Year in Review 2025/26



Great Barrier
Reef Foundation





Acknowledgement of Country

The Great Barrier Reef Foundation extends its deepest respect and recognition to all Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work, including the Great Barrier Reef and its Catchments. First Nations Peoples maintain a unique, unsevered and strong spiritual and cultural connection to their Land and Sea Country, and we pay our respects to their Elders, past and present.

Artwork credit: 'A Reef Wonderland' artwork by Melanie Hava, Mamu Aboriginal woman, Dugulbarra and Waribarra family groups, from the Johnstone River catchment of the Wet Tropics of Far North Queensland and the adjoining Great Barrier Reef Sea Country.

From breakthroughs to real-world impact

Innovation has always been part of the Great Barrier Reef's story.

For decades, researchers, Traditional Owners, communities and conservationists have worked together to better understand this extraordinary ecosystem and the challenges it faces. But today, the task before us is no longer just discovering what works. It's ensuring the most promising solutions reach the Reef fast enough to make a difference.

And that need has never been more urgent. With the Reef facing the prospect of what is being described as the strongest El Niño system ever recorded, the conditions ahead will test both its resilience and the approaches being developed to protect and restore it like never before.

It's that urgency that is changing the pace of our work.

Across the Reef, a new generation of tools and technologies is moving from research into action to speed up recovery. From new techniques for releasing healthy corals at scale to innovative approaches to rebuilding seagrass meadows, these advances are helping restore habitats that improve water quality, support marine life and strengthen the Reef's resilience.

These are not isolated breakthroughs. Together, they form part of a growing toolkit of practical solutions that are changing what's possible for reef restoration. The focus now is on optimising and scaling what works, so solutions can make a difference at the speed the Reef demands.

We need to create the conditions for these solutions to succeed at scale. That means bringing together the knowledge, expertise, investment and ambition needed to turn scientific breakthroughs into real-world impact.

This year, new research from Deloitte Access Economics put the scale of what we are working to protect into perspective. The Great Barrier Reef is now valued at $95 billion, reflecting its extraordinary economic, social and cultural significance. With the right action and investment, the Reef could unlock a further $124 billion in economic opportunity over the next 50 years.

Protecting that future will take more than the work happening on the water. It also means keeping the Reef, and the work to protect it, visible and connected to people around the world. This year, that ambition took flight with our long-standing partner Qantas, with a specially designed aircraft carrying the story of the Great Barrier Reef to millions of travellers around the world and reminding them that this remarkable ecosystem is worth protecting.

There is no underestimating what lies ahead. But there is also genuine cause for hope. Environmental innovation is advancing rapidly, with Australia at the forefront of breakthroughs in reef and coastal conservation that are helping shape the future of these ecosystems around the world. And this year has shown what can happen when bold ideas are matched with the determination and support to put them to work.

Behind every achievement in this report is an extraordinary community. Whether you are a scientist developing new technologies, a Traditional Owner sharing thousands of years of knowledge, a partner investing in solutions, or a supporter choosing to stand with us, you are part of that progress.

Together, we are not only imagining a better future for the Reef. *We are building it.*







David Thodey AO, Co-Chair

Dr Martin Parkinson AC PSM, Co-Chair

Anna Marsden, Managing Director

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(Cover) and (Left) Image Credit: Gary Cranitch, Queensland Museum.

Our impact



Our impact to date

Cumulative results to 30 June 2026



Coral Reefs

390 million baby corals deployed

32,000+ coral cradles deployed

91,000+ coral fragments outplanted

45 innovation projects advancing new ways to detect and control crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks at scale



Islands and Coasts

513 hectares of coastal and island habitat monitored, protected or restored, equivalent to 700 football fields

545,000+ seeds collected to restore seagrass meadows

91,888 community members involved in coastal and island restoration

20 Traditional Owner groups engaged in coastal and island projects



Traditional Owners

65 Traditional Owner groups partnered with across our programs

15,056 Traditional Owners engaged across our projects, grants and programs

1,020 hours co-design with Traditional Owners



Pacific Partnerships

6 place-based hubs strengthening locally led reef resilience

851 people trained in resilience-based reef management

62 projects advancing reef resilience around the world

26 Pacific organisations supported in building capacity for long-term reef management

Image credit (left to right): Australian Institute of Marine Science, Gary Cranitch, Queensland Museum, Goondoi Aboriginal Corporation, Dave Lavaki, Talanoa Consulting.

Putting the value of the Reef into perspective

How do you put a price on the Great Barrier Reef?

It's one of the world's great natural wonders. It supports so many communities and livelihoods, draws millions of visitors from around the world and is woven into Australia's identity.

But understanding its value can also help us understand just how much is at stake.

This year, we commissioned Deloitte Access Economics to take a fresh look at what the Reef is worth to Australia today, and what its future could mean for generations to come.

The answer was extraordinary. $95 billion.

That's the estimated economic, social and cultural value of the Reef today, up 69% from $56 billion in 2017. Every year, it contributes $9 billion to Australia's economy and supports 77,000 full-time jobs. If the Reef were a single employer, it would be the fifth largest in Australia.

With urgent climate action and large-scale investment in Reef resilience, Deloitte found the Reef could unlock a further $124 billion in economic opportunity over the next 50 years.

And its value to Australians goes well beyond economics. National polling released alongside the report found 98% believe losing the Reef would be a national tragedy. Nine in 10 are concerned about the risks climate change poses to it, and 78% say protecting the Reef for future generations is very or extremely important.

Together, the findings put the scale of the Reef's value, and the opportunity ahead, into sharp focus. Protecting it means safeguarding jobs, communities and an irreplaceable part of Australia's identity. It also means investing now in the possibility of a stronger future for the Reef, and for the generations who will inherit it.

Click to read the full report.



Our work



Image credit: James Unsworth

Coral reefs

Healthy coral reefs underpin life across our oceans, supporting extraordinary biodiversity, coastal communities and livelihoods around the world. But as oceans continue to warm, reefs are being pushed beyond their natural ability to recover. With a powerful El Niño predicted to bring heightened heat stress to reefs globally in the coming months, the need to accelerate this work has never been greater.

This growing urgency demands new ways to help reefs recover faster. Innovation is critical, allowing us to expand our restoration toolbox with technologies and approaches that can respond to different reef environments, conditions and restoration needs.

We're already seeing the potential of this innovation in new tools designed to tackle some of restoration's biggest challenges. Developed through our partnership with McLaren Racing, a new coral restoration robot known as OSCAR is tackling the time-consuming assembly of coral cradles – specially designed devices that help settle healthy baby corals onto the Reef. We've also invested in trials to test the Seedbox, a new coral release tool that is helping millions more baby corals settle onto the Reef.

As the same time, we are sharing learnings with our Pacific partners, so promising approaches can be adapted and applied where they are urgently needed. New locally-led restoration hubs are now taking shape across the region, bringing together infrastructure and technology with the local knowledge and capability needed to put these approaches into practice.

This progress is helping move coral restoration into its next phase, enabling restoration at a scale not previously possible.

Our impact in 2025–26



1 coral restoration robot
developed with McLaren Racing to help restore corals at scale



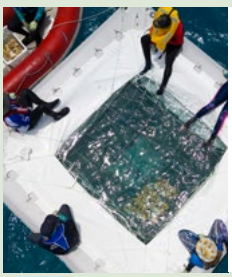
1 coral micro-nursery established
at the National Sea Simulator (SeaSim) for training, technology demonstrations and trials



1 world-first trial
using chemical signals to attract and locate crown-of-thorns starfish



100x more coral settlement
recorded around Seedboxes in the Whitsundays trial, compared with natural settlement



70 million baby corals deployed
on the Great Barrier Reef

Results from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026

On the Great Barrier Reef

Removing one of reef restoration's biggest barriers with McLaren Racing

Every year over a few nights in spring, the Great Barrier Reef comes alive as corals release billions of eggs and sperm into the water in one of nature's most extraordinary events. For reef restoration practitioners, this brief spawning window is a race against time when every second matters.

Scientists collect coral eggs and sperm and rear millions of baby corals using a technique known as Coral IVF. These young corals are then settled onto specially designed ceramic coral cradles that protect them from waves and predators during their vulnerable first year, increasing their chances of survival. But while this restoration approach has shown enormous promise, one critical step has limited how far it can be scaled: every coral cradle has traditionally been assembled by hand.

Taking up to 90 seconds to complete each unit, this painstaking process is one of the biggest bottlenecks in large-scale reef restoration, wasting precious time and resources. This year, we took a significant step towards solving that challenge.

Through our partnership with the McLaren Racing Accelerator Programme, engineers and marine scientists developed OSCAR – the Operational System for Coral Assembly and Restoration. Combining Formula 1 engineering with reef restoration expertise, OSCAR automates the assembly of coral cradles in as little as 10 seconds, increasing production by up to 800% while delivering the precision and consistency needed for large-scale restoration.

The significance of OSCAR extends well beyond robotics. By removing one of reef restoration's most persistent constraints, it has the potential to dramatically increase the number of baby corals that can be prepared for deployment during spawning season, while significantly reducing the cost of restoration over time. Early modelling suggests the technology could increase annual production capacity from around 100,000 coral cradles today to as many as one million in the future.

The 2026 coral spawning season will mark OSCAR's first operational use. If successful, it will represent an important milestone in making reef restoration faster, more efficient and better equipped to meet the scale of the challenge facing coral reefs around the world.



On the Great Barrier Reef

New coral restoration technology helping baby corals beat the odds

Every coral begins life as a tiny drifting baby, carried by ocean currents in search of a place to settle and grow. It's a journey of extraordinary odds. In the wild, only an estimated one in a million (0.0001%) survive long enough to become part of a reef. We're working to change those odds.

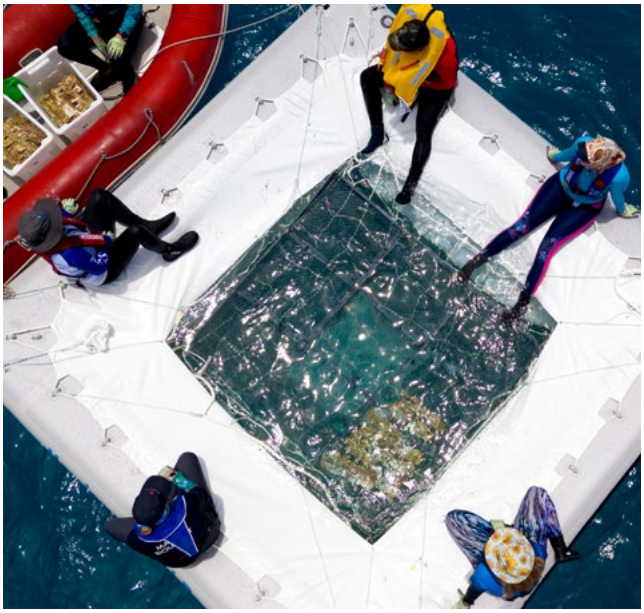
Producing healthy baby corals during the annual spawning season is only part of the challenge. They must also be delivered to the Reef at the right place and the right time, giving them the greatest possible chance of settling onto the Reef and surviving.

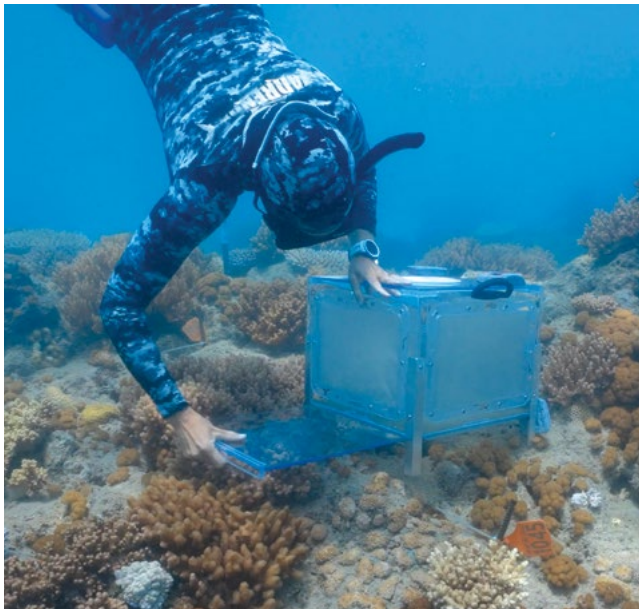
In 2025, together with researchers from CSIRO and Southern Cross University, we took an important step towards solving that challenge through trials of a new restoration tool known as the Seedbox. Supported through our partnership with Qantas, the technology is designed to deliver millions of baby corals more effectively, helping reef restoration reach larger areas while improving the chances of successful coral settlement.

Rather than releasing baby corals all at once, the Seedbox acts as a delayed-release system. Positioned carefully on the seafloor by divers, it protects young corals from being swept away by currents, releasing them gradually over 12 to 24 hours and giving them more time to settle onto suitable reef surfaces. It's a simple idea inspired by nature, but one with the potential to significantly improve restoration outcomes.

Building on promising early trials at Lizard Island, researchers focused on the Whitsundays during the 2025 coral spawning season. They worked alongside Traditional Owners and tourism operators to deploy 19 Seedboxes, each containing around half a million baby corals. Early monitoring has produced encouraging results – at some sites more than 100 times as many baby corals settled onto the Reef than would typically occur.

The next round of Seedbox trials will be conducted during the 2026 coral spawning season, helping determine how this promising technology can play a role in restoring coral reefs at greater scale across the Great Barrier Reef and beyond.





(Top): Researchers, scientists and tourism operators use a portable larval collection pool to collect baby corals during spawning season.
(Bottom): A diver positioning a Seedbox containing baby corals in the Whitsundays.

In the Pacific

Building a lifeline for coral reefs in Australia and the Pacific through the Reef Seeding Initiative

Reefs across the Pacific are facing a summer of extraordinary heat stress with meteorologists predicting one of the strongest El Niño events ever recorded.

As the window to protect coral reefs narrows, we have an opportunity – and a responsibility – to share the world-leading restoration technologies being tested and applied on the Great Barrier Reef with other Pacific communities on the frontline of climate change.

The Reef Seeding Initiative is helping turn this opportunity into action. Through a network of locally-led hubs, we're moving coral restoration from small-scale efforts towards large-scale application across the Great Barrier Reef and the Pacific. Delivered in partnership with the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) and SECORE International, each hub will provide the infrastructure, technology and technical support required to apply a variety of cutting-edge coral restoration tools at scale.

A critical part of this work is also building the local knowledge and experience needed to put these tools into practice. In December 2025, eight reef restoration experts from Palau and Fiji travelled to the National Sea Simulator in Townsville during coral spawning season to explore how restoration technologies could be adapted to their local reef conditions. There, they toured the coral aquaculture facilities and technologies being adapted for use in the Pacific and observed coral settlement and deployment activities.

Palau is now leading the way as the home of the Initiative's first Pacific hub. Co-designed and implemented in partnership with the Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC), the hub builds on our longstanding partnership established over eight years ago through the Resilient Reefs Initiative. Drawing on Palau's long history of ocean stewardship and leadership in science-based reef management, the hub will strengthen local capability and generate knowledge that can help inform restoration across the wider Pacific.

Coral reefs around the world are under severe pressure, and the Pacific is not only committed to protecting its reefs – it is building the science, local expertise and community infrastructure needed to turn commitment into action. Together with our partners, we're helping amplify these locally-led efforts, creating new hope for coral reefs across the Pacific and beyond.





Restoration practitioners and delivery partners from Palau and Fiji visiting the National Sea Simulator in Townsville to learn about reef restoration technologies.

In the Pacific

Accelerating locally-led reef action across the Pacific

Across the Pacific, local organisations are leading critical work to protect coral reefs and the communities that depend on them. Yet many face barriers to accessing the funding and support needed to grow their impact.

The Resilient Reefs Pasifika Accelerator Program was created to help change that. Rather than simply funding individual projects, the program invests in the organisations themselves – strengthening the people, systems, ideas and relationships that can turn local action into lasting change.

Delivered in partnership with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and Talanoa Consulting, the program supports four to six organisations each year to strengthen their staff's capability, refine their ideas and build connections with potential funders.

This year, the first cohort brought together five organisations from across the Pacific: Ocean Toa from the Cook Islands, Drawaqa Marine Conservation Trust from Fiji, Live & Learn from Solomon Islands, Rare from Palau and Island Conservation, working in Tuvalu.

For the organisations involved, the program was an opportunity to step back from the day-to-day work of conservation and invest in what would make their organisations stronger for the long term. Following workshops in Fiji, each organisation received $80k to strengthen their organisational readiness, advance program design and develop funding proposals to help turn their ideas into investment-ready opportunities.

This support is already translating into tangible results, with nearly $1.8m in additional catalytic funding leveraged to support implementation, including contributions raised by partners and commitments secured across the program.

The impact of this work is already being felt on the ground. In Palau, Rare combined scientific ecological assessments with Traditional Ecological Knowledge to inform future fisheries management and conservation. In Fiji's Yasawa Islands, Drawaqa Marine Conservation Trust delivered marine education across three schools, reaching nearly 500 students through classroom learning, reef monitoring, habitat surveys and citizen science.

With the second cohort now underway, we're building a growing network of organisations equipped not only to deliver projects, but to attract new investment and lead lasting action for their reefs and communities.







The first and second Accelerator Program cohorts attending workshops in Fiji. Credit: Pate Creatives & Dave Lavaki, Talanoa Consulting.

Islands and coasts

A decade ago, on a tiny island in far north Queensland, we began testing a new way to protect the places that make the Reef so extraordinary. At Raine Island, we brought Traditional Owners, scientists, government and conservation partners together to restore one of the world's most important nesting sites for turtles and seabirds, and find better ways to care for it into the future.

What started at Raine Island 10 years ago has grown into a broader way of working across the Reef's islands and coasts.

The Reef is a connected living system of islands, wetlands, mangroves, seagrass meadows, estuaries and coral reefs. What happens in one place can shape the health of another. As pressures on these environments intensify, we need to look beyond individual habitats and work to strengthen the system as a whole.

That means putting strong partnerships and local leadership at the centre, combining them with robust science, and being willing to test new approaches, learn what works and keep improving. It means building the knowledge, skills and confidence communities need to care for their own places for generations to come.

Over the past year, we have put this approach into action: strengthening community capability in the Whitsundays, building new Traditional Owner partnerships and supporting on Country stewardship at Avoid and Hinchinbrook Islands, and expanding our work to restore seagrass and wetlands through innovative research and new approaches.

In the year ahead, we will continue to develop and refine these approaches, finding ways to make island and coastal protection more effective, affordable and scalable.

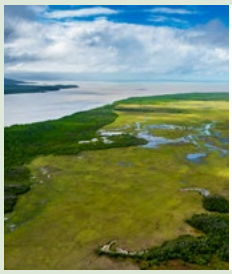
Our impact in 2025–26



1 seagrass restoration robot designed to plant seeds to scale seagrass meadow restoration



6 hectares of seagrass meadow reseeded, equivalent to approximately 8 football fields



Reef Wetlands Initiative launched to trial new approaches to restoring coastal wetlands across Reef catchments



100+ residents and citizen scientists involved in biodiversity monitoring on Yunbenun (Magnetic Island)



2 Whitsundays tourism operators engaged in seagrass restoration and monitoring activities

Results from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026

On the Great Barrier Reef

Accelerating seagrass restoration with the Mako robot

Seagrass meadows cover less than 0.2% of the planet, yet they are among our most valuable ecosystems. They support threatened species like dugongs and turtles, underpin major fisheries, store carbon up to 35 times faster than tropical rainforests and help protect coastlines from erosion and storm impacts.

The Great Barrier Reef contains an estimated 35,000 km² of seagrass – an area more than half the size of Tasmania – making it one of the world's largest seagrass ecosystems. However, climate change, extreme weather, poor water quality and coastal development are accelerating seagrass loss. Natural recovery is increasingly uncertain, while human-assisted restoration is slow and labour-intensive.

Achieving restoration at the scale needed to maintain these critical coastal habitats remains a challenge. Currently, we can only restore around five hectares of seagrass meadows per year, with traditional restoration methods relying on practitioners to collect and plant grass fragments by hand, or reseeding that is often restricted by capacity and favourable environmental conditions.

Enter the Mako robot. A custom built, first-of-its-kind autonomous underwater vehicle designed to plant seagrass seeds at scale. Named after the fast and agile mako shark, the robot, created by Ulysses in partnership with CQUniversity, aims to dramatically improve the efficiency of seagrass restoration.

Early technical field trials throughout 2025 showed promise, with Mako's ability to navigate murky coastal waters in strong currents and plant seeds at the speed and depth required. The next phase will focus on further refining the technology and conducting trials across larger areas and a wider range of coastal conditions and environments.

The long-term ambition is transformational: reducing restoration costs by up to tenfold while increasing capacity up to five hectares per day, helping to close the gap between seagrass meadow loss and recovery.





(Top) A seagrass meadow. Image credit: Matt Curnock. (Bottom) The Mako robot. Image credit: Ulysses Ecosystems Engineering.

On the Great Barrier Reef

Secrets of our Reef's southern ark

In 2018, the Reef Islands Initiative established a network of climate change refuges to protect critical habitats and species across several islands along the Great Barrier Reef, including Lady Elliot Island. Over the past seven years, the initiative has helped turn small-scale revegetation on the island into a coordinated island-wide effort, restoring 20 hectares of seabird nesting habitat, increasing turtle nesting habitat by 125% and unlocking further funding for the Leaf to Reef monitoring program.

Understanding how an ecosystem is changing is critical to protecting its future. On Lady Elliot Island, teams of researchers and citizen scientists are working together through the Leaf to Reef program to capture the island's ecological secrets. The aim of the monitoring effort is to better understand the island's role as a climate change refuge and how recent revegetation efforts impact the health of the island and its wild residents.

This year marked a major milestone for the team through the publication of a new biodiversity field guide. It's the most comprehensive guide for the island and Capricorn Bunker region to date. Over 800 species have been recorded and collated in the guide, including one species new to science – the tiny, iridescent Lady Elliot Shrimp Goby.

Understanding this breadth of biodiversity has never been more important. Recent modelling has revealed the island's biodiversity is expected to increase under climate scenarios, reinforcing the island's continued importance as a biodiversity stronghold and refuge in a changing climate.

The secret lives of Lady Elliot Island's marine turtles are also being uncovered through a new Leaf to Reef citizen science monitoring project. Visiting snorkellers and divers can now add their turtle photos to a research image library, which visually 'tags' turtles by the unique patterns of their facial scales. Importantly, the method avoids any risks associated with handling and tagging animals. This year, facial recognition has uncovered several repeat visitors, highlighting the importance of Lady Elliot Island as a foraging habitat for migrating green turtles.





(Top) Leaf to Reef researchers monitoring fish populations at Lady Elliot Island. Image credit: Asia Armstrong. (Bottom) A green sea turtle.

Reef Trust Partnership

This year marked the close of the six major programs under the Reef Trust Partnership (RTP), a landmark eight-year collaboration between the Australian Government's Reef Trust and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation.

Three of the programs have already concluded - Crown-of-Thorns Starfish Control and Integrated Monitoring and Reporting in June 2024 and Water Quality in June 2025.

The three remaining programs – Reef Restoration and Adaptation Science, Traditional Owner Reef Protection and Community Reef Protection – concluded on 30 June 2026.

Established in 2018, the $443.3m Partnership was the largest collaborative reef protection effort of its kind in the world. It brought together government, researchers, Traditional Owners, communities, industry and conservation organisations to deliver action and impact at unprecedented scale across the Great Barrier Reef.

Across six interconnected components, 679 delivery partners from the northernmost reaches of the Reef, right down to the southern tip, delivered 517 projects. The Foundation also secured an additional $461m in in-kind and financial co-investment – matching Government investment dollar-for-dollar.

The Reef Trust Partnership successfully demonstrated that large-scale, collaborative investment can deliver meaningful environmental outcomes, while strengthening the systems, knowledge, partnerships and capability needed to support the long-term resilience of the Great Barrier Reef.



A diver culling a crown-of-thorns starfish (COTS) on the Great Barrier Reef as part of efforts to protect coral from COTS outbreaks through the Reef Trust Partnership. Image credit: Rickard Abom.

On the Great Barrier Reef

Building sustainable livelihoods on Sea Country

For millennia, Reef Traditional Owners have cared for and managed their land and Sea Country. The RTP helped create new pathways for Traditional Owners to have a greater role in formal Reef protection and management, supporting Indigenous-led processes, governance and action on Country.

Through more than $50m in investment, the Traditional Owner Reef Protection component became the largest Traditional Owner-led reef protection program in the world. It engaged 15,056 Traditional Owners across 65 groups, while establishing new governance, training, employment and capacity-building opportunities.

But the work did not end with the RTP. It helped lay the foundations for a new approach to Reef protection – one in which Traditional Owners can lead, make formal decisions and build sustainable economic opportunities around caring for Sea Country.

That next chapter is now underway through a seven-year, $25m investment to support the growth of, and investment in, a Traditional Owner-led nature-based economy (NBE) on the Reef. The NBE program is co-designed with a Traditional Owner Technical Working Group, made up of six Reef Traditional Owners. The work supports Traditional Owner groups to develop and build businesses and employment opportunities that care for Sea Country, while creating sustainable livelihoods and strengthening communities.

Already, 30 Traditional Owner groups are actively engaged through workshops, case studies and grant activities. The first NBE grant round has supported 15 projects, unlocking over $2.1m in combined investment and providing targeted support for enterprise development, readiness building and on Country initiatives. These projects span a diverse range of sectors including tourism, ranger-led enterprises, environmental stewardship, native plant nurseries, bush foods and emerging nature repair market activities.

While the next phase of the program is still gearing up, the evolution of this work is significant. It's a shift from participation to leadership, and towards a future where caring for Sea Country can also support investment into strong, sustainable communities for generations to come.



Goondoi Traditional Owner and Head Ranger John Fejo tests the water quality at the Moresby River near Mourilyan as part of the Traditional Owner Reef Protection component of the Reef Trust Partnership. Image credit: Goondoi Aboriginal Corporation.

Partnerships



The power of collective action

Protecting the Great Barrier Reef at the scale and complexity required demands collaboration across sectors and disciplines. By bringing together science, engineering, investment, innovation and global reach, our partnerships enable us to tackle challenges in ways no single organisation could achieve alone.

We play a unique role in connecting these strengths – bringing together delivery partners with deep technical expertise and corporate and philanthropic partners with the resources, platforms and ambition to accelerate action.

This year, we worked with partners across science, aviation, tourism, retail, engineering and global consumer brands. Together, we tackled the shared challenge of protecting the Reef and building a more resilient future for this extraordinary natural asset.

Our 2025/26 partners & supporters

airbnb
AECOM
BHP Foundation
CHUBB
The Coca-Cola Foundation
coles
Containers for Change
Deloitte.
GARNIER
JCDecaux
lendlease
L'ORÉAL
McLaren Formula 1 Team
QANTAS
Rio Tinto
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Anna Marsden and Senator the Hon Murray Watt, Minister for the Environment and Water at State of the Reef held in Sydney, April 2026.

Across Australia

Taking the story of the Reef to the skies with Qantas

The Great Barrier Reef has taken to the skies on Coral Sea, a new Qantas aircraft celebrating one of Australia's most iconic natural wonders.

The 44-metre Airbus A321XLR is adorned with a vibrant underwater scene inspired by the Reef's extraordinary marine life, with clownfish, sea turtles, butterflyfish and colourful coral stretching across the aircraft. Flying passengers between Perth, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, with more destinations to come, Coral Sea will carry the Reef's story across Australia and inspire millions of passengers over the next decade.

The aircraft is the latest expression of a partnership between Qantas and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation that has grown over 15 years, built on a shared belief that connecting people with the Reef is an important part of protecting its future.

Tourism has a special role to play. Every year, tourism on the Great Barrier Reef contributes around $7.9 billion to the Australian economy and supports approximately 68,000 jobs. But the relationship goes deeper than economics. Reef tourism operators are among the people who know these waters best. They see change first-hand, share their knowledge, and play an important role in conservation and restoration.

In 2024, Qantas deepened its commitment with a $10 million pledge over 10 years to establish the Reef Restoration Fund. The Fund is supporting scientists, Traditional Owners and tourism operators to scale coral restoration and help reefs recover and adapt to a changing climate.

The arrival of Coral Sea in Australia brought that shared commitment to life. At a special event in Brisbane, representatives from government, tourism and science came together to celebrate the aircraft and the role that collaboration can and must play in securing the Reef's future. Students from Holland Park State School, a Reef Guardian School, also joined the event, connecting the next generation with the work already underway to protect the Reef.



(Top) Airbus A321XLR, Coral Sea.

On the Great Barrier Reef

A new partnership for Queensland's marine turtles

The Great Barrier Reef is home to six of the world's seven marine turtle species, all of which are considered vulnerable or endangered. As habitat loss intensifies, the dedicated volunteers working along Queensland's coastline play a critical role in monitoring and protecting these iconic species.

Since 2023, the Foundation has supported the Queensland Marine Turtle Network (QMTN), connecting 34 member organisations and their volunteers across Queensland to share knowledge, build capability and collaborate on shared conservation challenges.

This year, a new partnership with Container Exchange (COEX) – the not-for-profit organisation behind Containers for Change Queensland – is taking that work a step further, providing local groups with the resources to turn their knowledge and expertise into practical conservation action.

Together, the Foundation and COEX have established a grants program that addresses an important funding gap identified by volunteer-led conservation groups, supporting QMTN members to deliver projects with their communities. Grants will fund activities ranging from turtle monitoring and nest protection to habitat restoration, marine debris removal, volunteer equipment and community education.

By investing directly in the people who know their local turtles and habitats best, the funding will strengthen conservation efforts where they are needed most, while building on the connections and collective expertise established through QMTN.



A volunteer measuring the carapace of a nesting loggerhead turtle at Wreck Rock.

In Queensland and New South Wales

State of the Reef: connecting the people shaping the Reef's future

Each year, the Foundation's State of the Reef flagship event creates a space for leaders from across science, government, business, philanthropy and tourism to come together, hear the latest outlook for the Reef and ask a bigger question: what can we do, together, to shape its future?

In 2026, we took that conversation beyond a single room for the first time, hosting State of the Reef in two locations. At AECOM in Brisbane and Taronga Zoo in Sydney, the events sparked new connections, ideas and opportunities to explore how Australia can help drive action for coral reefs at home and around the world.

Conversations ranged from new approaches to helping reefs recover and adapt, to the challenges facing reef communities across the Pacific. But perhaps most importantly, they highlighted the value of sharing what we know and turning that knowledge into action.

One conversation in Brisbane showed exactly what that can look like. We heard about Palau's first major crown-of-thorns starfish (COTS) outbreak since the 1980s, and it became clear that Australia had something valuable to offer. Australia has developed world-leading expertise in controlling COTS and State of the Reef provided the opportunity for people with that expertise to connect with those responding to the outbreak in Palau.

What began as an update shared during a fireside chat on stage sparked a follow-up conversation — and has since led to a coordinated response on the ground. Co-funded by the Foundation and the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the program brings together the COTS Control Program, Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC), and Palau's state and national governments.

Australian COTS Control Program dive leads will work alongside local Palauan teams in an intensive two-week program, combining practical COTS control with training, equipment and knowledge sharing. The goal extends beyond tackling the immediate outbreak: it is about building local capability so Palau is better equipped to respond to future outbreaks.

This is the real power of State of the Reef. It is more than a forum for sharing information. It is a place where people meet, ideas spread and relationships turn into action — helping connect the knowledge, expertise and resources needed to give coral reefs a stronger future.





(Top) Fireside chat with Professor Pete Mumby, Dr Roger Beeden and Anna Marsden at State of the Reef at AECOM in Brisbane. (Bottom) Senator the Hon Murray Watt, Minister for the Environment and Water, delivering the keynote address at Taronga Zoo in Sydney.

Financial statement

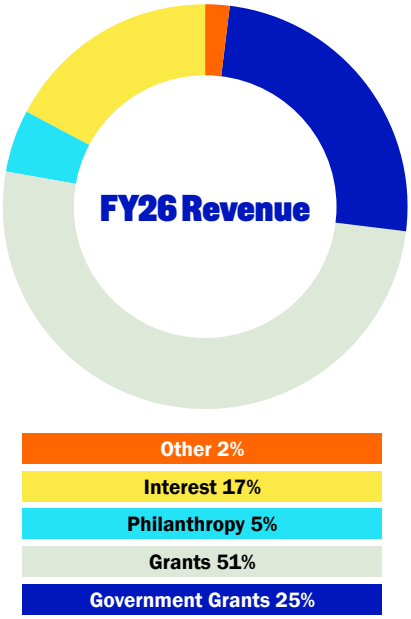


Financial statement

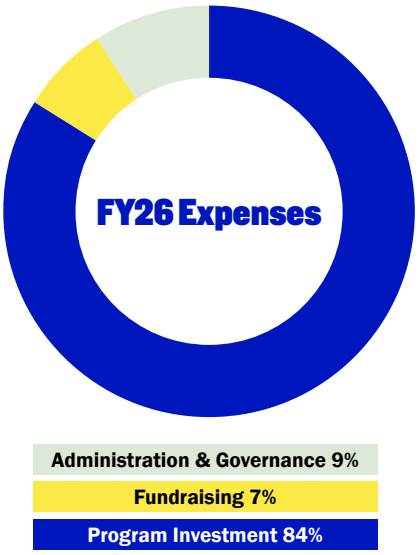
FY26 closed with a favourable full-year result, reflecting stronger revenue performance and underspend across the project portfolio. The Foundation reported a net surplus of $13.3m, primarily related to funding received in advance for multi-year project delivery.

Statement of Financial Results for the Great Barrier Reef Foundation for the year ended 30 June 2026

Revenue	FY26 ($)	FY25 ($)
Government grants	13,393,681	31,254,485
Grants	27,365,366	60,747,961
Philanthropy	2,989,788	2,790,367
Interest	9,100,225	6,475,260
Other	1,101,210	362,561
Total	**53,950,269**	**101,630,633**



Expenses	FY26 ($)	FY25 ($)
Program investment	34,155,587	50,800,764
Fundraising	2,671,362	2,150,547
Administration & governance	3,860,483	4,980,553
Total	**40,687,432**	**57,931,864**



Environmental, Social and Governance

Protecting the Great Barrier Reef is not only about what we do, but how we do it.

At the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles are embedded in our mission, our strategy and our day-to-day decisions.

Environmental responsibility

Through our programs, we pioneer and scale solutions to protect and restore coral reefs, islands and coastal ecosystems, elevate Indigenous and community leadership, and share Australia's reef solutions globally.

Alongside this work, we are committed to minimising our own operational footprint. This includes reducing emissions from travel, transitioning to renewable electricity, improving energy efficiency in our workplaces, reducing waste, and applying sustainability criteria to procurement and merchandise.

Social responsibility

Our social commitments focus on fostering a safe, inclusive and high-performing workplace; supporting health, wellbeing and fairness; and ensuring our programs deliver positive, culturally appropriate outcomes for communities.

A core pillar of this work is our commitment to reconciliation. We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first custodians of land and Sea Country and are committed to strengthening Indigenous leadership, partnerships and economic opportunity through our programs and organisational practices.

Strong governance and accountability

Our Board oversees ESG strategy and performance, integrates ESG risks into organisational risk management, and upholds high standards of ethical conduct, transparency and compliance. Clear policies, independent audits and robust reporting ensure accountability to donors, partners, governments and the wider community.

Measuring what matters

We are committed to tracking and reporting ESG performance alongside program impact and financial results.

This includes monitoring emissions, energy use, travel, workforce metrics, governance outcomes and progress against our Reconciliation Action Plan. By measuring what matters and reporting transparently, we strengthen decision-making, improve performance over time and maintain the trust that enables lasting impact for the Reef.

Environmental, Social and Governance at a glance

Environment	Social	Governance
Pioneer and scale reef restoration and adaptation solutions	Foster a safe, inclusive and high-performing workplace	Board oversight of strategy, risk and ESG performance
Reduce operational carbon footprint, including travel and energy use	Deliver culturally appropriate, community-led programs	Strong ethical standards, policies and compliance
Transition to renewable electricity and improve energy efficiency	Strengthen Indigenous partnerships and reconciliation	Transparent financial management and independent audits
Apply sustainable procurement and merchandise standards	Support staff wellbeing, diversity and engagement	Clear reporting to donors, partners and regulators

ESG performance is measured and reviewed annually as part of the Foundation's governance and reporting framework.



Great Barrier
Reef Foundation