# #3

COMPLETE

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| **Collector:** | Hervey Bay App...tion (Martin) (Email) |
| **Started:** | Monday, August 19, 2019 5:02:38 AM |
| **Last Modified:** | Thursday, September 19, 2019 8:26:34 AM |
| **Time Spent:** | Over a week |
| **Email:** | msimons@fcte.com.au |
| **IP Address:** | 23.62.157.96 |

## Page 3: Part 1: Contact Details

**Q1** Contact details of lead applicant

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|---|---|
| Name of applicant | **Martin Simons** |
| Position/ Title | **General Manager** |
| Organisation/ Business | **Fraser Coast Tourism & Events (FCTE)** |
| Email Address | **msimons@fcte.com.au** |
| Phone Number | **+617 4196 9622** |

**Q2** Name and organisation of Whale Heritage Site Steering Committee members:

| | |
|---|---|
| Person 1 | **Martin Simons FCTE** |
| Person 2 | **Peter Lynch Blue Dophin Marine Tours** |
| Person 3 | **Wally & Trish Franklin The Oceania Project** |
| Person 4 | **Alan Dyball Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service** |
| Person 5 | **Glen Miller Butchulla Mens Business Aboriginal Association** |
| Person 6 | **Dr Paul Forestell Pacific Whale Foundation** |
| Person 7 | **Prof Mark Orams University of the Sunshine Coast** |
| Person 8 | **Dr Kathy Townsend University of the Sunshine Coast** |

## Page 4: Part 2: Site area and Designations

**Q3** Define the geographical boundaries of the proposed Whale Heritage Site as clearly as possible. This must include both land and sea/freshwater area as applicable.300 word limit

A: The proposed site is located in waters off Hervey Bay in Queensland Australia, 280km north of the State capital of Brisbane. The area is within the Great Sandy Marine Park (GSMP) designated in 2006.

Whale watching in this region is defined by existing Maritime Safety Guidelines for permitted commercial vessels operating whale watching tours within the marine park, with the primary areas being Hervey Bay and Platypus Bay along the western shore of Fraser Island. The area is within the Local Government boundary of the Fraser Coast Regional Council – a region supporting a population of 101,504 (2016 census).

The waters in the WHS application area, with a perimeter of 214km and covering an area of approximately 1390 sq km, are bounded by a line drawn:

- from Burrum Point on the mainland, to the Fairway Beacon, Hervey Bay
- to Rooney Point, Fraser Island along the western shore of Fraser Island to latitude 25º 22.90' south
- to latitude 25º 24.90' south, longitude 152º 58.06' east
- due west to the mainland at latitude 25º 24.90' south.
- See appendix 1 for: Maryborough (North) – Partially smooth and smooth waters and Fraser Coast Local Government area.

The WHS application area covering approximately 23% of the Great Sandy Marine Park is a designated USL 1D marine survey area defined by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA).These boundaries, supported by stringent Government mandated regulations and an industry Code of Practice, allow the site to maximise the benefit to the people living within the region, as well as those who visit, by ensuring safe boating and environmentally sustainable practices that safeguard the habitat and protect cetaceans.

Data in the rest of this application will go on to show that the level of regulation and adherence to regulation and collaboration by Hervey Bay operators, to protect the environment, is at a level higher than anywhere in Australia and most places around the world.

Ongoing research activities and transparent communication engaging the community enables the site to share valuable information that is enhancing both the whale watching experience and building knowledge and ownership within the industry in a sustainable way.

The clearly defined boundaries within the Marine Park also allow for better management and enforcement of regulations providing a safe environment for cetaceans in the long term.

In total, the Great Sandy Marine Park covers approximately 6,000 square kilometres, extending from Double Island Point in the south, to Baffle Creek in the north and seaward to three nautical miles, off the east coast of Fraser Island. See appendix 2.

Within this area, more than 20,000 humpback whales migrate through the waters east of Fraser Island each year, with more than 8,000 of them making their way into the calm waters of Hervey Bay between Fraser Island and the mainland to rest and nurse their newborn calves on their return trip to Antarctica. The site  also hosts various other cetaceans, including the endangered Australian humpback dolphin, bottlenose dolphins, minki whales, false killer whales and increased sightings of Southern Right Whales.

This area is managed closely by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) under the Queensland State Government Department of Environment and Science. The Great Sandy Marine Park was awarded Biosphere Reserve status by UNESCO in 2009. https://greatsandybiosphere.org.au/

This area is recognised worldwide and is in the same class as the Galapagos Islands, Central Amazon, the Everglades and Uluru. It’s a unique environment, where the tidal lands and marine waters form a transition zone between tropical and temperate waters. Changing water temperatures drive unique and dynamic life cycles and influence marine habitats, communities and wildlife.

**Q4** Does the proposed Whale Heritage Site include any protected exclusion zones where human-cetacean interactions do not take place?

**No**

**Q5** Does the proposed Whale Heritage Site contain any “no take” zones where fishing is prohibited?

**Yes**

**Q6** List any Marine Protected Areas within the proposed site:

The whole site sits within the Great Sandy Marine Park so is protected by legislation under the Queensland Marine Parks Act 2004 and the Queensland Marine Parks Regulations 2017.

Within the site are area is four different zones: 1) Marine national park zones - fishing and collecting prohibited;  2) Conservation park zones - commercial netting/trawling prohibited with some line fishing permissible; 3) Habitat protection zones - may contain sensitive habitats and trawling prohibitions; 4) General use zone - covers all remaining areas of the marine park. These zones provide both conservation and reasonable use. Commercial activities require a permit, but most recreational activities are allowed.

**Q7** Do you believe that there are adequate personnel and equipment available to patrol at-sea or freshwater areas in order to monitor activities within these protected areas?

**Yes**

**Q8** List any local authorities or organisations responsible for monitoring protected areas:

1) Queensland Department of Environment and Science (Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service management authority)
2) Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
3) Maritime Safety Queensland
4) Fraser Coast Regional Council
5) The Burnett Mary Regional Group

## Page 5: Part 3: Cetacean species, protected status and culture

**Q9** List all species of cetacean (whales, dolphins, and porpoises) recorded within the proposed Whale Heritage Site?

1) Humpback whales
2) Australian humpback dolphins
3) Bottlenose dolphins
4) Minki whales
5) False killer whales
6) Southern right whales.
7) Brydes whales

**Q10** Are any cetacean species occurring within the site given specific protected status or have any been identified as of conservation concern, and if so, why?200 word limit

Special Management Declarations can be made when:

- Migaloo the white whale is in the area. (Boats and prohibited vessels cannot approach within 500 metres of a predominantly white whale and aircraft cannot fly within 610 metres. This applies to all whales that are more than 90% white).
- a cetacean at risk of stranding
- a calf becomes separated from its mother or group
- a female marine mammal is about to, or has recently, given birth
- dugongs need additional protection to help them recover from habitat loss in the circumstances where their usual sea grass feeding area has been damaged or destroyed by a natural disaster

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**Q11** Which months of the year are cetaceans regularly seen within the proposed Whale Heritage Site?

**July,**

**August,**

**September,**

**October**

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**Q12** Describe any known cultural processes amongst cetacean populations at the proposed Whale Heritage Site, such as social interactions, communication, and behaviours that are transferred between generations and reveal distinct features within local cetacean populations.300 word limit

Research has shown that the WHS application site is one of the few places in the world where multiple mother and calves join together in a single pod.

Scientists also believe that the choice of Hervey Bay waters as a resting and nurturing place for mothers and calves during their migration journey is a learned behaviour.

References:

- Franklin T. 2012: The social and ecological significance of Hervey Bay, Queensland, for eastern Australia humpback whales.
- Franklin, W. 2014: Abundance, population dynamics, reproduction, rates of population increase and migration linkages of eastern Australian humpback whales utilising Hervey Bay, Queensland.
- Franklin, T. et al 2017: Site specific female biased sex ratios of humpback whales in Hervey Bay during a stopover early in the southern migration.
- Martinez, E. et al 2013: Note on patterns of area use by humpback whales in 2013 in Hervey Bay, Australia, with an emphasis on mother-calf dyads.

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**Q13** Briefly describe what interactions and/or activities currently exist between people and cetaceans in the proposed Whale Heritage Site?200 word limit

The primary interaction between people and cetaceans in the proposed site is through commercial tour operations and recreational boating. (Almost 60,000 people participated in commercial whale watching from Hervey Bay in 2018).

Increasing numbers of humpbacks (currently more than 8000) take the “stopover route” resting and socialising in the waters between Fraser Island and the mainland between July and November each year on their southern migration, back to the cooler waters of Antarctica.

Many research organisations and universities have studied whales in Hervey Bay since the 1980s, including The Oceania Project, Pacific Whale Foundation, University of Queensland, Sydney University, Southern Cross University and University of the Sunshine Coast. (See appendix 3).

Australia’s two most foremost humpback whale researchers, Drs Trish and Wally Franklin (Oceania Project), have more than 20 years of study and research to back up their statements in relation to Hervey Bay’s significance as a “whale nursery”.

• Dr Trish Franklin states in 2012 that “... this research has shown that Hervey Bay is an important habitat for different maturational and reproductive classes of whales.” (The social and ecological significance of Hervey Bay Queensland for eastern Australian humpback whales, Southern Cross University, 2012).

• Dr Wally Franklin backs this up (2019) stating that the whales bring their young into the waters of Hervey Bay in order to teach the young certain skills to enable their survival and that part of this is how to safely interact with the humans on the water. In his opinion, without a doubt, whales know what to expect and enjoy the interactions almost as much as the humans. (Sunday Age, Melbourne January 2019; see Media and Publications folder in sharepoint).

• While he was alive, Pacific Whale Foundation's Greg Kaufman said Hervey Bay was the only area in the world where humpbacks consistently approached vessels. "The curious humpbacks of Hervey Bay provide some of the most unusual and prolonged encounters with humans," he said.  (The Daily Telegraph 2012 – Queensland tourists 'mugged' by whales in Hervey Bay.

http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/national/queensland-tourists-mugged-by-whales-inhervey-bay/story-fndo2iwh-1226460233013)

The Hervey Bay whale fleet prides itself on following strict regulations which creates this safe environment allowing positive engagement with whales.

In addition to research and whale watching tours, the proposed site also offers dolphin watching, diving, snorkelling and an immersive ‘swim with whale’ experience that recently completed its trial period after several years of negotiations and planning with stakeholders, including the State Government.

Ongoing research is being conducted by Pacific Whale Foundation and Southern Cross University, to better understand the impact of the immersive program on the whale population.

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## Page 6: Part 4: Historical practices

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| **Q14** Were any of the following interactions and/or activities practised historically between people and cetaceans in the proposed Whale Heritage Site? | Other, please describe:<br>Our research and communication with the indigenous Butchulla people has not revealed any close connection between the traditional owners and great whales. However, the dolphin remains a totem of the Butchulla. |

## Page 7: Criteria 1.1

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| **Q15** 1.1 Guidelines and/or regulations related to the interactions between humans and cetaceans support international best practice and are appropriate to local context. Guidelines and/or regulations must be developed collaboratively by all of the key stakeholders, reviewed regularly, and clearly communicated to relevant audiences.Do you wish to meet the requirements of this criterion 1.1? | **Yes** |

## Page 8: Criteria in detail - criterion 1.1

**Q16** Please briefly describe the guidelines and/or regulations used within the WHS below.

All vessels accessing the WHS application area must operate under the designated Code of Practice, developed by whale watch operators and scientists in conjunction with National Parks and Wildlife (now Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service) and formally adopted by Government legislation.

The Code of Practice, first developed in Hervey Bay in 1989, has since been used as the basis of national and world-wide regulation governing whale watching activities.

Full details of the Code of Practice are available to WHS assessors at https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/watching/marine-mammals/rules

Key components of the code are briefly described below.

1) Approach distances for whales and dolphins:

Approach distances reduce the risk of disturbing whales or dolphins. They apply to boats, prohibited vessels (including jet skis and hovercraft), aircraft (including helicopters) and people who are in the water. Approach distances for dugongs only apply where a Special Management Declaration has been made.
Approach distances are divided into caution zones and no approach zones.

2) Caution zones:

The caution zone is an area surrounding a whale or dolphin in which boats cannot travel at speeds of more than 6 knots or speeds that create a wake. The caution zone extends out 300 metres from a whale, and 150 metres for a dolphin.

3) No approach zones:

Within a caution zone there are areas designated as No Approach zones that boats cannot enter. These are the areas closest to an animal and directly in front of and behind an animal. For a whale, the no approach zone surrounds the animal for 100 metres and extends 300 metres in front of and behind the animal. For dolphins, the no approach zone surrounds the animal for 50 metres and extends 150 metres in front of and behind the animal.

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**Q17** Please describe how and by whom these guidelines and/or regulations were developed?(300 word limit)

The above guidelines were developed by the Hervey Bay whale watching industry in collaboration with other stakeholders such as Pacific Whale Foundation, National Parks and Wildlife and academic researchers such as Wally and Trish Franklin of the Oceania Project.

Over the years there have been a number of workshops and meetings to review the guidelines and ensure they are meeting up-to-date world best practice. These guidelines were adopted by Australian Government and used as a basis for Commonwealth legislation.

In addition to the now widely adopted Code of Practice, operational requirements applying to commercial vessels in the WHS application area are governed by Commercial Activity Agreements issued by the State Government (Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service) which require adherence to additional, stringent eco-tourism certification.

https://parks.des.queensland.gov.au/tourism/ecotourism/whale-watching/

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| **Q18** What percentage of local whale or dolphin watching tour operators participate in the ongoing development and implementation of these guidelines? | **100** |
| **Q19** Is there an active whale watching association within the proposed Whale Heritage Site? | **Yes,**<br>If yes, what percentage of local whale or dolphin watching tour operators participate in this association? How many times per year does this association meet?:<br>An association of whale watching operators was formed as an incorporated in the early 1990s to ensure industry-wide collaboration and adherence to regulations. With the introduction of Commercial Activity Agreements, the role of the association became less relevant due to the establishment of the legal framework governing activities in the Great Sandy Marine Park. With the introduction of new activities, such as swim with whales, and the depletion of the dugong sea grass beds, plans are underway to establish a community based advisory group to work with government and stakeholders on these issues. |
| **Q20** Are there any regular meetings held between all stakeholders, such as whale or dolphin watch tour operators, NGOs, research centres or universities, and government officials, to review or communicate the guidelines and/or regulations? | **Yes,**<br>If yes, how many times per year do these meetings occur?:<br>As needed. Regular meetings are held to address issues, with the most recent involving the industry and QPWS to develop ' swim with'protocols and research parameters. |
| **Q21** Have you submitted evidence for criterion 1.1 in following with the WHS Supporting Documents Checklist? | **Yes** |

## Page 9: Criteria 1.2

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| **Q22** 1.2 Guidelines and/or regulations are monitored by a minimum of two authorities, one of which can be advisory, but the other should be a responsible government body authorised to take effective action. There should be a clear process for any breaches including consequences for offenders.Do you wish to meet the requirements of criterion 1.2? | **Yes** |

## Page 10: Criteria in detail - criterion 1.2

**Q23** Please list all regulatory and advisory authorities responsible for monitoring compliance with local guidelines and/or regulations for cetacean-human interactions.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
Hervey Bay whale watch operators
Pacific Whale Foundation
The Oceania Project
Other scientific and government entities

**Q24** Is at least one of these authorities a government body that is empowered to take action against non-compliance? For example, this could include the National Park or Marine Park authority, the navy, the coastguard, or the Department for the Environment.

**Yes,**
If yes, describe the processes for any compliance breaches, including consequences for offenders (200 word limit):
If an operator is found to have breached the guidelines or the conditions of the Commercial Activity Agreement (CAA) they are liable to be penalised with fines of up to A$5000 and or have their permits revoked.

**Q25** Is at least one of these authorities an advisory or non-governmental body? For example, this could include a university or NGO responsible for reporting bad practices.

**Yes,**
If yes, describe how they monitor compliance and report bad practice? (200 word limit):
As part of internal monitoring of whale fleet compliance, operators report directly to Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service on incidents of alleged breaches. A number of incidents have been reported and investigated by QPWS.

**Q26** Does self-regulation occur at the proposed site? For example, do whale and dolphin watching tour operators work collaboratively to ensure that rules are adhered to?

**Yes,**
If yes, briefly describe::
Guidelines were originally set up in collaboration with Industry, government authorities and other stakeholders soon after whale watching began in Hervey Bay. Initially, compliance was enforced with regular iinspections by Government authorised officers and fines were issued on occasions. Over the years the current fleet evolved to the point it is at today where all operators have Commercial Activity Agreements/Permits to operate within the Great Sandy Marine Park. Under these permits, operators are required to follow the whale watching guidelines which are legally mandated. Instances of alleged breaches observed by fleet members are reported directly to QPWS and investigative action taken.

**Q27** Have you submitted evidence for criterion 1.2 in following with the WHS Supporting Documents Checklist?

**Yes**

## Page 11: Criterion 1.3

**Q28** 1.3 Regular training takes place for skippers, crew, guides, onshore staff, and other stakeholders to ensure ownership and maintenance of responsible standards for interactions.Do you wish to meet the requirements of criterion 1.3?

**Yes**

## Page 12: Criteria in detail - criteria 1.3

**Q29** Please describe when training is available, what it involves, and who attends?300 word limit

Under the licensing conditions of each operator's Commercial Activity Agreement (CAA), issued by the Queensland Government Department of Environment and Science for commercial whale watching vessels operating in the Great Sandy Marine Park, all crews must be fully trained in responsible standards of whale interaction.

Under the direction of the issuing authority, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, each operator must ensure all crews are fully trained prior to commencement of duties.

Vessels and crews are monitored annually by QPWS to ensure compliance. The penalties for failing to comply with permit conditions in an operator's Commercial Activity Agreement may result in forfeiture of the permit by the operator.

An operator training schedule (evidence Folder #1 PWF training catalogue) covers among other things environmentalism in the workplace, whale awareness, introduction to marine mammals, vessel safety and manoeuvring, regulations and compliance, indigenous culture and language  and other necessary skills development required to meet permit conditions.

An example of a QPWS-operator Commercial Activity Agreement for whale watching vessels operating within the Great Sandy Marine Park is also contained in evidence Folder #1.

**Q30** Have you submitted evidence for criterion 1.3 in following with the WHS Supporting Documents Checklist?

**Yes**

## Page 13: Criterion 1.4

**Q31** 1.4 A permit system exists that manages and limits licences for cetacean interactions according to the best available local research and includes regular assessment and reapplication.Do you wish to meet the requirements of criterion 1.4?

**Yes**

## Page 14: Criteria in detail - criterion 1.4

**Q32** Describe the general process and requirements for obtaining a permit at the proposed site, with emphasis on its effectiveness in ensuring that whale or dolphin watching is managed responsibly?300 word limit

Operators must submit an application to the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (within the Department of Environment and Science) for a permit to operate in Marine Park areas.

www.qld.gov.au/environment/coasts-waterways/marine-parks/applying

The application requires details of business, number of staff employed, criminal history and any offences under various Acts of Government (eg Marine Parks Act, Nature Conservation Act, Recreation Areas Act and Forestry Act). It also details of the type of activity to be performed, the type of vessel and its moorings, registration details, insurances, licensing and stipulates Eco Accreditation as a mandatory requirement.

Applicants must sign to show they have read and understand the various Conservation Acts outlined above and are required to submit copies of all relevant documents (eg licenses, insurance and vessel surveys). Applicants need to allow 60 days for the application to be processed and may not proceed with activities until the permit is granted.

The current permit system evolved from the early days of whale watching in Hervey Bay when the Queensland Parks and Wildlife began management of the marine park and commercial activity within the park. Of the 21 permits originally issued only 16 remain today, including permits for whale research.

**Q33** What percentage of operators within the proposed site currently hold a permit / licence? **100**

**Q34** How many licences are available annually for whale and dolphin watching activities?

Currently 16

**Q35** Is the number of permits limited or restricted in some way?

**Yes,**
If yes, please describe what information or evidence led to these restrictions? (300 word limit):
When commercial whale watching first began in the late 1980s, the Queensland Government acted almost immediately to set up strong management structures to regulate the industry. Initially this resulted in the formation of the Hervey Bay Marine Park and the establishment of Commercial Activity Agreements, which form the basis of the permitting system which is still in operation today in the expanded Great Sandy Marine Park. The number of permits allowing commercial tours and research vessels to access the marine park has reduced from 21 to 16 over the years. Permits were traded from one operator to another and some were closed down as operators left the industry. There are currently 10 active commercial tour operators accessing the Great Sandy Marine Park in the 2019 whale watching season. The reduction in tour operators working from Hervey Bay has also in part been caused by the increasing numbers of humpback whales migrating along the Australian coastline. Whale watching vessels now operate from many centres along the coast. The number of whale watch vessels able to access the Great Sandy Marine Park is now capped as the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service which manages the marine park is not issuing new commercial permits for whale watching in order to further protect the whales and dolphins in the Hervey Bay.

**Q36** Have you submitted evidence for criterion 1.4 in following with the WHS Supporting Documents Checklist?

**Yes**

## Page 15: Criterion 1.5

**Q37** 1.5 Mechanisms are in place to encourage ongoing reduction of any environmental impacts associated with watching cetaceans.Do you wish to meet the requirements of criterion 1.5?

**No**

## Page 16: Criterion in detail - criterion 1.5

**Q38** Please select which methods, if any, are implemented at the proposed site in order to reduce environmental impacts of human activities:

**Respondent skipped this question**

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| **Q39** Please list any sustainable tourism certifications or eco-labels currently awarded to operators at the proposed site: | **Respondent skipped this question** |
| **Q40** Please list any other innovative practices or technologies being implemented by operators to reduce environmental impacts of human activities at the proposed site: | **Respondent skipped this question** |
| **Q41** Have you submitted evidence for criterion 1.5 in following with the WHS Supporting Documents Checklist? | **Respondent skipped this question** |

## Page 17: Criteria 2.1

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| **Q42** 2.1 Wild cetaceans are reflected in culture through historical or contemporary practices that harness a greater appreciation for living cetaceans in their natural habitats.Do you wish to meet the requirements of criterion 2.1? | **Yes** |

## Page 18: Criteria in detail - criterion 2.1

**Q43** Please describe any historical and/or contemporary practices involving cetaceans which are of cultural significance to people within the proposed WHS?200 word limit

There are a number of events held annually during the whale season in Hervey Bay that are of cultural significance, such as the  Paddle Out for Whales and the Blessing of the Fleet. Paddle Out began in the late 1990s as a protest against commercial whaling by the Japanese and continues today as a celebration of whales and is one of the most popular local events.

The annual Hervey Bay Whale Parade and Concert invites local individuals and groups to enter a street parade and decorate a float with an ocean-related theme. Hundreds participate in the parade and 6000 to 8000 people line the streets to watch the floats as they travel along the Esplanade to the city's Seafront Oval where a concert and other entertainment takes place.

In recent years a number of other other events have been added to the festival program to engage children, including a Kite Karnival, with cetaceans and other animals taking to the skies in the form of huge kites. Kite Festival organisers adhere to environmental practices in the construction of the kites which are made from sustainable material.

**Q44** Define how these practices harness a greater appreciation for living cetaceans and their natural habitats?200 word limit

Events such as Paddle Out for Whales and the Whale Parade showcase the importance of the whale watching industry to the community and help local people to gain awareness and understanding for cetaceans in the natural environment.

Paddle out for Whales allows people of all ages and abilities to support conservation efforts in a fun way and the Whale parade and concert gives the local population the opportunity to acknowledge the importance of the whale watching industry to Hervey Bay and the greater community. Both events raise awareness of cetaceans and increase the likelihood of people to choose conservation over exploitation.

**Q45** List any museums, visitor centres, art galleries etc. that showcase either historical or contemporary practices involving people and cetaceans.

1) The Fraser Coast Discovery Sphere http://www.ourfrasercoast.com.au/Discovery-Sphere
2) Hervey Bay Visitor Information Centre
3) Into the Wild Photography by Michael Smith https://www.intothewildphotography.com.au/
4) Ellen Foulds Photography Hervey Bay https://www.elfotographyherveybay.com.au/humpbackwhale

**Q46** Have you submitted evidence for criterion 2.1 in following with the WHS Supporting Documents Checklist? **Yes**

## Page 19: Criterion 2.2

**Q47** 2.2 Cetacean-related festivals, ceremonies, meetings or other events that encourage a sense of pride, heritage, history, sustainability, and legacy are held annually.Do you wish to meet the requirements of criterion 2.2? **Yes**

## Page 20: Criteria in detail - criterion 2.2

**Q48** List all annual cetacean-related festivals, ceremonies, meetings, or other events. Include start and end dates where appropriate.

1) Blessing of the Fleet, 27 July 2019

2) Whale Parade and Festival, 3 August 2019

3) Paddle out for Whales, 4 August 2019

4) Kite Karnival, 10 August 2019

5) Annual beach clean-ups on World Environment Day and International Coastal Clean-up Day

**Q49** Describe these events, highlighting their key benefits in terms of encouraging a sense of pride, heritage, history, sustainability, and legacy.300 word limit

The Blessing of the Fleet, held this year on 27 July, is an age-old tradition where whale watching vessels are blessed to ensure a safe and prosperous season for all. In addition to the religious blessing, the modern-day event includes conservation presentations, stalls, live entertainment, a sail-past and an inspection of vessels.

The Whale Parade and Concert on 3 August was supported by schools, businesses and community groups, with floats and lanterns depicting all things ocean-themed in a colourful and bright street parade, followed by a concert in the park. Each year new elements are added to the celebration and in 2016 the festival was expanded to include the Hervey Bay Seafood Festival, which is now the largest event of its type on the Queensland coast attracting a crowd of up to 10,000, to celebrate sustainable fishing practices.

The ocean/whale festival, starting with the Blessing, is now a 10-day event attracting people from outside the Fraser Coast region.

Paddle Out for Whales, celebrating the return of great cetaceans to Hervey Bay each year, attracted hundreds of paddlers in 2019 using kayaks, canoes and anything that floats, forming a circle for a minute's silence to remember the whales that have been lost.

The Kite Karnival held on 10 August 2019 - now in its second year - is the newest addition to the whale festival program. It was a celebration of marine life aimed at children and families. One kite was a life-sized humpback whale.

Annual beach clean-ups highlight ocean pollution and encourage people to adopt sustainable practices to preserve the environment. The clean-up activities draw media coverage, broadcasting the message to the Fraser Coast community.

**Q50** Have you submitted evidence for criterion 2.2 in following with the WHS Supporting Documents Checklist?

**Yes**

## Page 21: Criterion 2.3

**Q51** 2.3 Cetacean-related works of art are created, including in music, dance, and theatre; the visual arts, and in literature, from both written and spoken traditions.Do you wish to meet the requirements of criterion 2.3?

**Yes**

## Page 22: Criteria in detail - criterion 2.3

**Q52** Please describe any cetacean-related works of art that are created at the proposed site, such as music, dance, and theatre, the visual arts, and literature. 300 word limit

Sculptures:
- Life-size Nala the whale sculpture at the Fraser Coast Cultural Centre.
- Nala's tail at the Wetside Water Education Park in Pialba
- Whale sculpture at entrance of Whale Bay Marina

Music:
- Whales Rising song by the Bobkats

Arts and craft:
- Art by Rebecca Jane - including drawings, paintings, coasters, mouse pads (including a cetacean related work of art at the Hervey Bay Information Centre).
- Into the Wild Photography, Michael Smith
- Silver and gold jewellery made by local craftsmen (on sale at the Visitor Information Centre, Hervey Bay and throughout the world)

Literature:
- Whale Watching in Hervey Bay - the whale watch capital of the world by Jacinta Padget
- We Come in Peace by Eddy May

Dance:
- Aloha Ohana Hula Na Wahine dance group (peforms at Whale Festival events)

**Q53** Have you submitted evidence for criterion 2.3 in following with the WHS Supporting Documents Checklist? **Yes**

## Page 24: Criteria in detail - criterion 3.1

**Q54** How many tourists visited the proposed WHS in the last year that records were obtained? Please state number and year.

1.75 million people visited the Fraser Coast region in 2018, with half of this number (902,000) staying overnight. Note: Hervey Bay is the main tourist centre within the region but statistics are only available for the Fraser Coast as a whole.

**Q55** What is the current population of the proposed WHS?

Hervey Bay is around 52,000 people

**Q56** How many people are directly employed by activities that relate to cetaceans?

80-100

**Q57** What percentage of these employees are unskilled or lowest paid workers?

Zero

**Q58** What percentage of these employees are skilled manual workers?

60%

**Q59** What percentage of these employees are skilled technical workers?

40%

**Q60** Approximately how much revenue is generated annually, by activities directly related to cetaceans?

A$12-A$20 million generated annually

**Q61** If known, approximately how much revenue is generated annually, by activities indirectly related to cetaceans?

estimated as an additional 30%- 40% of direct revenue using established formulas for indirect expenditure for tourism activities

**Q62** Approximately how many people in the proposed site are employed indirectly by activities that relate to cetaceans (i.e. hotels, transport, restaurants, natural parks, visitor attractions etc.)?

Hundreds

**Q63** As a percentage, where do visiting tourists originate?

| | |
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| Local or regional | **69%** |
| National | **17%** |
| International | **14%** |

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| **Q64** Have you submitted evidence for criterion 3.1 in following with the WHS Supporting Documents Checklist? | **Yes** |

## Page 25: Criteria in detail - criterion 3.2

**Q65** Describe how local communities have been given the opportunity to participate in decision-making at key stages of the WHS accreditation process?200 word limit

Key stakeholders including fleet members, Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service staff, humpback whale researchers, educationalists, Butchulla first nations people and community members have provided input to the Hervey Bay WHS application.

**Q66** Give examples of how the public have been informed via press, social media or other means, about the Whale Heritage Site Candidacy and the rationale behind it.200 word limit

A program of media releases
Regular television interviews
Regular Facebook posts
Newspaper feature articles
Regular updates in industry newsletters (which are published weekly by Fraser Coast Tourism & Events)
Updates to the FCTE Board and Fraser Coast Regional Council
Updates to Tourism & Events Queensland
Sponsorship applications and verbal reports to Queensland Government Ministers and the Queensland Premier

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**Q67** List those stakeholders involved in preparing and maintaining the site for WHS status.

Ongoing consultation has occurred with the:

- Pacific Whale Foundation
- Oceania Project
- Fraser Coast Regional Council
- Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service - State Department of Environment and Science
- University of the Sunshine Coast
- Members of the Butchulla community
- Members of the public

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**Q68** Give examples of educational and community outreach events that have encouraged the public to promote the WHS and the reasons for its existence.200 word limit

Education programs:
An annual education program (Junior Whale Whisperer) is delivered in schools to educate primary students about humpback whales. The program encourages classes to enter group art projects relating to whales.

Pacific Whale Foundation's Plastic Pollution Solutions:
An annual classroom collaboration project of the PWF and the Plastic Ocean Foundation taken to Fraser Coast schools, exchanging learning techniques, expertise and resources to develop Year 6 and 7 students into future stewards of our planet's oceans.

Community Art Project - 2019 World Whale Conference:
A Community Arts Project being constructed of sustainable bamboo to be unveiled at the 2019 World Whale Conference has helped promote Hervey Bay's WHS application process and the conference. Members of the public have been invited to participate in various ways including supplying sustainable and collection of sustainable materials; building the structures which are shaped like a whale and calf, signifying Hervey Bay as an important whale nursery. The project has the support of the regional council, the regional art funding body and has been promoted in local media.

School children will be involved in a vacation workshop program, making cane lanterns to be used to create an artificial sea for the official opening of the Community Art Project during the Whale Conference.

Delegate welcome - 2019 World Whale Conference:
An illumination art project by a world renowned artist, Jorge Pujol, has been planned as part of the conference program. Children will light 3000 candles to welcome to delegates attending the World Whale Conference opening event. Prior to this hundreds of school children have been engaged in decorating and writing welcome messages on thousands of paper bags which will be used during the ceremony.

All Hervey Bay Whale Festival events promote whale conservation and sustainable environmental practice.

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**Q69** Have you submitted evidence for criterion 3.2 in following with the WHS Supporting Documents Checklist? **Yes**

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## Page 26: Criteria in detail - criterion 3.3

**Q70** List any current threats relevant to primary cetacean habitat.

There is no immediate threat to the habitat within the proposed World Heritage Site application zone.

However, directly to the north of Hervey Bay the migratory route of the eastern humpback is close to the Great Barrier Reef which is a sensitive environmental zone and is the focus of recent Queensland State Government legislation to reduce coastal run-off from agriculture and direct sources of pollution from intensive land uses, such as sewage treatment plants, aquaculture and mining. These measures will improve the ocean habitat and the protection of all species.

Hervey Bay is below the southern tip of the Great Barrier Reef system and ocean currents, in the main, travel south from this region. All farming activities in the Fraser Coast are required to abide by the new regulations.

New catch limits for commercial fishing vessels operating with the Great Sandy Marine Park have also recently been introduced. https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/fisheries/sustainable/sustainable-fisheries-strategy/changes-to-queenslands-fisheries-legislation

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**Q71** List any local or national regulations, programmes, or projects that are working to address these threats, including those carried out by government, research institutes, universities, or NGOs.

The Queensland Eco and Sustainable Tourism (QuEST) delivers a policy framework for ecotourism operators accessing high visitation national parks. The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), is determined to ensure the tourism industry is consistently able to provide high-quality, nature-based experiences across a range of iconic protected areas.

Access to Hervey Bay's most pristine areas - the Great Sandy Marine Park and K'gari Fraser Island - is limited by the QPWS permitting system, with no new commercial permits being issued for either whale watching or Fraser Island commercial tourism activities.

Fraser Coast Regional Council actively manages outflows and land run-off to ensure impacts on the Fraser Coast ocean habitat is limited.

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**Q72** Provide a summary of your current or proposed action plan to address these threats.

The site is in the process of setting up a community-based action group to be led by a prominent academic (Dr Kathy Townsend) to engage a range of stakeholders in monitoring sustainable environmental issues across the total Great Sandy Marine Park. The group will be an important advocate for sustainable oceans and shorelines, in consultation with regulatory authorities.

Ongoing initiatives with schools and universities will also continue and engagement with local council initiatives will be a priority.

As part of its annual tourism development program, the Regional Tourism Organisation (Fraser Coast Tourism & Events) provides educational opportunities for tourism operators to build capacity and improve digital communication skills. This program works in conjunction with the State Government tourism bodies - Queensland Tourism Industry Council and Tourism & Events Queensland - to enhance experience development within the tourism sector. Part of this is to increase awareness and capacity in sustainable business practices.

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| **Q73** Which of the following measures are being undertaken at the proposed site? | **Carbon footprint measurement and initiatives and incentives to reduce carbon emissions in the tourism sector.**<br>,<br>**Initiatives to maintain or improve biodiversity, both marine and terrestrial.**<br>,<br>**Implementation of measures to reduce water pollution.** ,<br>**Implementation of measures to reduce plastics, discarded fishing gear and other solid waste entering waterways.**<br>,<br>**Provision of sustainability training for local tourism businesses.**<br>,<br>Other - please describe:<br>Hervey Bay's sustainability programs are driven by the State Department of Environment and Science, with legislation and policies enforced by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, responsible for managing the Great Sandy Marine Park. |
| **Q74** Have you submitted evidence for criterion 3.3 in following with the WHS Supporting Documents Checklist? | **Yes** |

## Page 27: Criteria 3.4

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| **Q75** 3.4 Sustainable Destination Management - to support achievement of all the above criteria, ensure continuous improvement and maintain the long term sustainability of the WHS, those responsible for the management of tourism in the location should ensure that there is an active and ongoing process to improve sustainability using recognised tools such as:The European Sustainable Tourism Indicator System (ETIS) developed by the European Commission. http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer/sustainable/indicators/index_en.htmThe Global Sustainable Tourism Council's Criteria for Destinations (GSTC C-D) https://www.gstcouncil.org/en/gstc-criteria/criteria-for-destinations.htmlOr another Global Sustainable Tourism Council recognised destination management or accreditation scheme https://www.gstcouncil.org/en/gstc-criteria-hotels-tour-operators-destinations/gstc-recognized-standards/recognized-standards-for-destinations.htmlDo you wish to provide additional information for this criterion? | **No** |

## Page 28: Criteria in detail - criterion 3.4

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| **Q76** List any sustainable tourism tools or indicator systems currently adopted across the proposed site | **Respondent skipped this question** |
| **Q77** Have you submitted evidence for criterion 3.4 in following with the WHS Supporting Documents Checklist? | **Respondent skipped this question** |

## Page 29: Criterion 4

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| **Q78** 4.1 Companies and organisations involved with cetacean interactions incorporate conservation-directed science and research programmes.Do you wish to meet the requirements of criterion 4.1? | **Yes** |

## Page 30: Criteria in detail - criterion 4.1

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| **Q79** Which of the following conservation-directed science and research programmes are currently implemented by companies and organisations involved with cetaceans? | **Citizen science initiatives** , **Collaborative long-term data gathering projects run by whale watch tour operators in collaboration with each other and in association with academic institutions or NGOs** , **Opportunities for researchers aboard whale watch boats through internship programmes** , **Ongoing independent conservation-research delivered by a number of stakeholders, including NGOs, academic institutions, and government bodies** |
| **Q80** Have you submitted evidence for criterion 4.1 in following with the WHS Supporting Documents Checklist? | **Yes** |

## Page 31: Criterion 4.2

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| **Q81** 4.2 Conservation-based cetacean research and policy is showcased within the site.Do you wish to meet the requirements of criterion 4.2? | **Yes** |

## Page 32: Criteria in detail - criterion 4.2

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| **Q82** Does the proposed site showcase any conservation-based research and policy? Please select from the following list: | **Peer reviewed journal publications** , **Non-scientific articles, television or radio interviews** , **Dissemination of the latest research or policy changes to whale watching naturalist guides** , **Display information prominently placed in visitor centres, museums, and other visitor attractions** , **School visits,** **Open house events at research institutes or universities** , **Scientific conferences and meetings** |

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| **Q83** Have you submitted evidence for criterion 4.2 in following with the WHS Supporting Documents Checklist? | **Yes** |

## Page 33: Criterion 4.3

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| **Q84** 4.3 Educational programmes that focus on cetaceans are delivered to local communities.Do you wish to meet the requirements of criterion 4.3? | **Yes** |

## Page 34: Criteria in detail - criterion 4.3

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| **Q85** Does the proposed site deliver any educational programs focused on cetaceans to local communities? Please select from the following list: | Other - please describe:<br>NB: Hervey Bay delivers educational programs covering all of the above criteria. Survey Monkey will only allow one box to be ticked. |
| **Q86** Have you submitted evidence for criterion 4.3 in following with the WHS Supporting Documents Checklist? | **Yes** |

## Page 35: Criterion 4.4

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| **Q87** 4.4 Local sustainability initiatives benefitting the marine environment are showcased.Do you wish to meet the requirements of criterion 4.4? | **No** |

## Page 36: Criteria in detail - criterion 4.4

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| **Q88** Does the proposed site showcase any local sustainability initiatives that benefit the marine environment? Please select from the following list: | **Respondent skipped this question** |
| **Q89** Have you submitted evidence for criterion 4.4 in following with the WHS Supporting Documents Checklist? | **Respondent skipped this question** |

## Page 37: Additional information

**Q90** Please use this space if you wish to submit further information or provide more detail on specific criteria:

Additional information:

To assist the WCA assessment panel to analyse the vast amount of information and supporting evidence provided, we have included in the dropbox folders (link below):

1. The original candidate questionnaire, which provides a narrative summary of Hervey Bay's WHS application.

2. The WHS Checklist showing where Hervey Bay has provided evidence to support its application.

3. The WHS Checklist, in expanded format, showing where to locate in the Dropbox our supporting information, as per the various criteria. This file is designed to be used by the assessors as the index to the evidence underpinning the Hervey Bay WHS application. To assist with navigation where there are several criteria items to the same point, the supporting information is provided in alphabetical order.

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**Q91** It is important that you provide evidence to support your application (see our supporting documents checklist). Please upload evidence to a file sharing platform (such as Dropbox or Wetransfer) and insert a link to them here:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/2nk4em7l1gqgg0e/AAAnv_ES9ZJE7spetlWONpOJa?dl=0

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**Q92** By submitting this application, I confirm that I have read and agree to the terms and conditions of the Whale Heritage Site initiative. **Yes**

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**Q93** We agree to pay the relevant WHS fees on completion of this application and upon being granted WHS status. **Yes**

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