



*How Australians feel about
the Great Barrier Reef*

May 2018

Background



- We have reached a turning point in the way we speak about the Great Barrier Reef.
- General view that the Australian community are fatigued of feeling guilty or frightened about the state of the Great Barrier Reef and with no hope of solutions.
- There is good news to share alongside the bad – but we are not in control of the conversation.
- We are at risk of people turning away from the Reef if they see the challenge to protect it as too big.
- We all have a role to play in using our voice to bring hope for the Reef.

Research objectives



In early 2018, the GBRF engaged KPMG to understand:

- how best to raise community awareness and understanding of the Reef
- the messages that will resonate with Australians
- how to get more people engaged in protecting the Reef.

Research Methodology

Qualitative: 8 exploratory focus groups (Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne) across a range of demographics and ranging from ‘really engaged’ to general community

Quantitative: online survey conducted across Australia, USA, UK and Germany

Key findings



- Australians are well aware of the threats facing The Reef.
- There is already a reasonable proportion of the community willing to act to protect the Reef.
- Those who experience the reef, love the reef: and this translates into greater engagement and action.
- At the time of the research, recall of media about The Reef is high – and threats to the Reef dominate.
- Communications messaging needs to inspire hope and pride, and bring The Reef alive.
- The Great Barrier Reef is seen as a global issue and is a key driver for visitation to Australia.

We uncovered 4 drivers to communication & engagement



PRIDE

One of the seven natural wonders of the world.



ASPIRATION

Those who experience the Reef love it.



PROTECTIVENESS

The community feel more protective when they have a 'face' to act upon.



HOPE

The community are more likely to engage if they feel hopeful.

Pride



- Australians want to feel proud of the Great Barrier Reef.
- Australians are extremely interested in environmental/conservation issues. Equaling their interest in health and disability issues.
- The conservation of the GBR is the lead environmental issue of interest to Australians.
- Australians are **well aware of the threats** to the Reef.
- When the focus appears to be *only* on threats to the Reef, there is a risk of diminishing the special value of the Reef. Reigniting the national pride Australians feel in the Reef drives engagement and could lead to better action.

Aspiration



- Those who experience the reef, love the reef
- The focus groups highlighted that those who visit the Reef:
 - love the Reef
 - want their children to see the Reef
 - advocate for the Reef
 - will inspire others to visit the Reef
 - better understand the issues facing the Reef
 - are keen to help and protect the Reef
- Encouraging Australians to visit The Great Barrier Reef – including through **beautiful, inspirational imagery** - should be a cornerstone of any communications strategy.

Protectiveness



- Making people feel protective, makes them want to act
- In the focus groups, we could see that the emotional territory of Our reef is home to endangered and protected species resonated well.
- Even those skeptical to climate change can have a desire to help and protect animals
- Animals brought the Reef to life, and gave the Reef a face.
- The community feels more protective when they have a 'face' or a voice to act upon.

Hope



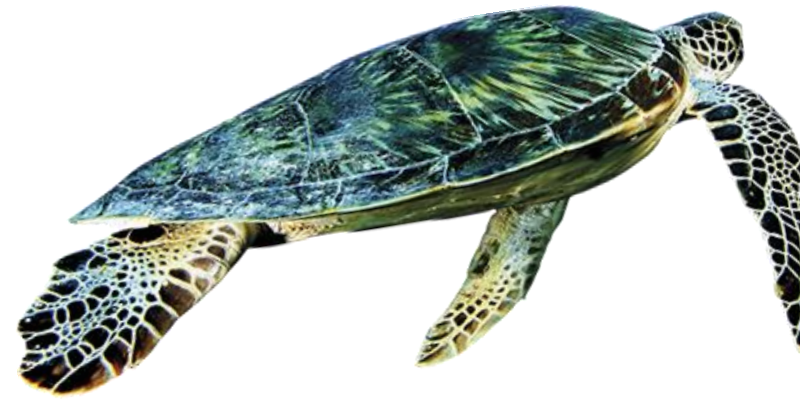
- Australians need to feel hope that something can, and is being done for the Great Barrier Reef
- We tested which ‘solutions’ or ‘actions’ prompted the strongest response.
- There was strong interest in the role of science and scientific discoveries.
- Positive scientific contributions create hope, optimism and engagement.
- However the research also shows that communications regarding science and the natural world need to be carefully constructed.

Reefonomics

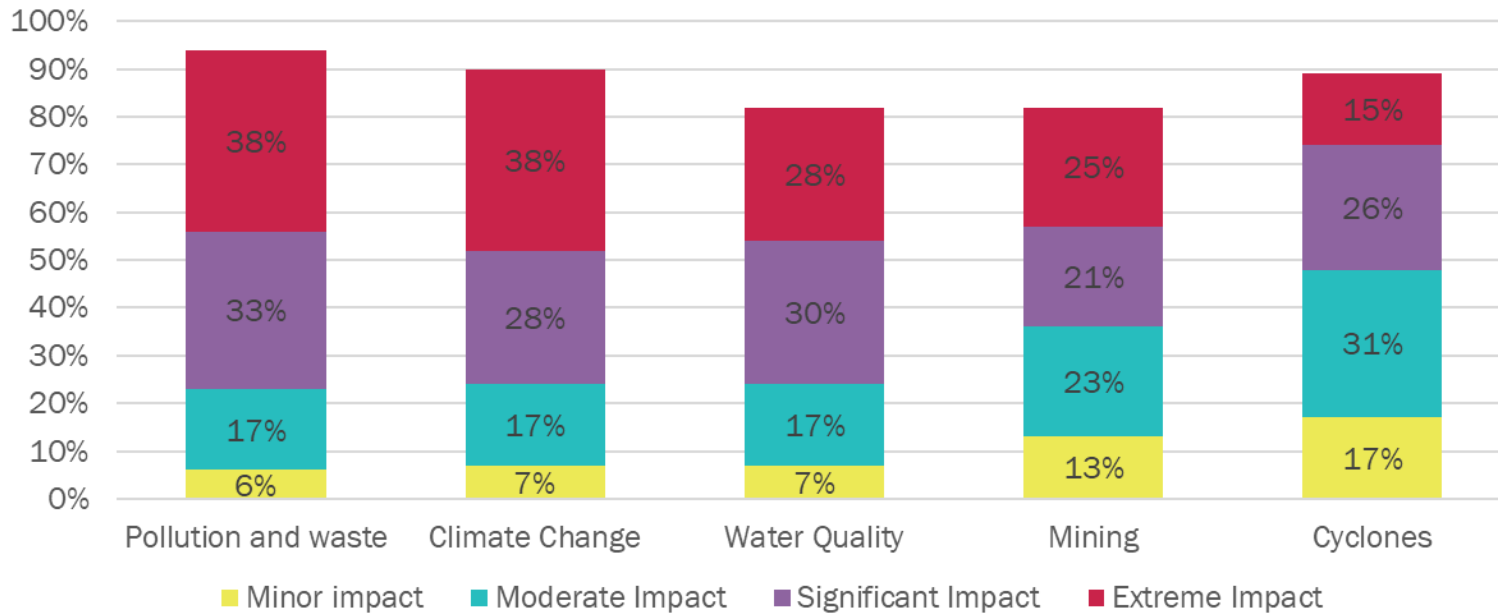


- In 2017 the GBRF commissioned Deloitte Access Economics to value the Reef.
- We tested if the fact that Reef provides jobs and supports our economy prompts greater engagement.
- The general community seemed unswayed by economics as a reason for action – the argument can be seen to be used by both sides of the debate, and (except for those directly employed) to have small personal relevance.

Competing threats



Q. How much of an impact do you believe the following issues have to the Reef?





The power of a visit

Almost everyone (95%) who has visited the Reef would recommend it to people in their lives.

