

2.3 The community influences the protection of wildlife through strategies based on practical, scientific, or traditional knowledge.

[Local Marine Advisory Committees](#) (LMACs) are voluntary community-based committees that advise GBRMPA on Marine Park management issues at the local level. The Whitsundays LMAC has stakeholders from fishing, tourism, state and local government, education, local conservation organisations, shipping, natural resource management, aquaculture, and the indigenous community. As the Whitsundays has one of the highest proportions of private boat ownership and a high percentage of tourists visiting the Reef from our doorstep, many of the issues discussed have to do with the negative environmental impacts associated and potential measures to reduce them. The Whales of the Whitsunday Steering Committee also speaks about many of these same issues, although they do tend to be more cetacean-focused threats. One of our current endeavours is to better understand the impacts associated with boat noise. After whale season, we have a plan to use hydrophones to record the difference between a boat travelling at low, medium, and high speed to give us a better understanding of what the whales are hearing. This information can then be used to help us inform the public about the positive associations of lowering speed during whale season (minutes attached).

Members of local non-government organisations are on both the Whitsunday LMAC and the Whales of the Whitsundays Steering Committee, including representatives from Whitsunday Environmental, Little Fish Tourism Development, and Whitsunday Conservation Council. They readily provide their advice and expertise to these respective committees and have some of the highest recorded attendance. The Whales of the Whitsunday Steering Committee recently worked with the University of Queensland and a local tourism operator, Viper, to run a hydrophone training day for anyone who was interested. It was a full day of learning about whales, their songs, and how best to record them. By increasing citizen science we are improving our knowledge of cetaceans and building awareness in the community.

A couple of members of the Whitsunday LMAC and the Steering Committee are also members of the Regional [Traditional Owner Reference Group](#) (TORG). The TORG is committed to managing, maintaining, and protecting tribal lands and sea within the region. They help to discuss, develop, and deliver opportunities to build capacity within the group and share cultural and heritage environmental values. The TORG directs and participates in on-Country activities to restore and protect cultural heritage and are charged with the responsibility to disseminate this material to the wider Indigenous community. The TORG provides an opportunity for the community to work together with Traditional Owners to improve the community's knowledge of cultural heritage values and natural resource management issues within the region.