7. *Describe any current sustainability initiatives operating within the proposed Whale Heritage Site? Max 300 words.*

A: The sustainability of our region is monitored, regulated and protected by State and Federal laws under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act); Nature Conservation Act 1992; Marine Parks Act 2004; Marine Parks (Great Sandy) Zoning Plan 2006; Recreation Areas Management Act 2006, plus various associated regulations. (See appendix 7 for the EPBC Act).

The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) is an Act of the Parliament of Australia that provides a framework for protection of the Australian environment, including its biodiversity and its natural and culturally significant places.

The proposed site area is currently protected by the highest level of environmental and conservational protection at state, national and international levels. These are reviewed and monitored on a regular and continual basis.

The Australian Whale Sanctuary has been established to protect all whales and dolphins found in Australian waters. Under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) all cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises) are protected in Australian waters:

- the Australian Whale Sanctuary includes all Commonwealth waters from the three nautical mile state waters limit out to the boundary of the Exclusive Economic Zone (i.e. out to 200 nautical miles and
- within the Sanctuary it is an offence to kill, injure or interfere with a cetacean. Severe penalties apply to anyone convicted of such offences
- all states and territories also protect whales and dolphins within their waters. In state/territory waters (within 3 nautical miles of the coastline); it is the responsibility of the state and territory governments to protect whales and dolphins.
  https://www.environment.gov.au/marine/marine-species/cetaceans/australian-whale-sanctuary

Along with regulations on tourism and commercial operators accessing World Heritage-listed Fraser Island, a wide-ranging system of permits control all commercial activity within the Biosphere. Recreational users of the zone are also bound to law to adhere to the same regulations established for commercial whale watch operators.

Some current sustainability initiatives include:

The Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger Program – Specifically in the Hervey Bay Whale Heritage Site application territory, this $11m annual Queensland Government program involves indigenous Butchulla Aboriginal Corporation representatives in:

- The protection and management of all cultural heritage values both tangible and intangible, including burial sites, artefact sites, scar trees, shell middens and sacred areas.
- Participate in boat patrols, marine animal strandings, monitor coral ecosystems, marine conservation and habitat management including cleaning up shorelines and maintaining healthy water ways and sea grass.
- Research and education support work with tertiary education partners and the Fraser Coast Regional Council (FCRC) **Sustainability Program** which includes ongoing initiatives such as the Community Environment Program; School Water & Wise Garden Competition; Waste 2 Art and Planet Ark National Tree Day in 2018 which planted one thousand trees at a revegetation site.
  www.frasercoast.qld.gov.au/sustainability
- **Fraser Coast Tourism & Events (FCTE)** also supports Butchulla community inclusion. Underpinning the ideals of World Heritage Site accreditation, the regional tourism body is actively engaging with the various stakeholder groups within the local indigenous population. This is an ongoing activity in an extremely complex environment of Native Title application and recognition and campaigns for compensation by the various First Nations groups, often displaying conflicting agendas. FCTE has also recently appointed an indigenous elder (Glen Miller) to its Board of Directors.

The **Wetside Water Education Park** is an award winning zero depth water play and education park in Hervey Bay, in July rated as the #1 amusement park/water park in Australia and the South Pacific, based on TripAdvisor reviews. Adorning the wooden boardwalks around the play area are stainless steel plaques printed with water facts.
www.frasercoast.qld.gov.au/wetside

Fraser Coast Intrepid Landcare group and Pacific Whale Foundation Australia are partnered to celebrate World Oceans Day in June 2019 with a beach clean-up and educational activities. There are also other clean-ups throughout the year and plans for the setting up a Sea Bin at Urangan Boat Harbour.
FB - @frasercoastintrepidlandcare and https://blog.pacificwhale.org/tag/australia/

The **Burnet-Mary Regional Group (BMRG)** is a community based, not for profit organisation that delivers targeted natural resource management outcomes for the Burnett Mary region including the RAMSAR listed Great Sandy Strait and Fraser Island. Programs include land-care and schools; indigenous engagement and flood recovery programs. www.bmrg.org.au

Plastic Free Fraser Coast – a local initiative encouraging the reduction in plastic waste.
http://www.plasticfreefrasercoast.com.au/ Pacific Whale Foundation also presents a 'Plastic Solutions' program in local schools encouraging nil use of "single-use plastics".