



Australian Government

Department of Climate Change, Energy,  
the Environment and Water

# Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan Review

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An aerial photograph of a river meandering through a vast, dense forest of tall, thin trees. The water is calm, reflecting the surrounding greenery. The text "Acknowledgement of Country" is centered in a semi-transparent white box over the middle of the river.

# Acknowledgement of Country



Australian Government

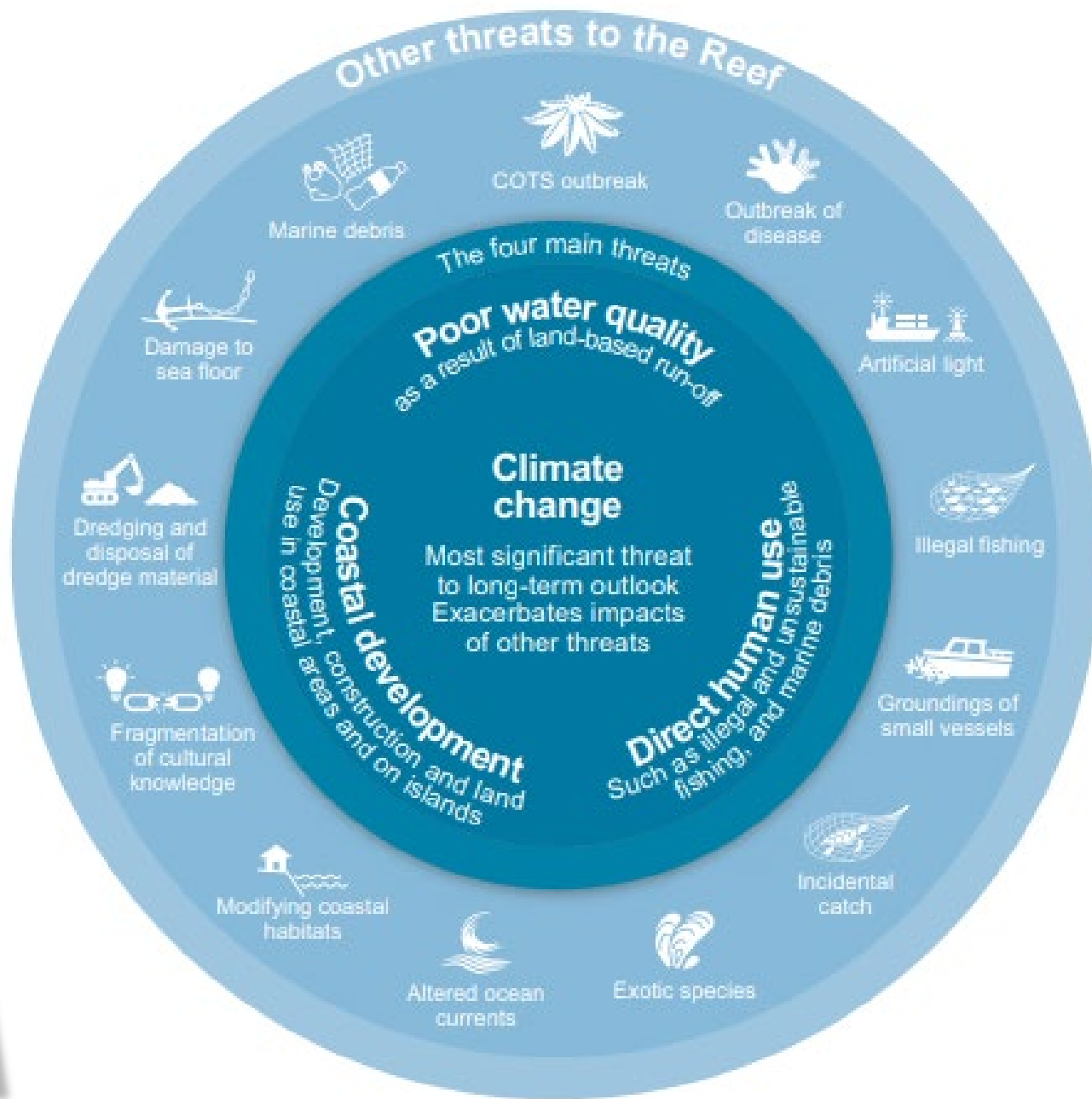


Queensland Government



# Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan

2021-2025



# Everything is connected



## Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan 2017-2022



### PRESSURE/ACTIVITY Agriculture

Warm through heavy sea levels, ocean acidification, and warmer waters causing corals to bleach.

80% of land is the main fine sediments to the Reef.

### LANDSCAPE FEATURE Rivers and streams

act as corridors for many important species to move between freshwater, estuarine and marine environments. They also provide a pathway for pollutants to flow to the Reef.

### PRESSURE/ACTIVITY Clearing

of coastal and riparian vegetation contributes to erosion, especially of streambanks.

### PRESSURE/ACTIVITY Ground cover

stabilises soil preventing gullies from forming and eroding soil causing sediment to flow to the Reef.

### PRESSURE/ACTIVITY Urban and industrial

construction and land use activities cause nutrients, sediments, and other pollutants such as heavy metals and plastics to flow to the Reef.

### PRESSURE/ACTIVITY Urban development

including roads, footpaths and rooftops increases surface run-off which washes pollution into waterways.

### POLLUTANT Pesticides

pose a risk to seagrass, wetlands and freshwater ecosystems, and restrict coral growth.

### POLLUTANT Sediment

blocks light to and smothers corals and seagrass restricting growth. When combined with nutrients, fine sediment forms flocs that can impact coral health.

### LANDSCAPE FEATURE Aquatic and marine ecosystems

provide important habitats for species such as fish, birds, and turtles to migrate to the Reef for breeding, feeding and shelter.

### BENEFIT Recovery from bleaching

events and other impacts is supported by good water quality. It is important that water quality impacts from both the catchment and marine environments are properly managed while climate change is being addressed.

### POLLUTANT Nutrients

are linked to outbreaks of the coral eating crown-of-thorns starfish and cause growth of algae and algal blooms.

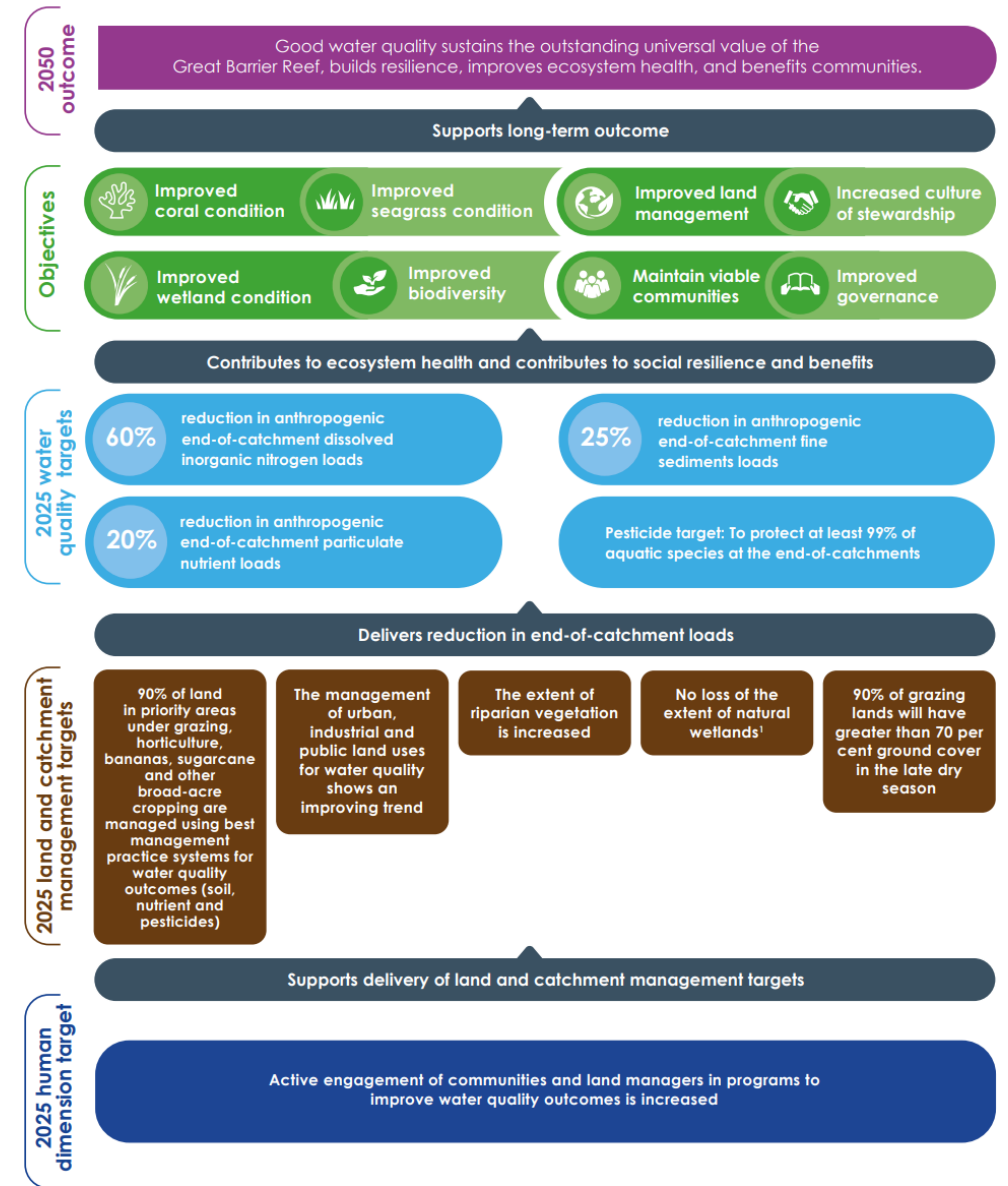
### BENEFIT Cultural and community

are supported by a range of resources, and recreation.

# Current framework

- The Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan guides how governments, Reef communities, Traditional Owners, industry, and partners work together to improve the quality of water flowing through local waterways and wetlands to the Great Barrier Reef.
- The Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan set outcome, objectives and targets to be achieved by 2025.
- The Paddock to Reef program uses monitoring and modelling to report on the progress towards targets and objectives which are reported in a Reef Water Quality Report Card.
- The Reef Water Quality Report Card 2021 and 2022 was released in May 2024.

Figure 4. Summary of Reef 2050 WQIP outcome, objectives and targets



Best management practices are defined by this Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan's water quality risk frameworks priority areas as defined in Appendix 3

<sup>1</sup>Natural wetlands include lakes, swamps and estuarine wetlands.

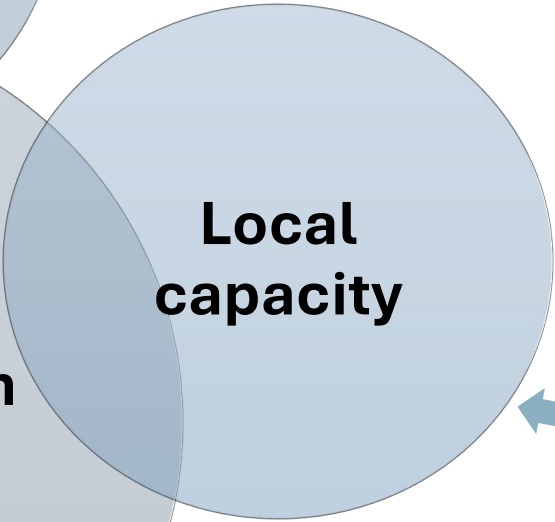
# What have we learned over the years?

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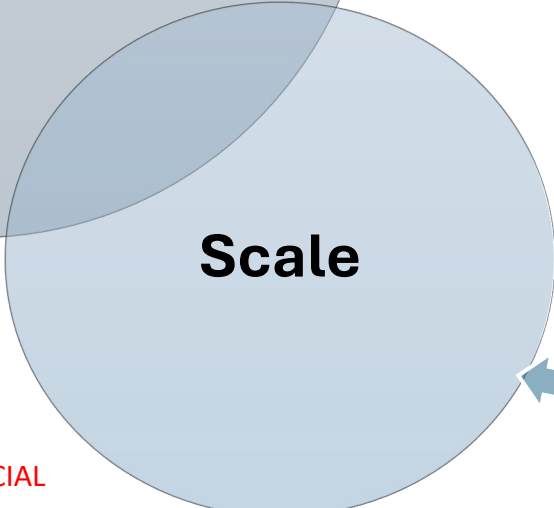
How do we enable flexibility in approaches to address regionally specific needs?



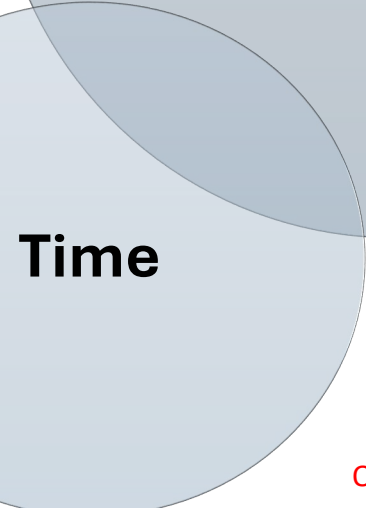
How can we engage, upskill and retain people who can support implementation of the next plan?



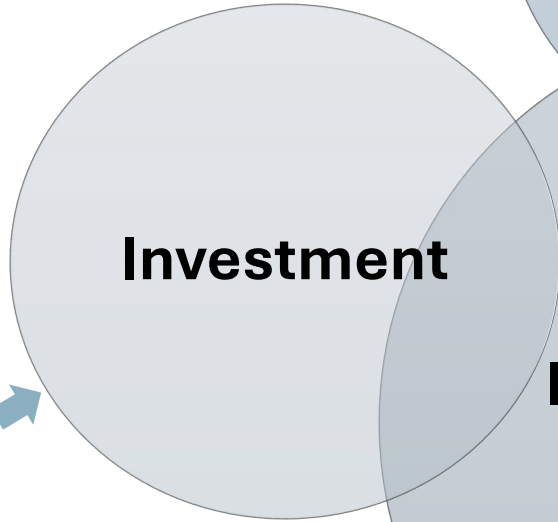
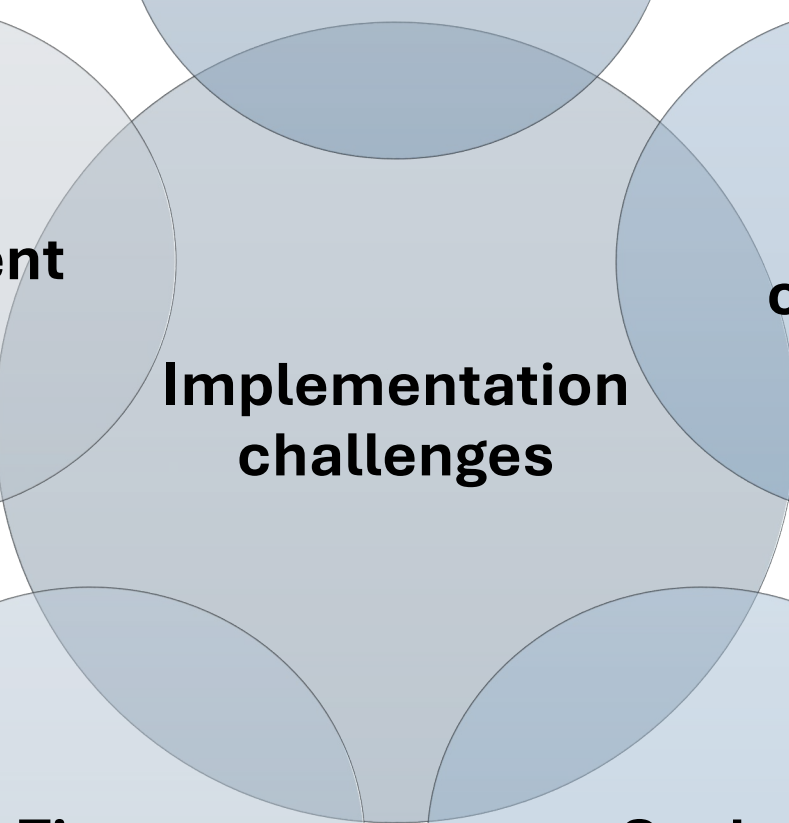
How do we enable local led planning, delivery and legacy for maximum reach?



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How can we better articulate our ambitions to drive the actions we need urgently today to achieve them in the future?



How can we ensure that we obtain sufficient investment to achieve accelerated progress under the next plan?



# What are we aiming to achieve through the review?

- Produce a more **holistic and inclusive narrative** that reflects the connection between **Reef catchments** and the Reef and how **Reef communities** work together to enhance that connection.
- **Build on the knowledge, experience and successes** of partners including Traditional Owners, stakeholders and communities.
- **Set priority actions** that reflect aspirations of Reef communities and the needs of the Reef.
- Provide a comprehensive, clear and **easy to understand framework** for the implementation of priority actions and evaluation of progress towards targets.



TICA



## What is holistic?





**Not Government Policy  
For Discussion Purposes Only**

**If we bring  
communities,  
landscapes and  
water together,  
we can have  
better outcomes**



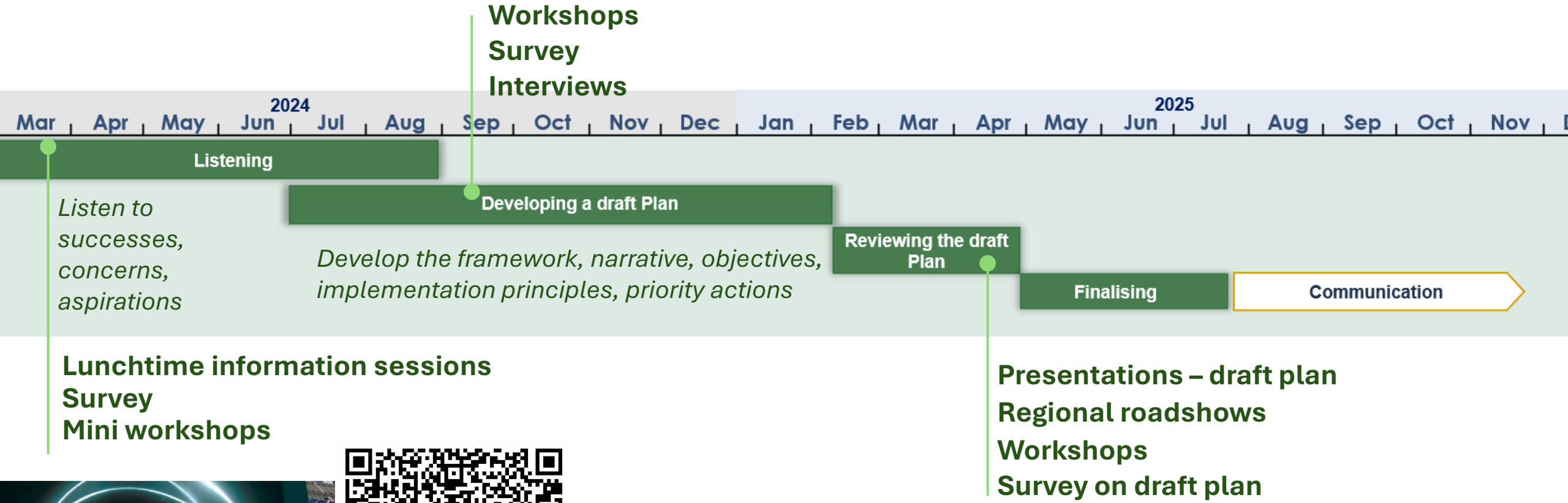
principles

which is in the

# Activity – Lets create the narrative together

- You will have 30 minutes as a group to prepare a 1 minute elevator pitch
- In your table:
  - Pick a project, program or initiative that you have been involved in or you have been wanting to test that you think delivers:
    - Community ownership
    - Resilient landscapes
    - Healthy water
  - Jot down:
    - What is the project?
    - Who plays a role in delivering it?
    - What would it need to be successful (enablers)?
  - Summarise the project, program or initiative as a 1 minute pitch
  - Wow the room

# Today is part of a long engagement journey – thank you for being part of the Reef story



Got more to say? e: [officeoftheGBR@des.qld.gov.au](mailto:officeoftheGBR@des.qld.gov.au)