



Australian Government
Climate Change Authority



Management of the Great Barrier Reef in a changing environment

Global Eco Asia-Pacific Conference
Townsville 26-28 November 2018
Wendy Craik AM

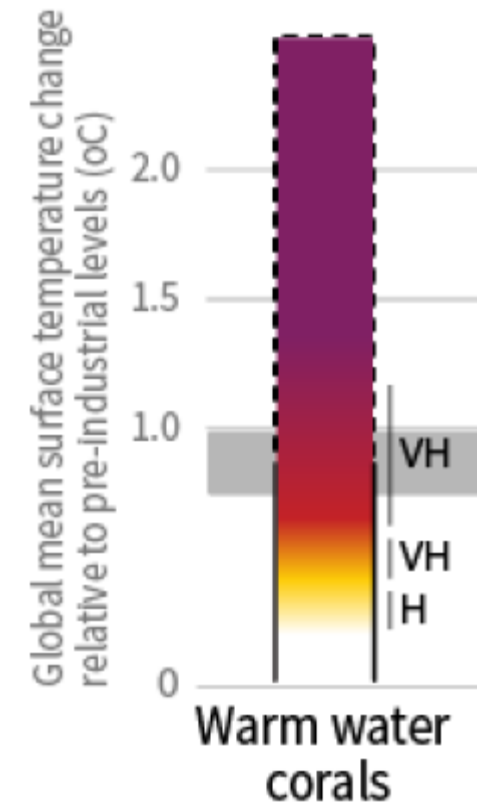
The Great Barrier Reef: a valuable icon

- An internationally significant world heritage listed Australian icon
- Natural beauty, size and biological diversity
- Cultural and heritage values
- 2.7 million visitors in 2016/17
- Economic value
 - Contributes \$6.4 billion to the Australian economy (0.4 per cent of GDP)
 - Supports 64,000 jobs
 - Asset value estimated at \$56 billion



An icon under pressure: risks to the Reef

- Major pressures on the Reef: from inside marine park to outside and cumulative and long term
 - Climate change
 - Poor water quality from land-based run-off
 - Coastal development



Confidence level for transition: L=Low, M=Medium, H=High and VH=Very high

The last decade

- Increase in visitation
- Coral bleaching 2016/17
- Cyclone Debbie 2017 – tenth since 2005
- LNG plant Curtis Island
- Leaking dredge spoil Gladstone
- Abbott Point expansion and dredge spoil dumping approvals
- Hay Point dredge spoil dumping permit
- Ban on dumping capital spoil
- 2015 ANAO Audit of GBRMPA permits and approvals
- Carmichael coal mine and rail to Abbott Point



Consequences of changes

- Increase in international scrutiny – UNESCO, IUCN
- More organisations involved – collaboration and competition
- Changes in scope of GBRMPA functions and resources
 - Conservation to resilience and restoration
- 2050 Reef Sustainability Plan



Reef 2050: changed arrangements

- The Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan – overarching framework for Reef protection and management from 2015 to 2050
- Preceded by Water Quality Protection Plans: 2003, 2009, 2013, 2018
- Implemented by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the Australian and Queensland governments
- Vision: to ensure the Great Barrier Reef continues to improve on its Outstanding Universal Value every decade between now and 2050 to be a natural wonder for each successive generation to come.



2017 Review of GBRMPA

- 2006 review of GBRMPA: “Its governance framework will be shaped by the changing needs of the Reef”
- 2017 GBRMPA Review to look at
 - Board role, composition and responsibilities
 - Combined Chair/CEO position in supporting GBRMPA functions
- Provide advice on changes to corporate governance

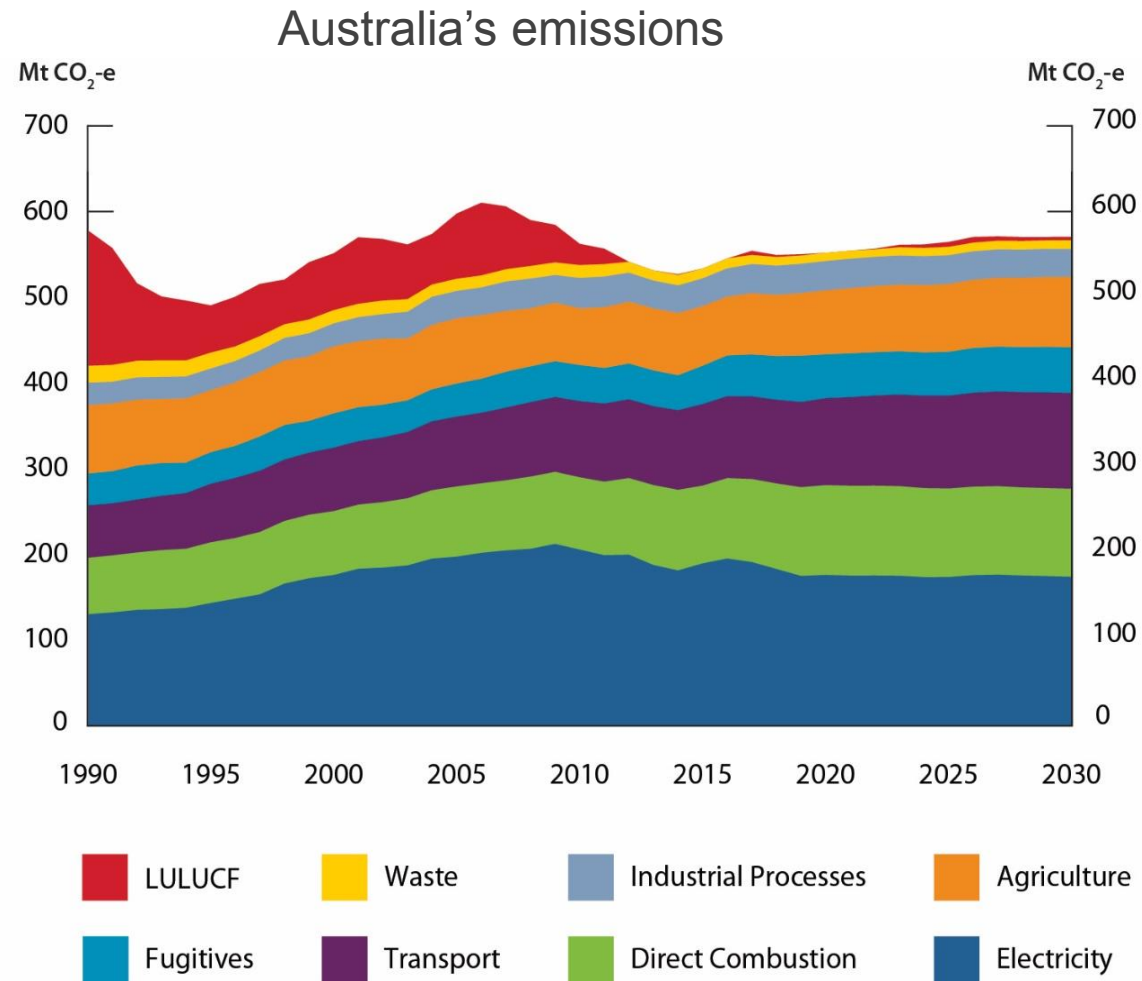


2017 Review recommendations

- Separate part time Chair and CEO
- Board of seven: Chair, CEO, five others including maintenance of indigenous, Reef tourism and Queensland expertise plus two with other skills, backgrounds and geographic perspectives
- Two terms max for Board members
- Conflicts of interest – not interest group executive
- Joint Statements of Ministerial Expectations for Australian Government agencies – GBR objectives, roles, responsibilities and coordination



Climate change: national emissions projections 2017



Source: Department of the Environment and Energy, Australia's emissions projections, 2017

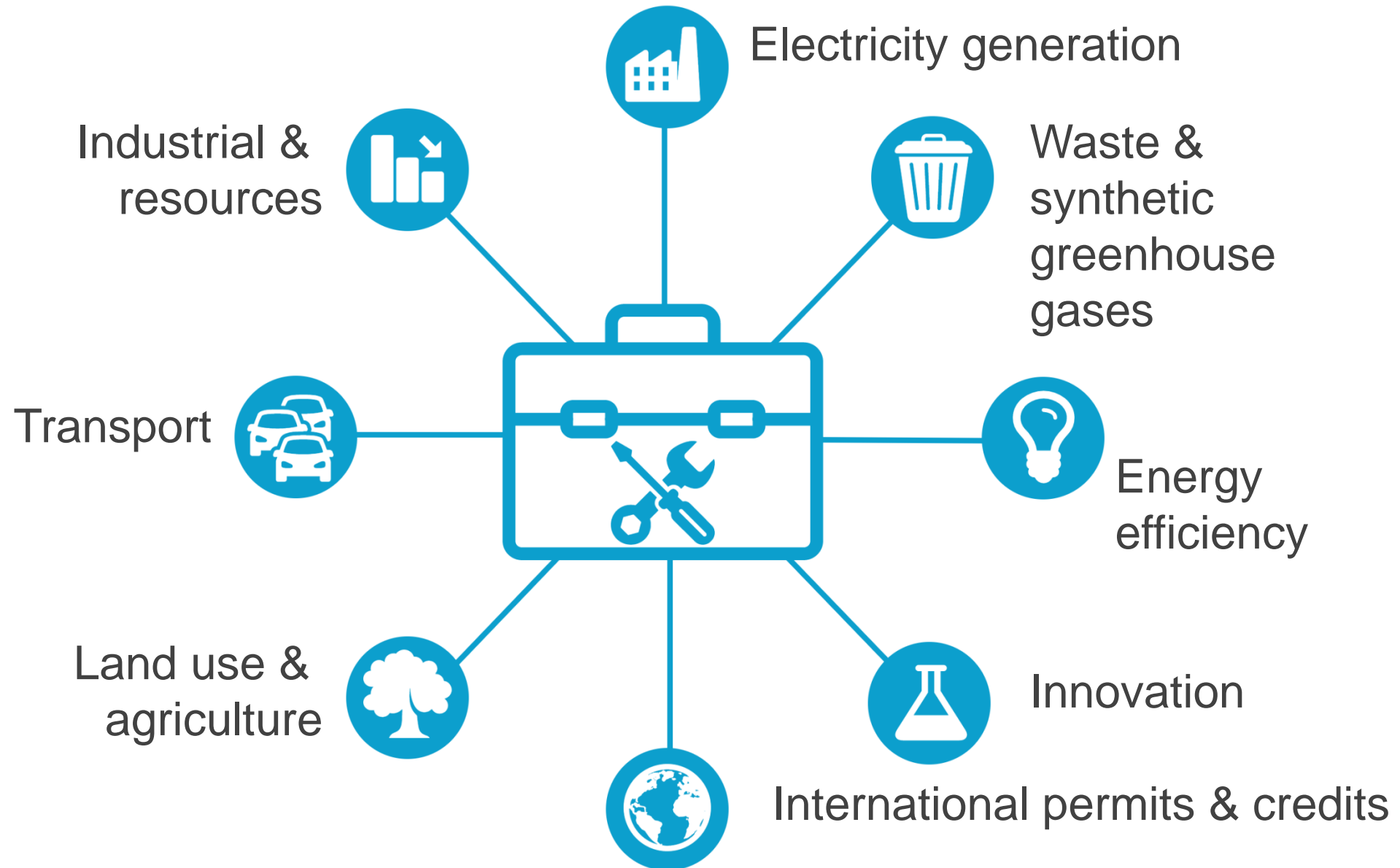


Commonwealth Government policies on climate change

- Emissions Reduction Fund
- Safeguard mechanism
- Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC)
- Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA)
- National Energy Productivity Plan
- Renewable Energy Target
- National Carbon Offset Standard (NCOS)
- National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting scheme



CCA 2016 Special Review - policy toolkit



CCA stocktakes of action to update 2016 advice

- Stocktake of government policies
- Stocktake of industry action
- Stocktake of international action
- Review of technology, modelling
- Review 2016 advice in the light of these stocktakes

GBR responses to climate change

- Reef 2050
- Blueprint for Resilience



Opportunities in Reef management

- Water Quality Targets
 - more than \$600 million in approved Australian and Queensland government investment through to 2022
- Emissions Reduction Fund
 - methods can credit vegetation projects that improve water quality in the Reef
- Reef Credits Initiative
 - projects designed to rebuild wetlands and replant endangered rainforest to filter water before it reaches the Reef
- Queensland Land Restoration Fund
 - carbon farming projects with environmental and economic co-benefits



CCA recommendations on ERF

- Co-fund projects with for example Reef Trust for multiple benefits
 - water quality, reduced farm runoff, sequestering carbon and productivity benefits
- Develop a new ERF method to reward fertiliser reductions from cane farming – like existing cotton method
 - Reduces fertiliser costs and emissions and improves water quality
- Reef Credits – Babinda project rebuilds wetlands and rainforest to create carbon offsets
 - Qantas is a purchaser



Adaptation

- Technological innovations
 - Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program
 - Heat resilient corals, cold water intrusions, eco/geo engineering
 - Unknown unknowns
- Adaption of tourism activities
- Other approaches
 - Artificial reefs
 - ‘Out of water’ experience, improve regional infrastructure



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The future

- Challenging
- Uncertain
- Concerted effort required
- Importance of technological advances
- And community support

