

Reef Trust Partnership

Traditional Owner Partnerships



Expression of Interest (EOI) Guidelines:

**Crown-of-Thorns Starfish Control and Reef
Restoration and Adaptation Science Traditional
Owner Technical Working Group**

Issued 5 June 2025

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Acknowledgment of Country

The Great Barrier Reef Foundation extends its deepest respect and recognition to all Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef and its Catchments as First Nations Peoples hold the hopes, dreams, traditions and cultures of the Reef.

Questions can be emailed to the Great Barrier Reef Foundation (the Foundation) grants inbox at applications@barrierreef.org.

Applicants must not initiate direct contact with any other Foundation personnel during the application or assessment phase. All enquiries about the application process must be via the grants inbox listed above.

1. About the Great Barrier Reef Foundation

The Great Barrier Reef Foundation (the Foundation) is the lead charity dedicated to protecting the Great Barrier Reef (the Reef) by funding science, technology, engineering and Traditional Owner solutions, and on-ground action to ensure its long-term conservation.

The Reef Trust partnership (RTP) between the Australian Government and the Foundation is centred on a landmark investment of \$443.3 million to build the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef. It commenced in July 2018 and was expected to finalise in 2024. However, the Traditional Owner component received an extension of 2 years to June 2026. See the Foundation's website [Great Barrier Reef Foundation](#) for more information.

2. About the Partnership and Traditional Owner Component

The Reef Trust Partnership investment is the largest single government investment in protecting the Reef and its Outstanding Universal Value. Importantly it has secured Australia's largest Traditional Owner Reef Protection Program, with \$51.8m of investment dedicated over the life of the Partnership. This investment aims to improve Traditional Owner engagement in the management of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and Catchment and acts to catalyse and accelerate important activities that Traditional Owners have planned to look after Country. These activities maintain cultural practice and build strong foundations for the future.

3. About this Expression of Interest

This expression of interest (EOI) is to identify suitably skilled Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owners through an open and transparent process, to fill a vacancy in the Crown-of-Thorns Starfish (COTS) and Reef Restoration and Adaptation Science (RRAS) Traditional Owner Technical Working Group (COTS-RRAS TWG).

The COTS-RRAS TWG is part of the existing Traditional Owner governance structure underpinning the co-delivery and co-evaluation of the Reef Trust Partnership Program. The TWG was established in early 2020 in response to calls from Traditional Owners—during a Reef-wide co-design workshop in May, 2019—for leadership roles in the design and delivery of programs that directly impact on and enable Traditional Owners to care for Land and Sea Country. The role of TWG members is to contribute their lived experiences, diverse skillsets and professional expertise to identify and create outcomes that have co-benefits to Traditional Owners of the Reef and Catchment areas. The TWG's are not representative structures, and thus members do not represent particular Traditional Owner groups.

The roles of TWG members include:

- participation in the delivery of the co-evaluation of outcomes under the Reef Trust Partnership since its establishment in 2018
- active participation and leadership in working group meetings and regional workshops to ground-truth ideas and concepts informed by members' knowledge of the aspirations and directions of Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owners
- provision of technical advice and support to the Foundation's Traditional Owner Partnerships team and Traditional Owner Advisory Group.

Key information about the commitment:

- The COTS-RRAS TWG hold at least four TWG meetings per year—with an aim to deliver two meetings online and two in-person.
- Members must be able to commit at least 20 days between July 2025 and 30 June 2026 to the role. This is comprised of:
 - preparation for, and attendance at TWG meetings
 - participation in meetings with the broader Traditional Owner governance groups and

other activities related to the co-delivery and co-evaluation of Traditional Owner led projects under the RTP Agreement

- The term of this appointment is until June 2026.
- Remuneration will be \$650 per day for contribution to meetings, plus reasonable expenses to attend meetings (including flights, accommodation and meals for in-person meetings).
- Younger people and emerging Reef Traditional Owner leaders and encouraged to apply.

Potential applicants should read these Guidelines in their entirety before deciding whether to submit an EOI.

Key Dates

Table 2. Key dates.

| | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Call for Expressions of Interest open | Thursday 5 June 2025 |
| Call for Expressions of Interest close | Friday 20 June 2025, 5:00pm AEST |
| Successful applicants engaged | 4 July 2025 |

4. About the COTS-RRAS Technical Working Group

The COTS-RRAS Technical Working Group (TWG) was formed through a collaborative partnership between the Foundation and the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS). Initially, it was the role of its members to take active leadership in the co-design and co-delivery of the Crown-of-thorns Starfish Control and Reef Restoration and Adaptation Science (COTS-RRAS) components of the Reef Trust Partnership Agreement and to contribute to related broader research and development. The COTS-RRAS TWG provide advice and seek to improve the engagement of Traditional Owners in Crown-of-thorns Starfish control and reef restoration and adaptation programs and research. It also collaborates with and provides advice to, the Foundation's Traditional Owner Advisory Group, and technical support and guidance to its Traditional Owner Partnership team. In the final year of RTP delivery, the COTS-RRAS TWG's role will also have a focus on evaluating outcomes and impacts for Traditional Owners from the program.

To date, this TWG and its members have actively and critically:

- advised and supported the Cairns-Port Douglas Reef Hub
- contributed to the co-design and piloting of a Biocultural Risk and Assessment Framework led by CSIRO and AIMS
- co-designed the \$1.77m Healing Country Grants program (2022-2024) for Traditional Owner-led reef projects and the \$5.33m Helping Country Grants program (2024-2026), resulting in 27 grants altogether across 22 separate Traditional Owner groups
- guided and participated in the design and execution of the 2024 Reef Resilience Symposium including as key members of the organising and steering committees and plenary speakers
- co-designed a COTS Control Leadership program for young Indigenous people of the Reef
- provided guidance on Traditional Owner engagement in the Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program
- provide guidance on the implementation of the RRAP Indigenous Futures Project—a micro-

- credentialling program for Traditional Owner rangers in reef restoration work
- provided advice to several research projects.

For the next year until June 2026, areas of focus for the COTS-RRAS TWG will include:

- leadership and participation in delivering the co-evaluation of outcomes under the Reef Trust Partnership program since its establishment in 2018
- showcasing stories of impact and learnings from the Healing Country and Helping Country grants programs to demonstrate the power of Traditional Owner-led actions, partnerships and approaches to managing Sea Country
- ongoing guidance to the implementation of several projects including
 - RRAP Indigenous Futures Project
 - A project expanding career pathway for young people into STEM (yet to be publicly announced)

5. Eligibility criteria

Who can apply?

To be eligible to submit an EOI, applicants need to meet the following requirements:

1. Identify as a Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner, or Great Barrier Reef Catchment Traditional Owner.
2. Knowledge, experience or interest in one of the two Reef Trust Partnership program areas (1) crown-of-thorns starfish control, (2) reef restoration and adaptation.
3. Availability to participate a minimum of 20 days per year, between July 2025 and June 2026
4. Ability to travel to meetings and workshops.
5. Strong on-ground relationships within own community, amongst other Reef Traditional Owners and with partners.

6. How applications are assessed

The information provided in response to this EOI will allow the Foundation to assess the technical knowledge and capability of individuals to support the delivery across the portfolio of work, including with respect to assisting lead a co-design, co-delivery and co-evaluation approach.

EOIs will be assessed through the following stages.

Stage one – Eligibility Assessment

Each EOI will be screened to check that the applicant is eligible to apply. Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria (listed above) will not be progressed to Stage Two.

Stage two - Capability Assessment

Eligible applications will be assessed by the Foundation based on the applicant's responses to the bullet points outlined in Section 7 below and taking into consideration the knowledge, experience and skills the applicant would bring to the role.

Stage three – Notification of applicants

Applicants will be informed in writing whether their application was successful or not.

7. How to apply

Step 1

Prepare an expression of interest (no more than two pages) outlining:

- how your knowledge, skills, experience and interests would contribute to the COTS-RRAS TWG
- a description of your relationships within your community, amongst other Reef Traditional Owners and with partners.
- your availability to commit to the minimum time requirements until 30 June 2026 for the work of the COTS-RRAS TWG (currently estimated at 20 days per year), including your ability to travel to meetings and workshops.
- which Traditional Owner group you identify with has Country within the Great Barrier Reef or Great Barrier Reef Catchment area. A letter of support from your Traditional Owner organisation or Elder will be highly regarded.

Step 2

Include a resume with two referees who may be contacted by the Foundation. One must be an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person who is aware of your skills and experience and your application for this role.

Step 3

Email your expression of interest to applications@barrierreef.org by 5:00pm AEST, Friday 20 June 2025.

8. Further information

- [Traditional Owner Governance- Great Barrier Reef Foundation and the Reef Trust Partnership](#)
- [Summary Report from the Co-design Workshop in May 2019](#)

For any further questions applicants may contact the Foundation by reaching out to:

Katrina Beattie, Director Traditional Owner Partnerships via email kbeattie@barrierreef.org.