

# NERP Tropical Ecosystems Hub – Project 10.1 Factsheet

## SELTMP 2013: A national survey about the Great Barrier Reef

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### Project summary

This project initiated a long-term monitoring program to document Australian perceptions about the Great Barrier Reef (GBR). A nationally representative online survey of more than 2,000 Australian residents explored individual attitudes about four key areas: inspiration, visitation, attitudes and perceptions of threats.

### Why the research is needed

Increasing threats to the GBR have placed considerable importance on the creation of viable management and conservation outputs. In response, decision makers increasingly rely upon public consultation to help inform decision-making. Critical to driving the prioritization and implementation of resource management plans is the identification of key drivers of change. Indirect drivers of change such as perceptions, attitudes and beliefs provide an important context for understanding individual behaviour, informing management programs and influencing environmental decision-making.

### Key research findings

This project finds that Australians are overwhelmingly concerned about and connected to the GBR. We find the GBR to be Australia's most inspiring natural or cultural icon. Further, a strong majority of respondents want to visit the GBR in the future (~50%) or have done so already (~40%). Respondents believe climate change and pollution are the biggest threats to the GBR, followed by marine debris, agricultural run-off and shipping. Most people are proud the GBR is listed as a World Heritage Site and they also feel a collective responsibility to protect it. Respondents believe the GBR is part of their Australian identity and they are concerned about the impacts of climate change. Approximately half of respondents are confident that the GBR is well managed and a minority feel strongly optimistic about the future of the GBR.



Photos: Matt Curnock, CSIRO

### Outcomes

- Annual updates regarding national perceptions of GBR visitation, inspiration and attitudes.
- Baseline data related to national perceptions of threats to the GBR.
- An annual report on the national opinions related to GBR management and impacts.
- Publications on community perceptions and attitudes in relation to climate change, resource management and environmental drivers of change.
- Contextual support for making local and regional decisions along the GBR.

Find this project at [www.nerptropical.edu.au](http://www.nerptropical.edu.au)  
Theme 3: Managing for resilient tropical ecosystems  
Program 10: Socio-economic value of GBR goods and services  
Project: 10.1 Social and economic long-term monitoring program

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