

Changes in the state of Great Barrier Reef tourism from 2013 to 2017, and challenges for its future

Matt Curnock – CSIRO Land and Water, Townsville

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National Environmental
Research Program



Australian Government
Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority

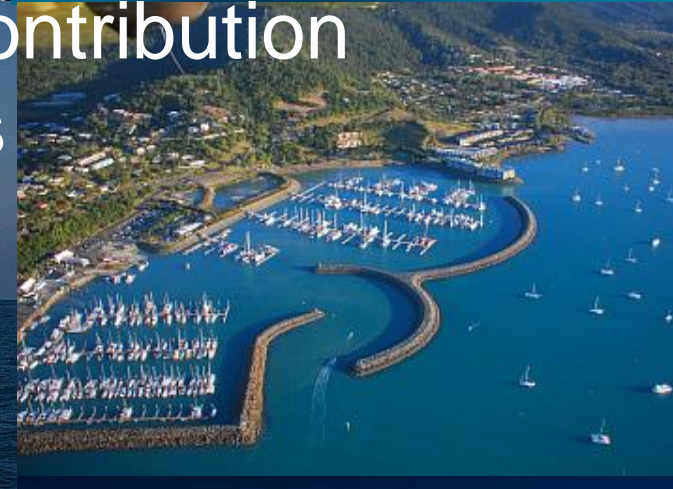


GREAT BARRIER REEF
foundation



\$5.7B annual economic contribution
58,980 FTE jobs

(Deloitte Access Economics, 2017)



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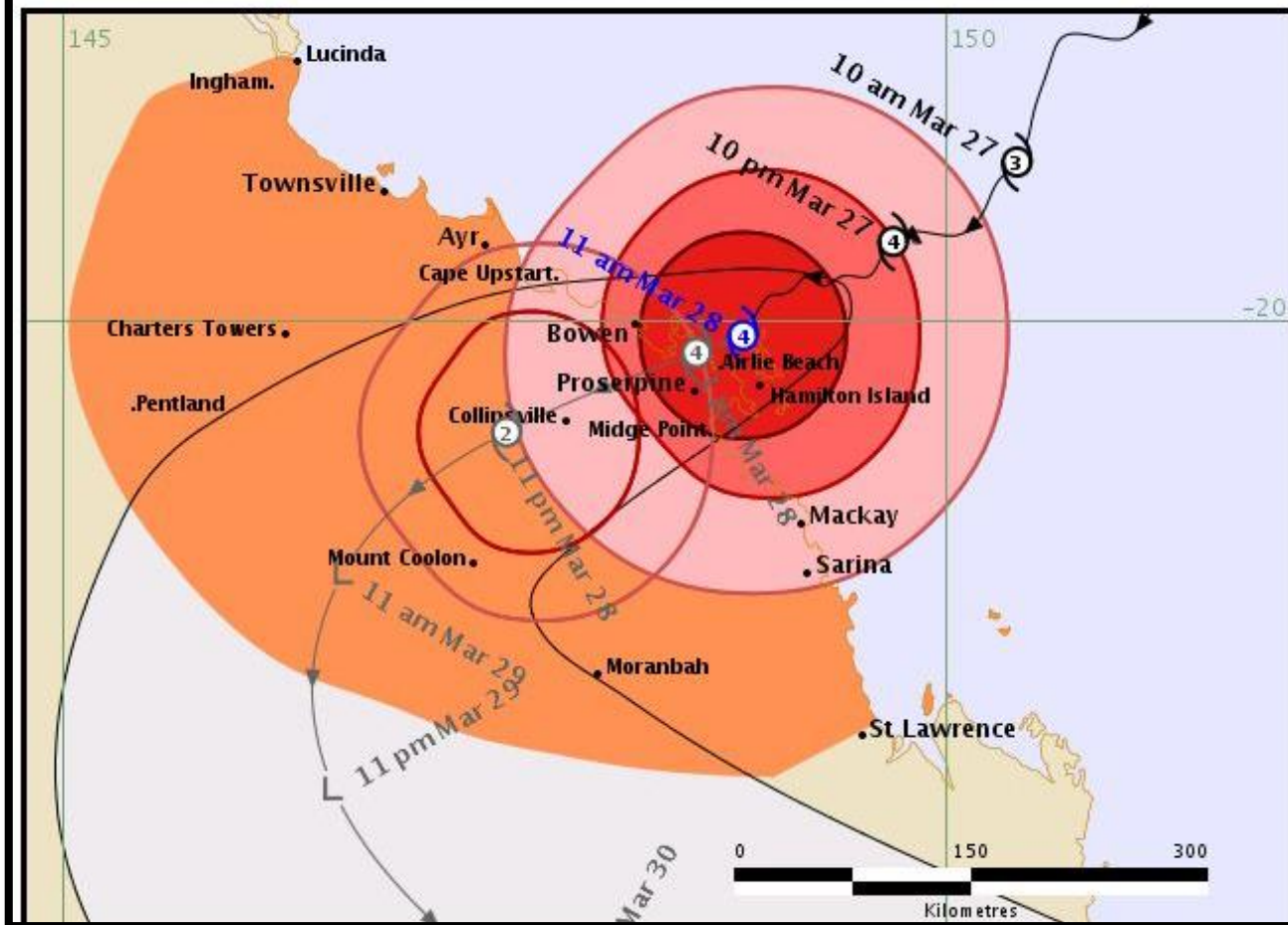


Maps from ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies

<https://www.coralcoe.org.au/for-managers/coral-bleaching-and-the-great-barrier-reef>

Severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie

Issued at 11:04 am AEST Tuesday 28 March 2017. Refer to latest Tropical Cyclone Advice.



from the Bureau of Meteorology

<http://www.bom.gov.au/cyclone/history/debbie17.shtml>

Marine Park tourist visitation – 11 years to June 2018

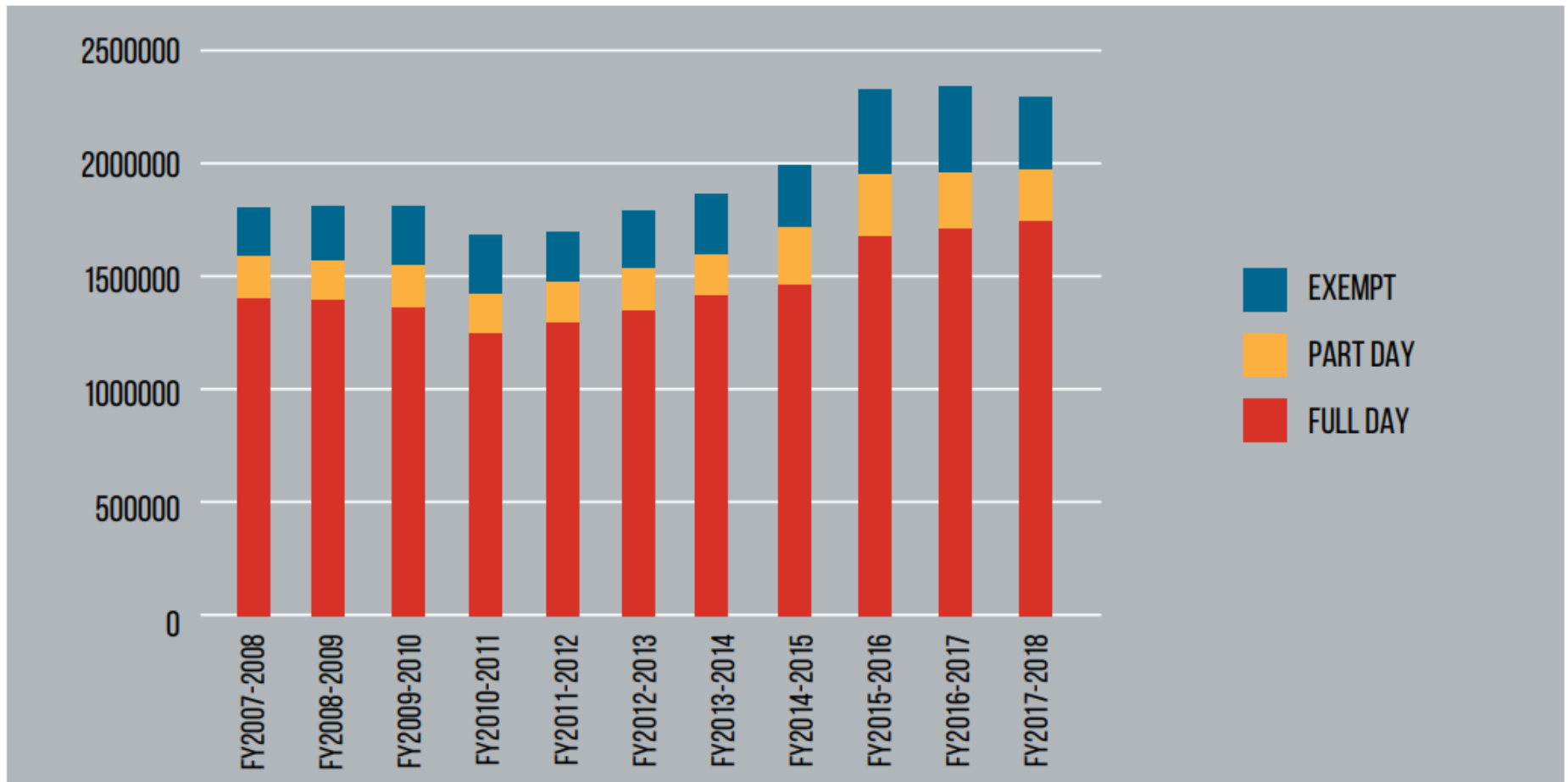


Figure 10: Tourism visits* to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park since 2007–08

This includes full-day and part-day visitors, and passenger exempt from the environmental management charge. *These figures do not include stand-alone coral viewing activities and scenic flights. Source: Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority environmental management charge records

National & international media reporting

Obituary: Great Barrier Reef (25 Million BC-2016)

Climate change and ocean acidification have killed off one of the most spectacular features on the planet.

By: Rowan Jacobsen Oct 11, 2016



Original article: Outside Online

<https://www.outsideonline.com/2112086/obituary-great-barrier-reef-25-million-bc-2016>



SELTMP – sampling in 2013 & 2017

2013:

2877 tourists in region

3182 coastal residents

2002 online Australians

211 commercial fishers

119 tourism operators

= 8391 respondents

2017:

1804 tourists in region

1933 coastal residents

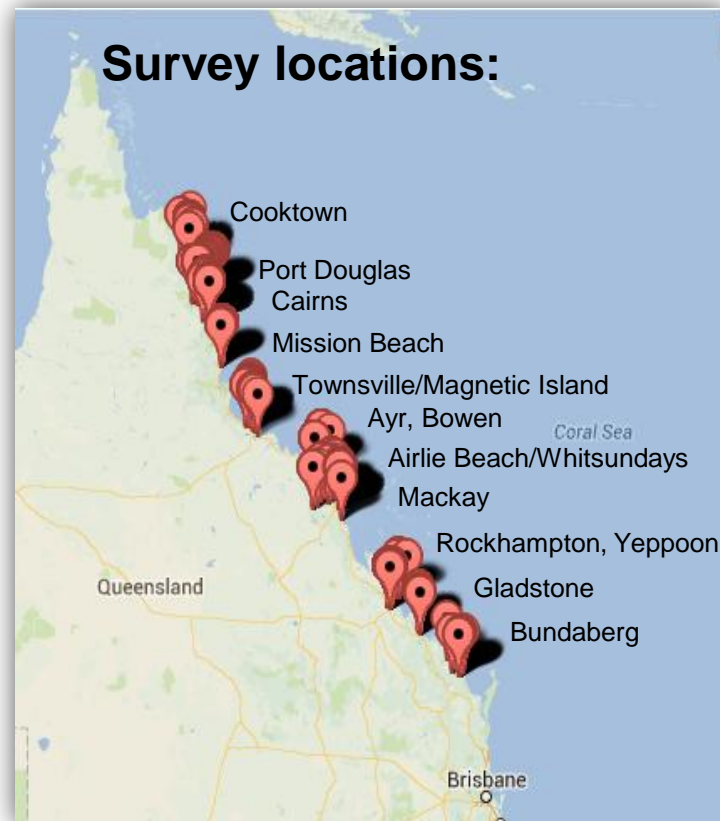
1028 online Australians

91 commercial fishers

94 tourism operators

= 4950 respondents

Survey locations:



Tourists in the GBR region: 2013 & 2017 samples

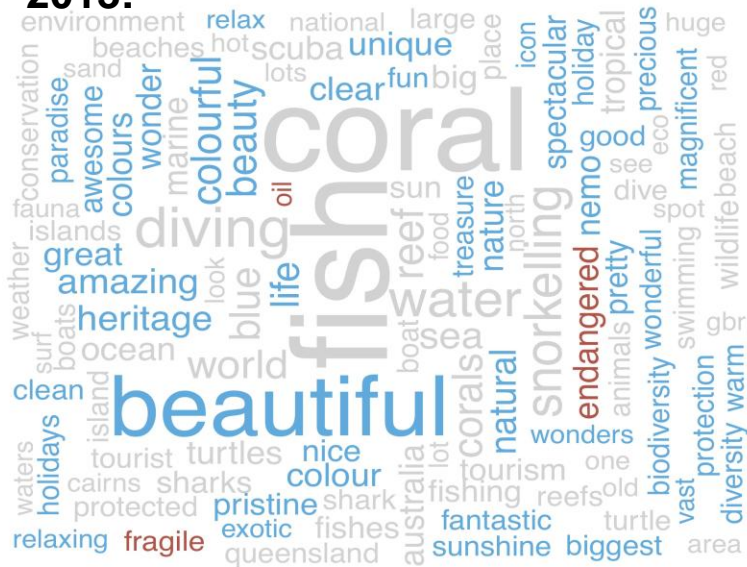
Table 1: SELTMP tourist sample demographics in 2013 and 2017.

	2013 Domestic tourists (n=1557)	2017 Domestic tourists (n=831)	2013 International tourists (n=1286)	2017 International tourists (n=805)
Mean age (\pm SE; range)	48.9 (\pm 0.45; 15-94)	43.5 (\pm 0.64; 15-87)	28.5 (\pm 0.34; 15-81)	27.4 (\pm 0.42; 16-94)
Gender (F:M; %)	46:54	51:49	55:45	57:43
Visited GBR this trip?	58%	58%	85%	67%
Took a paid GBR tour?	22%	25%	52%	46%
First time visitor to GBR region?	23%	23%	84%	86%
Top 5 states/countries of origin (ranked)	QLD (37%) NSW & ACT (28%) VIC (24%) SA (4%) WA (4%)	QLD (40%) NSW & ACT (26%) VIC (22%) WA (5%) SA (3%)	UK (25%) Germany (18%) France (12%) USA (8%) New Zealand (5%) <i>(54 countries total)</i>	Germany (19%) UK (19%) USA (11%) France (11%) Netherlands (6%) <i>(35 countries total)</i>

“What are the first words that come to mind when you think of the Great Barrier Reef?”

2013:

a

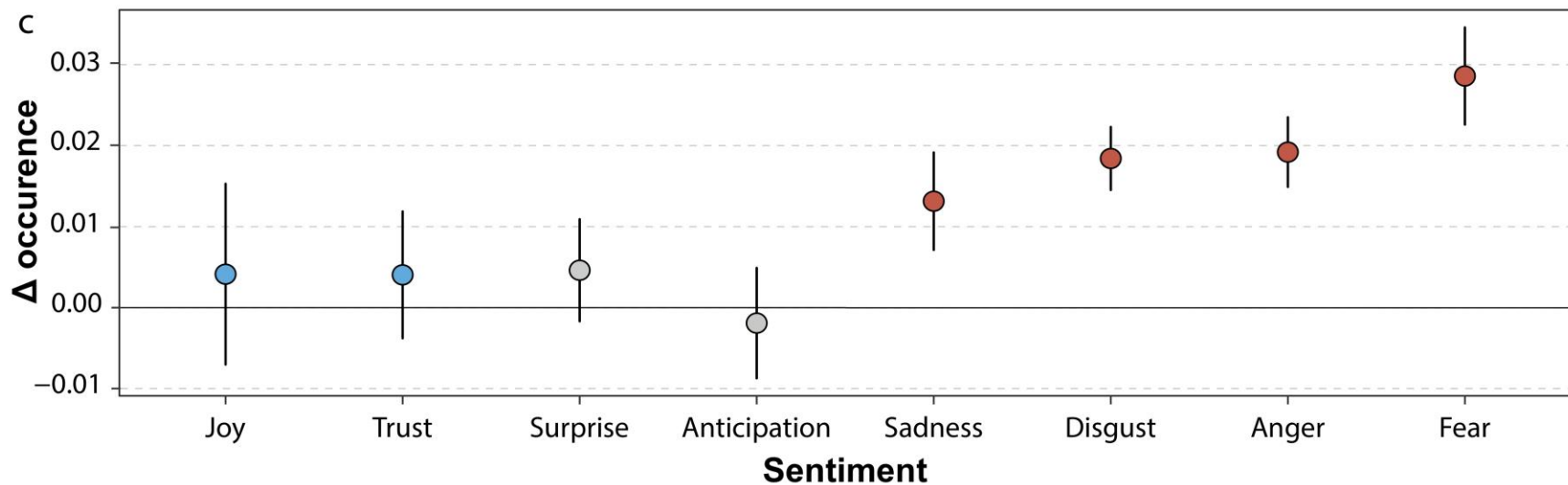


2017:

b



C



Key findings: *Declines* in tourist satisfaction, perceptions of GBR condition and aesthetics, and optimism

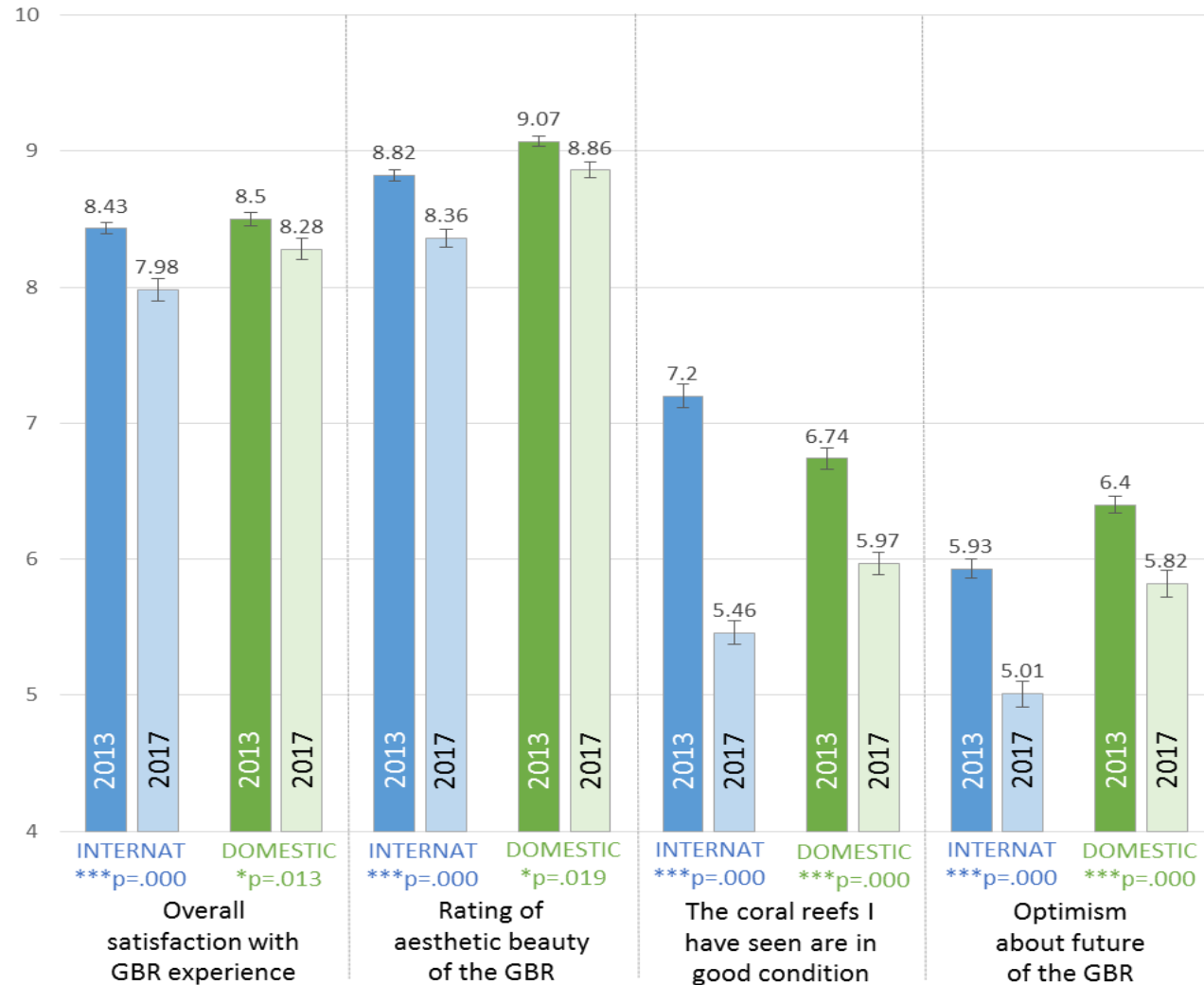


Figure 1: Comparison of mean ratings (1-10 scale; 2013 and 2017; \pm SE) and statistical test results for international and domestic tourists in the GBR region, comparing ratings of (a) their overall satisfaction with their GBR experience, (b) perceived aesthetic beauty of the GBR, (c) perceived condition of coral reef(s) that they saw during their visit, and (d) levels of optimism for the future of the GBR. NB. Non-parametric Mann-Whitney Tests used for (a – c), Independent samples T-Test used for (d).

Key findings: *Increase* in values associated with the Reef

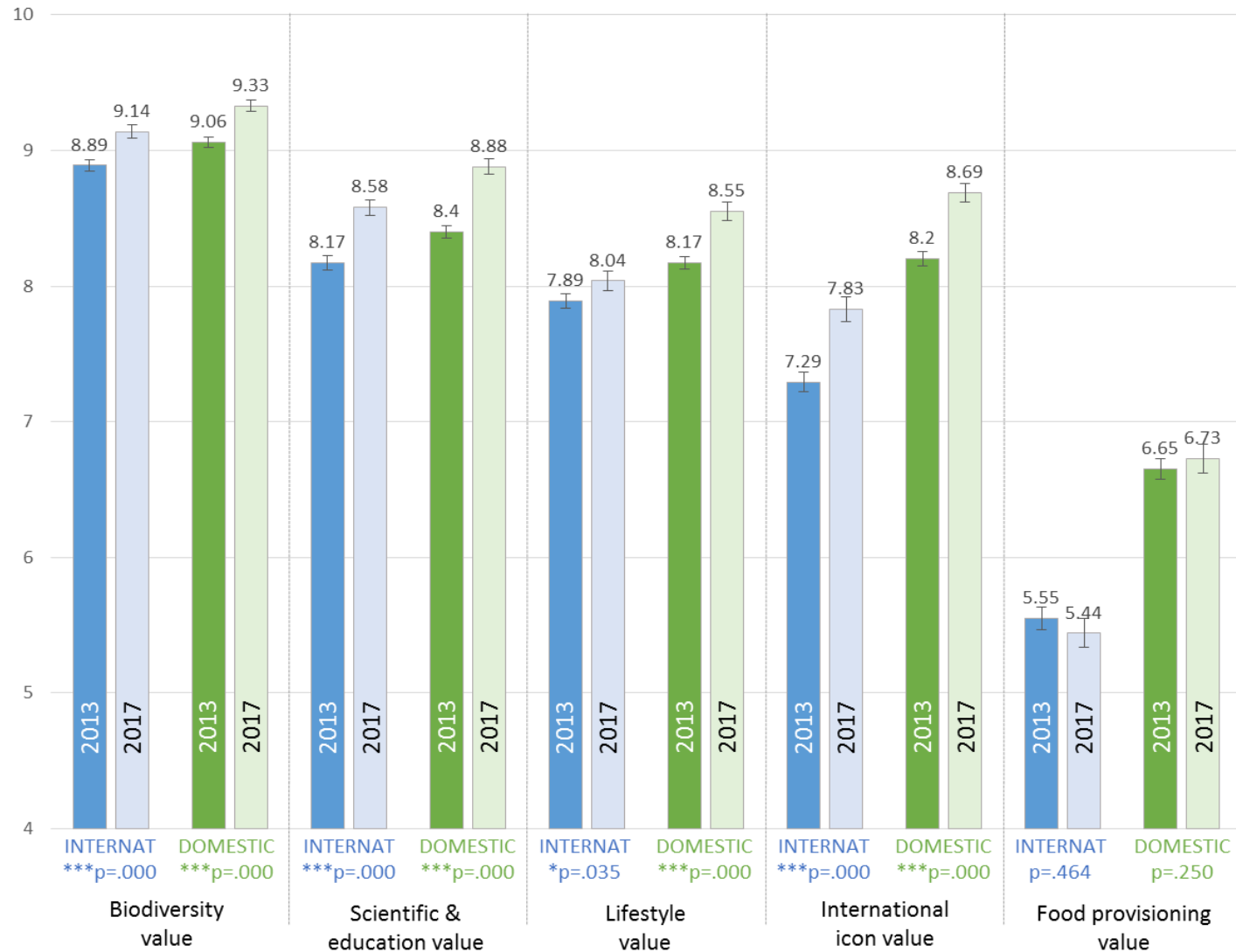


Figure 3: Comparison of mean ratings (2013 and 2017; \pm SE) and statistical test results for international and domestic tourists in the GBR region, comparing ratings of relative strength of values associated with the GBR, including (a) biodiversity value, (b) scientific and education value, (c) lifestyle value, (d) international icon value, and (e) food provisioning value. *NB. Non-parametric Mann-Whitney Tests used for (a – d), Independent samples T-Test used for (e).*

Growth of “last chance” tourism?

JOURNAL OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM, 2017
VOL. 25, NO. 3, 397–415
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2016.1213849>

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group

Last chance tourism and the Great Barrier Reef

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ABSTRACT

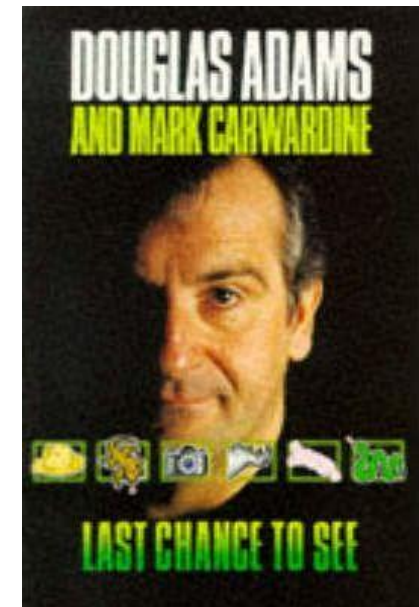
The publically documented decline in health of the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) has led to its labelling, in media and academic literature, as a last chance tourism destination. That is, a place tourists travel to experience before it is gone. While the GBR has been labelled as such, no empirical evidence has identified that this is actually occurring. This article explores if tourists are motivated to visit the GBR to see it before it's gone, and examines the level of concern tourists have about the range of issues that are threatening the GBR. Drawing on 235 questionnaires with on-site tourists, the results indicate that tourists are seeking travel to the GBR in a bid to see the reef before it's too late. These tourists – identified as “seeking a last chance experience” – were also found to be more environmentally conscious, and have a higher level of concern about the overall health of the GBR. In terms of threats to the GBR, respondents indicated that they were mainly concerned about coral bleaching/disease and climate change, with tourism only considered as a moderate to low concern. The implications of this are discussed.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 6 January 2016
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KEYWORDS

Climate change; Great Barrier Reef; last chance tourism; sustainable tourism; Australia



Key findings: *Increase* in protective sentiment...

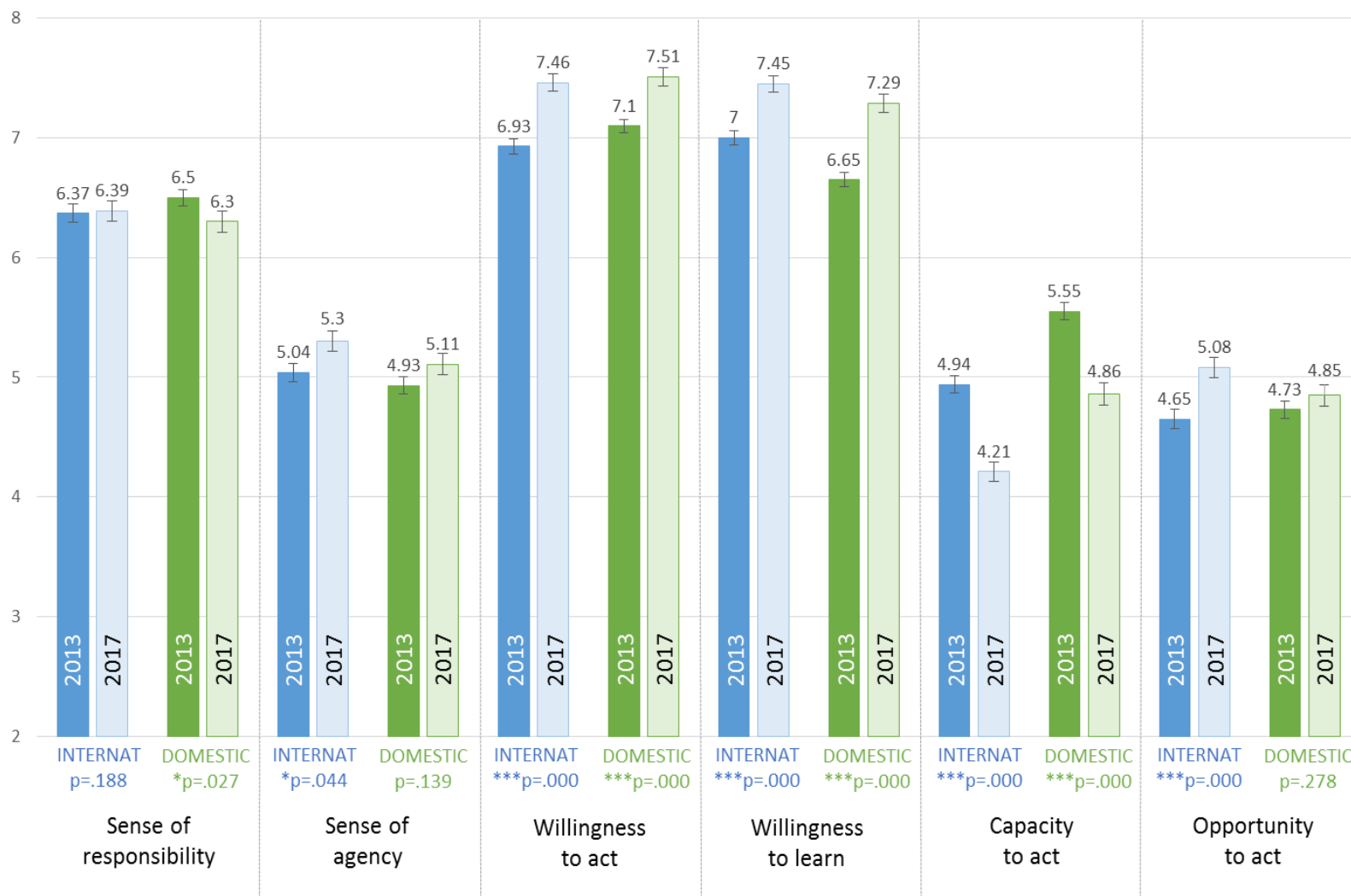


Figure 4: Comparison of mean ratings (2013 and 2017; \pm SE) and statistical test results for international and domestic tourists in the GBR region, comparing agreement ratings indicating stewardship sentiment and empowerment to take action to reduce impacts on the GBR. Specific indicators include (a) sense of responsibility, (b) sense of agency, (c) willingness to act, (d) willingness to learn, (e) capacity to act, and (f) opportunity to act. NB. Ratings of agreement for negatively worded statements (a, b, f) are inverted. Non-parametric Mann-Whitney Tests used for (a, c, d), Independent samples T-Tests used for (b, e, f).

Key findings: *Decline in trust...*

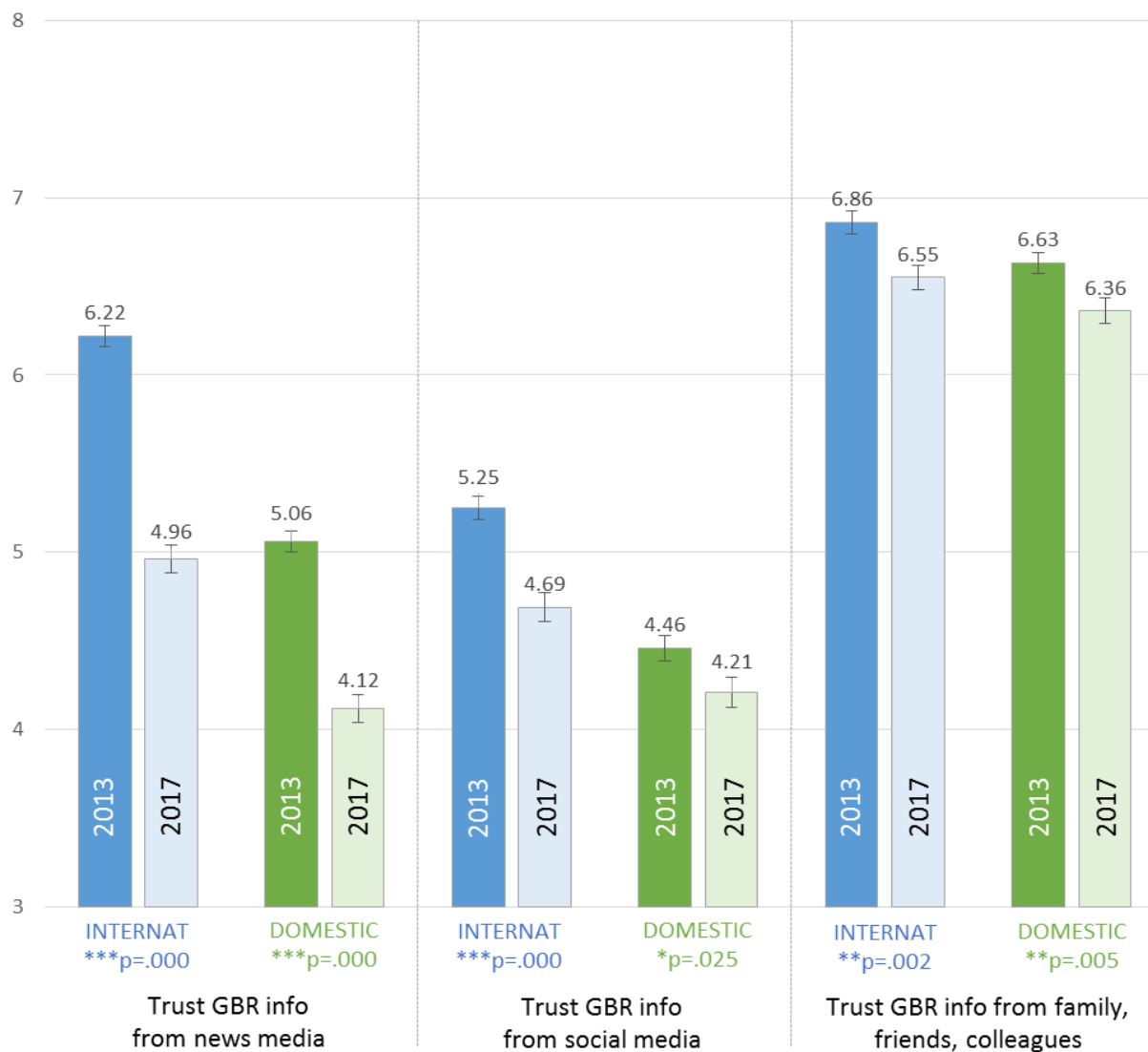
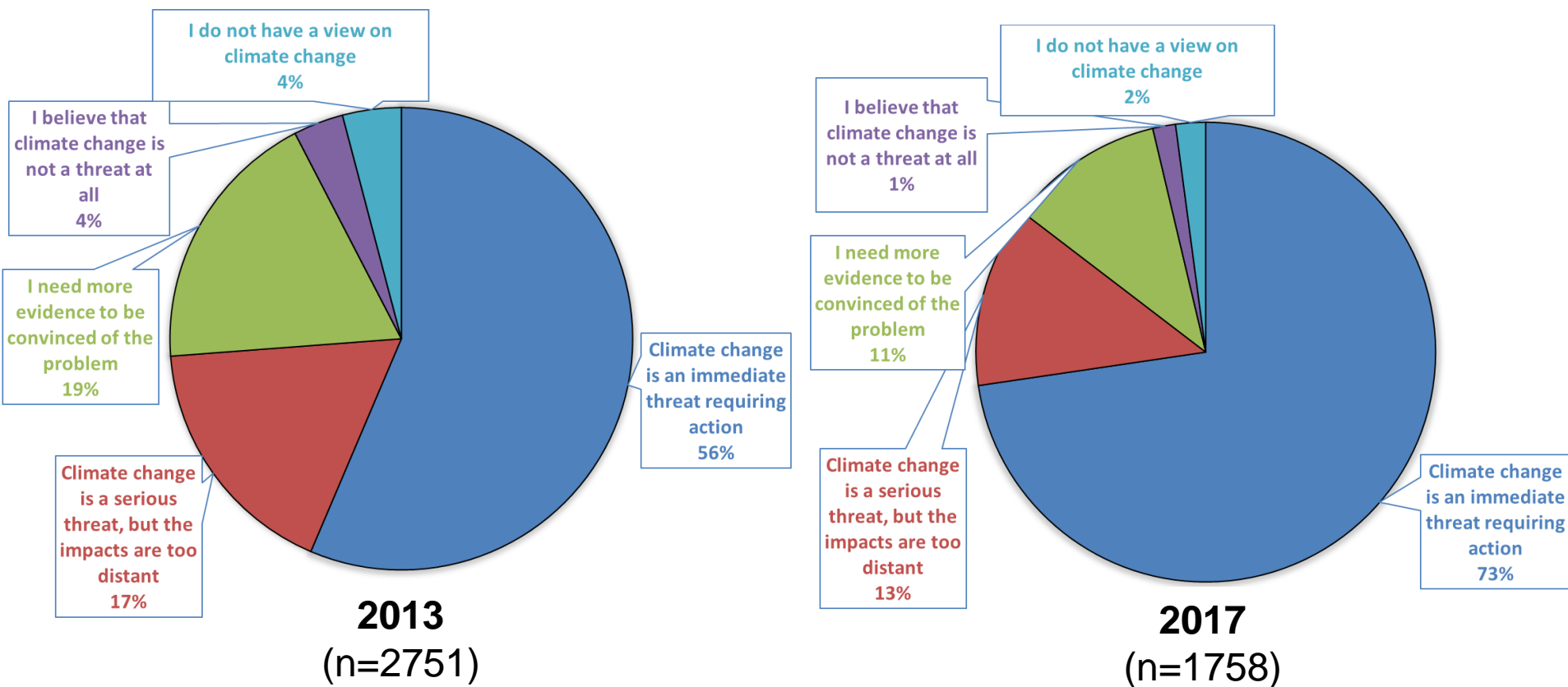


Figure 6: Comparison of mean ratings (2013 and 2017; \pm SE) and statistical test results for international and domestic tourists in the GBR region, comparing ratings of trust in GBR-related information from different sources, including (a) news media, (b) social media, and (c) family, friends and colleagues. *NB. Non-parametric Mann-Whitney tests used.*

Key findings: *Increasing* awareness of climate change threat



Key findings: *Increasing awareness of climate change threat*

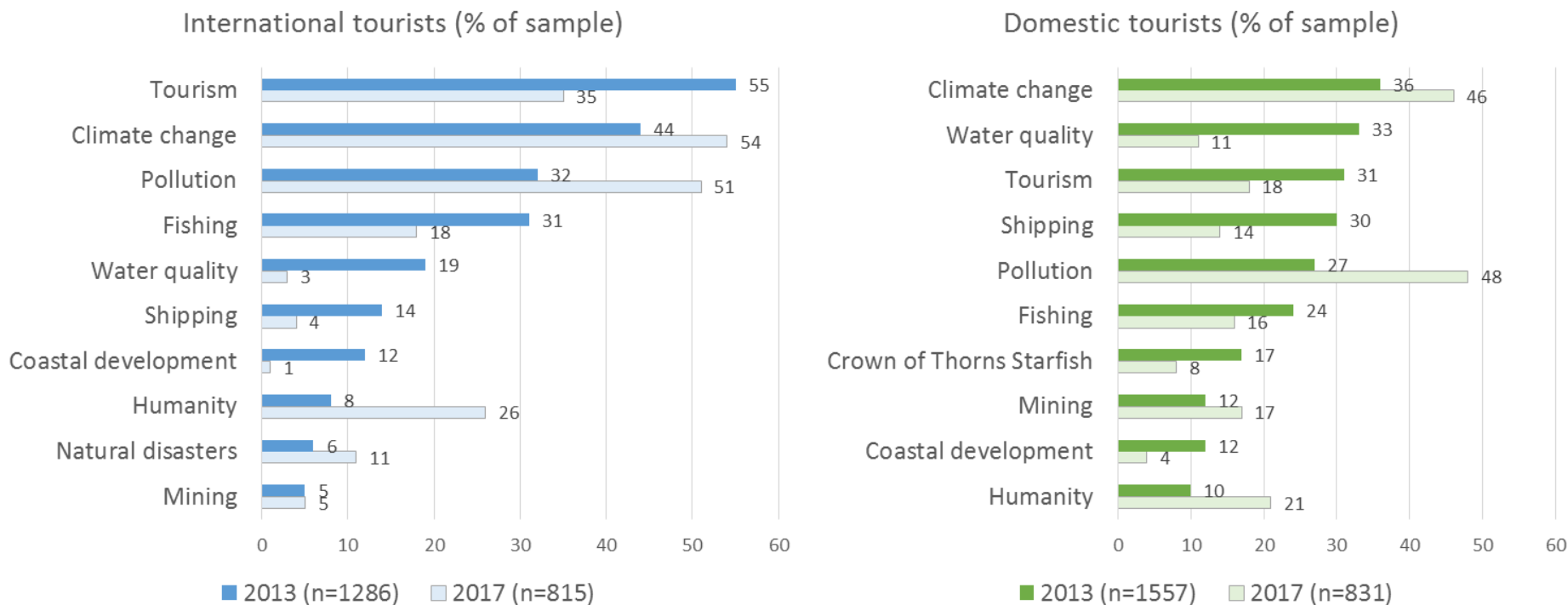


Figure 8: Comparison of the proportion of international and domestic tourists (2013 and 2017) who identified specific threats among their perceived 'three most serious threats to the Great Barrier Reef'. *NB. Top ten response themes shown and ranked for each group.*

Take home messages:

1. Significant changes have occurred in tourists' perceptions, experiences and satisfaction with the GBR, and it is likely that the impacts to the Reef over 2016 and 2017 contributed to these changes.

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2. Re: tourist visitation patterns - we don't know yet what will happen over the medium to longer term.

Take home messages:

1. Significant changes have occurred in tourists' perceptions, experiences and satisfaction with the GBR, and it is likely that the impacts to the Reef over 2016 and 2017 contributed to these changes.
2. Re: tourist visitation patterns - we don't know yet what will happen over the medium to longer term.
3. How do we constructively utilise the outpouring of public sentiment for the GBR, before it fades?



Thank you

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