

World Heritage Attributes and Values Identified for Magnetic Island and the Surrounding Marine Environment

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2005

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Disclaimer

Views expressed by the authors do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Australian Government.

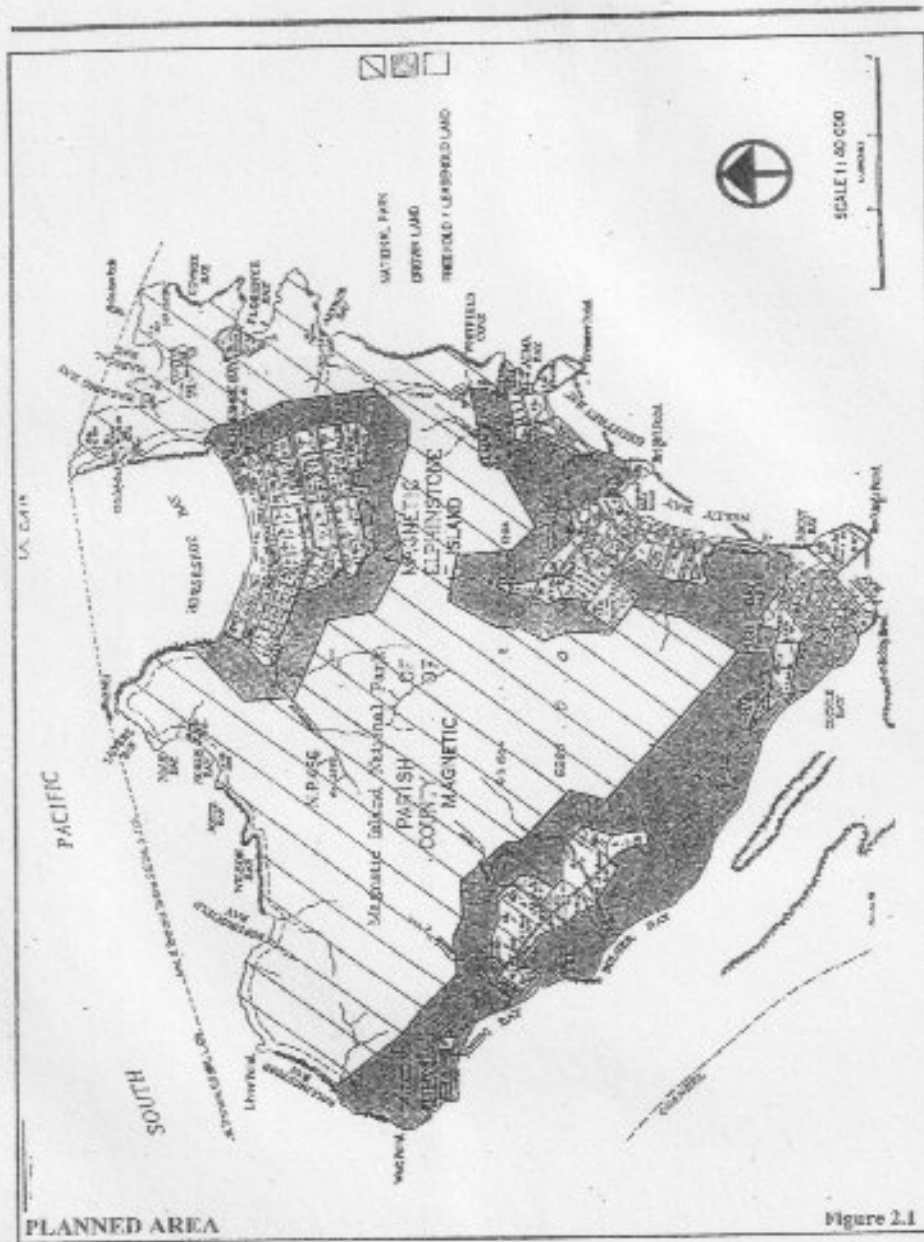


Figure 2.1

Land Tenure Magnetic Island Plan 1994
Source: City of Townsville Development Control Plan (1994)

Introduction

This study was commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Heritage to

- describe the World Heritage (WH) attributes and values identified for Magnetic Island and the surrounding marine environment (to 500m from mean low water); and
- explain both their World Heritage significance and their relative contribution to the World Heritage attributes and values of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWHA).

This report provides a systematic but local-scale collation and explanation of specific WH values or groups of values on the basis of available information. It was developed through an initial desk study of available literature. An initial draft was discussed at an Expert Workshop ([Appendix 2](#)) in Townsville to advise on omissions and errors of interpretation. Both authors made brief field visits to Magnetic Island before revising the report to take account of new information identified through the Expert Workshop and field visits. The scope of the commissioned study does not provide for consideration and consultation leading to recommendations regarding the management of those values.

The extent to which values expressed on Magnetic Island are expressed elsewhere in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area is relevant to addressing the obligations of protection and conservation. This report draws on published and "grey" literature to identify Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area values:

- which are uniquely expressed on Magnetic Island;
- for which Magnetic Island contains a highly significant expression or the majority of expressions in the GBRWHA; and
- for which Magnetic Island is a minor component of expression of a value that is widely expressed in the GBRWHA.

Within the limits of available information at appropriate scales, the report identifies locations where values or combinations of values are well expressed. It also identifies information needs for achieving better understanding of the quality and distribution of values within Magnetic Island.

World Heritage Obligations

The World Heritage Convention came into force in 1975. As a party to the World Heritage Convention, Australia has accepted an obligation to identify areas of outstanding universal value and to nominate them for inscription on the Register of World Heritage Properties. There are consequent obligations from articles 4 to 7 of the Convention to take appropriate action for protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of the values of World Heritage Properties. The ongoing work of the World Heritage Committee is advised by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) with respect to natural heritage matters and the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) with respect to cultural heritage matters. Under Article 5 of the Convention parties have obligations for monitoring, research and reporting on the condition and management of properties.

The Great Barrier Reef was inscribed on the Register of World Heritage Properties on 30 October 1981. It was one of the earliest World Heritage nominations and it remains the largest World Heritage Property worldwide. The area nominated included all marine, intertidal and island areas within the outer boundaries of the area defined as the Great Barrier Reef Region in Schedule 1 of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act (1975).

The nomination was prepared in accordance with the 1978 *World Heritage Operational Guidelines*. It addressed the detailed description and inventory of the natural and cultural heritage at the broad ecosystem scale and was not required to identify values at any greater level of specificity. It was not intended as a comprehensive document for driving management decisions.

The management basis of the 1981 nomination was that the Great Barrier Reef Region as defined in the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act (1975)* would progressively be zoned to become the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and that areas of Queensland within the outer boundaries of the Region would be managed in a complementary manner. The nomination cited Section 32(7) of the *Act*:

- “In the preparation of the plan, regard shall be had to the following objects:
- (a) the conservation of the Great Barrier Reef;
 - (b) the regulation of the use of the Marine Park so as to protect the Great Barrier Reef while allowing the reasonable use of the Great Barrier Reef Region;
 - (c) the regulation of activities that exploit the resources of the Great Barrier Reef Region so as to minimize the effect of those activities on the Great Barrier Reef;
 - (d) the reservation of some areas of the Great Barrier Reef for its appreciation and enjoyment by the public; and

