e.g. dive spot, local history)
- Commercial opportunity

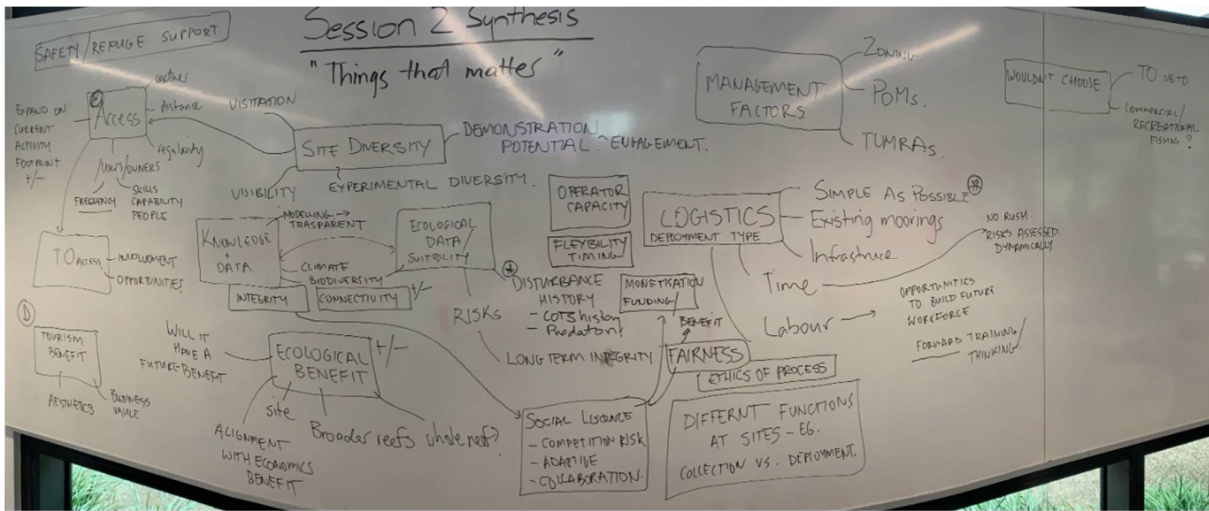

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**Session 2:**  
*Instruction slide for small group discussions*



Session 2: Examples of outputs from small group discussions

Each group then verbally reported back on their discussions to the room, describing major themes and connections between those themes. These were recorded and synthesised on the whiteboard (see image, below, *Things that matter*) during the report-back session.



*Things that matter: Real-time synthesis of small group feedback on considerations for site selection.*

## 2.2 Outputs

The primary output from the session was a working list of considerations, each coded with letters ‘A’ through ‘O’. These were captured in a slide (below) to be used as part of the following workshop *Session 3*. Developing a list of ‘themes’ or considerations is valuable for two reasons. Firstly, they provide an insight into the breadth of “things that matter” to participants for site selection decisions, and secondly, these can also serve as working ‘criteria’ or outcomes sought from the decision-process itself to complement the criteria identified by the RRAP technical teams.

THEMES TO GUIDE DECISIONS (WORKSHOP OUTPUT – Session 2)

<p>A. Past and current condition</p> <p>B. Site diversity (ecological / experimental)</p> <p>C. Potential ecological benefits +/-</p> <p>D. Likelihood of success</p> <p>E. Knowledge and Data</p> <p>F. Access (e.g. weather, distance, existing users/visitors)</p> <p>G. Supporting infrastructure and resources (e.g. moorings)</p> <p>H. Visibility and visitation (public), demonstration, aesthetics</p>	<p>I. TO Opportunities</p> <p>J. Industry opportunity / risks</p> <p>K. Collaboration potential (across operators, TOs)</p> <p>L. TO Right of veto</p> <p>M. Other users’ constraints e.g. fishing</p> <p>N. Management (zoning, TUMRA, POMs)</p> <p>O. Cost</p>
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*Output from session 2: Coded themes or considerations for use in mapping exercise*

The discussion also raised some considerations not directly related to site conditions or opportunities and more related to stage, maturity, timing and method of deployment proposed. Participants noted that their own assessments and RRAPs assessments of site suitability should also be influenced by:

- **Availability and sharing of data** and information from the Program to stakeholders on the effectiveness of the intervention methods themselves from recent trials, capacity building activities or other monitoring.
- Some sites may be more or less suitable or appropriate for pilot deployment depending on the **specific method** that was proposed for a given location (i.e. a given location may be suitable for coral aquaculture but not slick capture and release)
- The mix of considerations for site selection will **vary in time** from early stages (e.g. year 1) to later years of pilot program (e.g. years 4 or 5) as knowledge of efficacy and risk management improve. That is a site considered unsuitable in year 1 due to low information might become suitable later in the program roll-out.

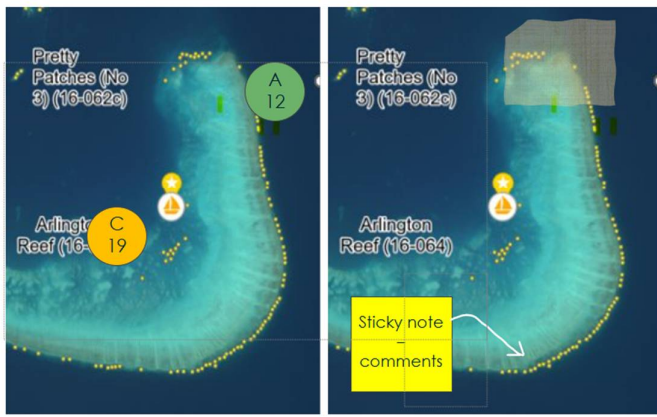
The full list of considerations captured during the session are attached in Appendix C.

# 3 Mapping site preferences and suitability

## 3.1 What we did

The purpose of this exercise in the workshop was to take the considerations identified in session 2, above, and apply these to a participatory group mapping exercise to identify actual locations on reefs in the region that are potentially suitable or unsuitable for pilot deployments. Again, participants formed 5 small groups (of different composition from previous session). Groups were supported/facilitated through the mapping with instructions at the start of the session (see below) and by group facilitators. General guidance provided to groups included (i) that agreement within groups on suitability of locations was not required (ii) identifying more locations (than fewer) was preferable to provide options for deployment (iii) sensitive information was not sought in this exercise but could be shared subsequently with the research team confidentially. After the exercise groups shared and discussed their maps with the other groups.

Session 3: Examples of working on the maps OR table



Reef or location name	Reason to select or not select	ID
Pretty patches (no 3)	Dive location, scenic beauty – avoid	6
Arlington	Good access, education	24



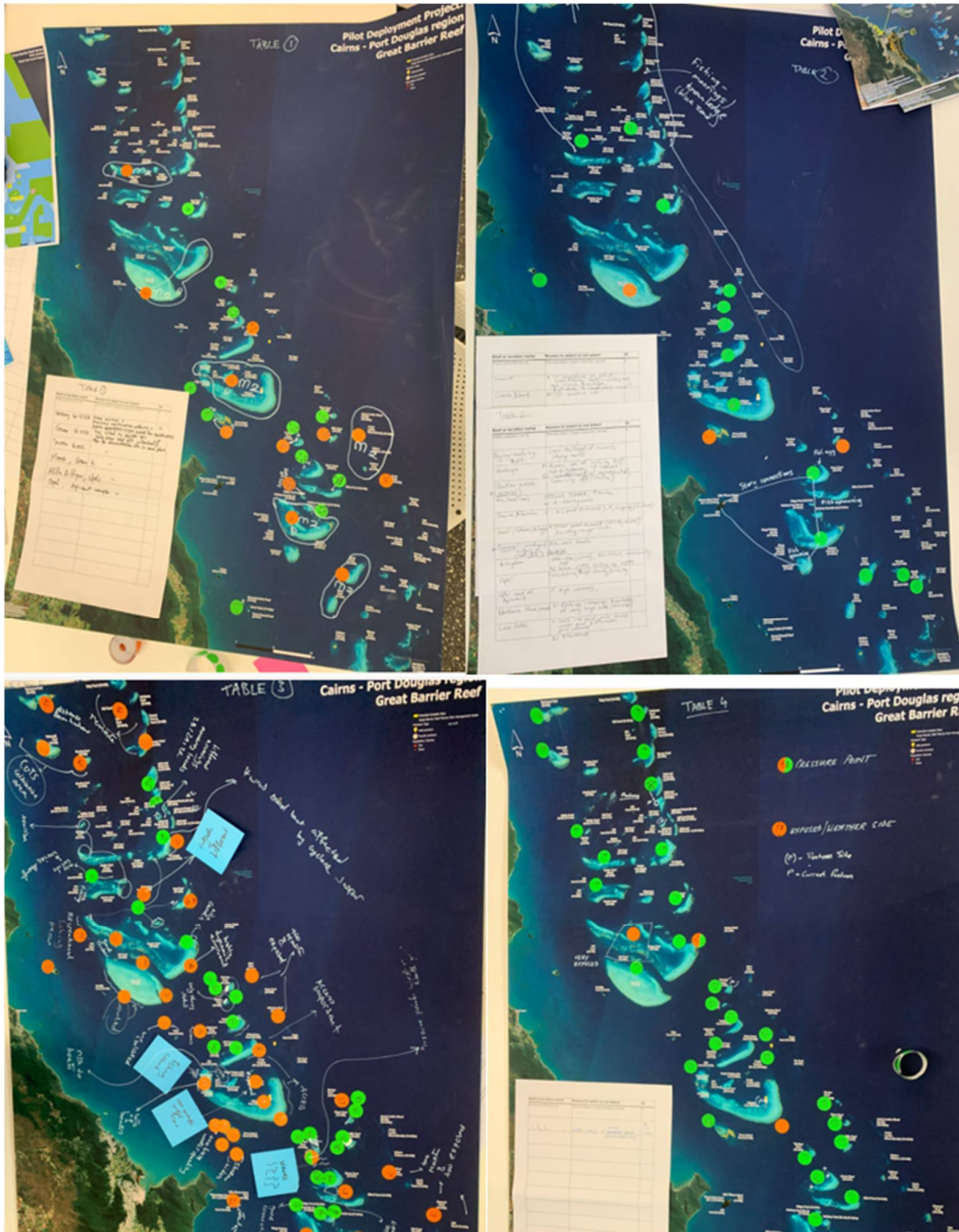
### Mapping methods:

**Above:** Participants used sticky green dots where locations were 'suitable', amber dots where 'unsuitable'. Codes on dots (e.g. A19) where letter is 'consideration' code (section 2.2. above), and number is participant identifier (voluntary). Or participants could use sticky notes with text or draw arrows or boundaries directly on maps. Other information was recorded in writing on tables provided.

**Right:** AO Poster size maps supplied to each of the groups used in the exercise. All reefs in Cairns-Port Douglas pilot deployment region are labelled/named. Maps included the ~1200x1.5ha long-list candidate sites identified from RRAP remote sensing analysis (see very small yellow dots in top image).

### 3.2 Outputs

All five groups worked on their maps and produced rich and detailed information about suitability or unsuitability of different locations. Only four of the five maps are shown below to provide examples, however the data from all five maps will be used in the analysis. The maps illustrate the extensive experience and diverse and detailed knowledge that participants hold, and shared, about conditions and activities in the region and on specific reefs.



Examples of maps from four of the five groups (NB: data from all five maps have been used)

# 4 Using the information and next steps

## 4.1 Organizing the data

At the time of writing this report, the locational and textual information provided by participants through the participatory mapping exercise above has been incorporated into a simple spreadsheet database. That database includes records of all the information provided by participants in a standardized way.

Table #	Reef name	Reef ID	Location of point (e.g. N, NE, E, SE etc). R=whole reef	Suitability (green/amber)	Consideration (code A-O) or unspecified (U)	Attendee ID
1	Thetford Reef	16-068	N	Green	B	11
1	Thetford Reef	16-068	N	Amber	H	
1	Thetford Reef	16-068	N	Amber	N	
1	Jenny Louise Shoal	16-066a	R	Amber	M	2
1	Jenny Louise Shoal	16-066b	R	Amber	M	2
1	Bairnes Patches	16-069	R	Amber	M	2
1	Pellowe Reef	16-070	R	Amber	M	2
1	North West Reef	16-072	R	Amber	N	2
1	Moore Reef	16-071	NW	Green	F	11
1	Moore Reef	16-071	NW	Green	G	11
1	Moore Reef	16-071	NW	Green	H	11
1	Moore Reef	16-071	NW	Green	K	11
1	Briggs Reef	16-074	N	Amber	A	11
1	Elford Reef	16-073	N	Green	D	11
1	Sudbury Reef No. 2	17-001b	N	Green	C	11
1	Sudbury Reef No. 2	17-001b	N	Green	F	11
1	Sudbury Reef No. 2	17-001b	N	Green	H	11
1	Sudbury Reef No. 2	17-001b	N	Green	N	11
1	Sudbury Reef No. 1	17-001a	R	Amber	M	2
1	Sudbury Reef No. 1	17-001a	R	Amber	B	2
1	Maori Reef	17-006	R	Amber	M	2
1	Flora Reef	17-010	R	Amber	M	2
1	Normanby-Mabel Reef	17-012	N	Green	A	3
1	Normanby-Mabel Reef	17-012	N	Green	D	3
1	Normanby-Mabel Reef	17-012	N	Green	F	3
1	Normanby-Mabel Reef	17-012	N	Green	M	3
1	Normanby-Mabel Reef	17-012	S	Green	A	3
1	Normanby-Mabel Reef	17-012	S	Green	D	3
1	Normanby-Mabel Reef	17-012	S	Green	F	3
1	Normanby-Mabel Reef	17-012	S	Green	M	3
1	Saxon Reef	16-032	R	Green	H	
1	Agincourt Reef No. 4	15-096	R	Green	H	

### Organising the information from the workshop:

Left: A small sample of the information shared by workshop participants in the mapping exercise that has been compiled into a database to help identify locations for pilot deployment.

The information from all five maps and associated text tables are being combined to help answer the following questions:

- Where are the locations in the region where there is broad agreement on suitability or unsuitability for pilot deployment?
- Where are the locations where views on suitability are mixed?
- What are the considerations and knowledge related to these locations that have informed those suitability assessments by stakeholders?
- Which stakeholder groups, organizations or individuals have identified connections to those locations?

Using this information the RRAP team will identify an interim list of candidate locations – based on stakeholder preferences and knowledge – to include in the broader site selection process. This will be undertaken in consultation with Reef Traditional Owners and the Reef Authority.

In addition to the database the RRAP team will explore if a ‘map layer’ of suitability based on stakeholder input provided can be developed to help communicate the information.

The above information can also be used by the Pilot Deployment Program to inform the annual operational planning for implementation and ongoing engagement with regional stakeholders and community.

## 4.2 Next steps

In the final session of the workshop the RRAP team described the next steps for stakeholder engagement in the process of selecting suitable locations, and the broader decision process and timeline between now and planned pilot deployment in November 2025.

These steps and timelines are summarised below, but may be subject to change:

Stakeholder site selection workshop, Cairns	12 <sup>th</sup> February 2025
Workshop summary report circulated to participants	On or before 28 <sup>th</sup> February 2025
Interim list of candidate locations identified, and consultation with the Reef Authority	List by 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2025 for discussion with the Reef Authority, and ongoing consultation
On-line session with workshop participants and RRAP team members to report back on interim location list (invite pending)	mid-March 2025
Ongoing discussions with Traditional Owners of sea country with candidate sites and Free Prior and Informed Consent process	Ongoing
On-water surveys of interim locations to confirm suitability	August 2025
Annual operational work planning finalized by Pilot Deployments Program	September-October 2025
Pilot deployments commence	November 2025
Review of annual deployment operations in region and stakeholder engagement in forward planning (proposed)	February 2026

# 5 Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet



## Research Participant Information Sheet

### Stakeholder workshop to guide pilot deployment locations

#### Project overview

In the Cairns Port Douglas region of Queensland, as part of the **Reef Restoration & Adaptation Program (RRAP)** -Pilot Deployment Program, coral restoration activities are being planned on some of the individual reefs in that region from November 2025. This presents an opportunity for RRAP researchers to seek input from local stakeholders about where that work might happen, and what are some important factors in decision-making about selecting those locations. You are invited to take part in a workshop to gather community and stakeholder views and contribute to that site selection process. The workshop is part of a broader set of research activities about stakeholder involvement in large scale reef restoration and adaptation being led by Dr Bruce Taylor, CSIRO, and funded under the Reef Trust Partnership between the Australian Government and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation.

#### What does participation involve?

Participation in this study will involve taking part in a one-day stakeholder workshop in the Cairns Port Douglas region with 20-30 other local stakeholders and community members, RRAP scientists and Reef Authority representatives as observers. The workshop will cover the following topics:

1. Providing background information on the process and criteria for selecting reefs
2. Seeking your views on other important criteria that could be considered in the decision-making process
3. Discussing and exploring locations where activity would be beneficial or where it should be avoided
4. Seeking your views on how to best move towards agreement on locations

The CSIRO project team will be facilitating the workshop which will involve information sessions, small and large group discussions. Your acceptance of the invitation to the workshop means you consent to the research team recording your feedback and contributions to group discussions and including this information into a summary report from the workshop to share back with participants and other stakeholders. Individuals' contributions will not be identified in the workshop report. However, if participants wish to have follow-up discussions on more complex issues, that can be organised with the research team.

Indigenous ranger representatives and other Traditional Owner groups in the region are very welcome to attend and contribute to this workshop. Importantly this workshop will not focus specifically on Traditional Owner biocultural knowledge for site selection on sea country. RRAP has established a dedicated Traditional Owner Working Group for the Pilot Deployment Program, the DREAMS team, to guide and support that decision-making process with Traditional Owners, including Free Prior and Informed Consent.

#### Risks and benefits

Aside from giving up your time, there are no foreseeable risks associated with participating in this workshop. Whilst your participation in this workshop may not benefit you directly, your participation will improve

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transparency of the decision-making process and improve the likelihood of selecting reefs that are preferable to people who use and depend on the reefs in the region, and to RRAP-Pilot Deployment researchers.

## Withdrawal from the research project

Participation in this workshop is completely voluntary, and you do not have to take part. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone else at CSIRO. If any topic is raised during the workshop that you prefer not to discuss, or share your knowledge or information about, there is no obligation to contribute. Similarly, you are free to leave and re-enter the workshop at any time. As the information collected through the workshop process will be combined and not linked to any individual's name or identity it may not be possible to find and remove material shared at the workshop from the final report.

## Confidentiality

Workshop participants will have the option to have their names and/or affiliations listed as attending and contributing to the workshop in the workshop summary report or related documents or communications. If preferred, attendees will have the option to provide input during the workshop in a way that specific contributions or views will not be directly linked to you as an individual. However, in some cases, due to familiarity in the reef community about what already happens on the reefs in the region (e.g. established tourism businesses at specific sites), input provided may be linkable to participants. The raw notes from the workshop will only be available to our research team. Any data (notes from the workshop) collected as part of this study will be securely stored as per CSIRO's Recordkeeping Procedure.

## How will my information be used?

The information obtained through the workshop will be published and/or presented in a variety of forums. This includes the production of a summary report on stakeholder views on reef selection as well as scientific journal publications and conference presentations that describe the process and outcomes of the project so that other communities and programs might learn from this experience.

## Ethics clearance and contacts

This study has been approved by CSIRO's Social Science Human Research Ethics Committee in accordance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2023)*. If you have any questions concerning your participation in the study please contact the researchers via their contact details provided. Alternatively, any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study can be raised with the Executive Manager of Social Responsibility and Ethics on +61 7 3833 5693 or by email at [csshrec@csiro.au](mailto:csshrec@csiro.au).

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Thank you for taking the time to help with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.

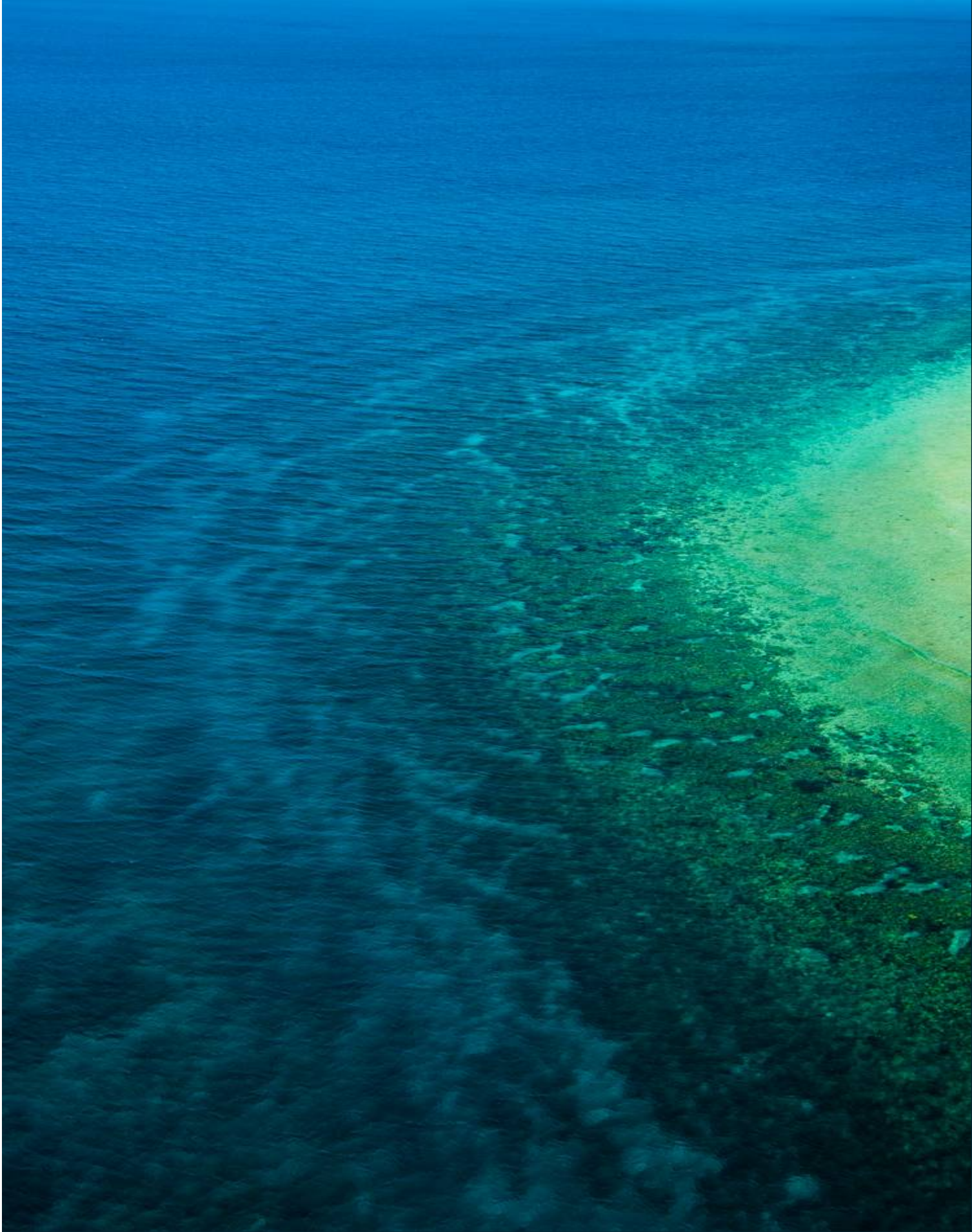
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## 6 Appendix B: Considerations for site selection identified at workshop

Category	Themes	Criteria Longlist
Ecological / Technical	Past and current condition	Substrate suitability
		Connectivity
		Coral cover
		Coral condition
		Disturbance history and risk (and merging knowledge with data)
		Existing biodiversity
		History of continuous COTS damage
		History / risk of other predation
	Site diversity (ecological)	"Higher risk" or adventurous sites with less-than-optimal conditions but have experimental diversity
	Potential ecological benefits +/-	Future benefits
		Alignment with economic benefit (as a filter/tiebreaker on top of this)
		Broader reefs / whole GBR
	Likelihood of success	Demonstrability of success
	Knowledge and Data	Data integrity
	Science robust and has integrity, transparency	
Logistics	Access	Prevailing weather
		Port distance
		Regularity of use
		Types of users who are able to access
		Flexibility to adjust for variable conditions
		Expanding on current activity footprint
		Existing TO Access
	Supporting infrastructure and resources	Simplicity
		Existing infrastructure / moorings
	Time and operator capacity	

Category	Themes	Criteria Longlist
		Labour
	Safety	Distance from shelter / refuges
		Close support
<b>TO / Social / Stakeholder / Operators / Users</b>	Visibility and public opportunity	Public visibility, operator visibility, demonstration potential
		Citizen science opportunities
		Sites with strong aesthetic value
	TO Opportunities	TO Involvement
		TO Opportunities
	Industry opportunity / risks	Industry benefits/ monetisation
		Competition risks
		Fairness
		Opportunities to build future workforce
	Collaboration potential	Collaboration potential (across operators, TOs)
	TO Interests	Right of veto (no go zones)
	TO values, stories	
Other users' constraints	Commercial / recreational fishing operations	
<b>Regulatory / Management Considerations</b>	Management Considerations	Zoning
		TUMRAs
		POMs
<b>Financial</b>	Cost	Cost beneficial
		Operating cost e.g. staffing, fuel



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REEF RESTORATION & ADAPTATION PROGRAM



Great Barrier Reef Foundation



JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA



Southern Cross University

