

NERP Tropical Ecosystems Hub Project Factsheet

Socio-economic systems and reef resilience

Project leader: Dr Natalie Stoeckl (JCU)

Project summary

The Great Barrier Reef (GBR) is famous for its spectacular coral, rich biodiversity and natural beauty. However, none of these important assets are bought or sold in the marketplace, so none are explicitly 'valued' with a price. Recognising that absence of price does not mean absence of value, this project seeks to improve our understanding of these non-market 'values' to a variety of different stakeholders. How important are pristine beaches, iconic marine mammals or healthy coral reefs to the community, tourists and the tourism industry? How would people feel if some of these 'values' were degraded (e.g. if water clarity declined, or if fish were less abundant)?

Why this research is needed

Today's business leaders and policy makers need information that helps them deal with complex problems affecting those living in and around World Heritage Areas. They may need to answer questions such as:

- Would residents be happier, and/or would more tourists come to the region if there were more opportunities to enjoy a region's non-market values?
- What losses would different stakeholder groups suffer if development eroded some of the region's values?

The project will provide vitally important information that will help people in and around the GBR answer questions such as these. It will also help to improve methods for assessing non-market values which can be used throughout the world.

Research-user focus

The project will deliver outcomes that are useful to a range of stakeholders including local, state and Australian government bodies, the tourism sector and environmental managers. Identified research users include the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, the Queensland Government, Tropical Tourism North Queensland, the Queensland Seafood Industry Association and the Alliance for Sustainable Tourism.



Photo: GBRMPA

What a great catch!



Photo: Matt Curnock

Exploring the deep blue

Outcomes

Information generated from this project will help research-users assess conservation, management and marketing priorities and to make predictions about the way in which changes in population and tourist numbers might affect those priorities.



Australian National University



Find this project at nerptropical.edu.au
Theme 3: Managing for Resilient Tropical Systems
Program 10: Socio-economic value of GBR goods and services
Project: 10.2

For more information about this project, contact:
Natalie Stoeckl, James Cook University
Natalie.stoeckl@jcu.edu.au

