

# Calling for Expressions of Interest First Nations Member/Reef Traditional Owner COTS Control Partnership Group

*The Great Barrier Reef Foundation extends its deepest respect and recognition to all Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef and its Catchments as First Nations Peoples, recognising past, present, and future generations to come.*

## About this Expression of Interest

This expression of interest has been prepared by the Great Barrier Reef Foundation on behalf of the COTS Control Partnership Group partners – the Reef Authority, Reef and Rainforest Research Centre (RRRC) and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation. This role will be contracted through the Reef Authority.

The Foundation recognises Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait as those people who, through membership in a descent or clan, have responsibility for caring for particular Sea Country within the [Great Barrier Reef Region](#). We are committed to meaningful collaboration and engagement with Reef Traditional Owners and are embedding Reef Traditional Owner Knowledge and leadership in the governance of programs across the Reef Trust Partnership.

This expression of interest (EOI) is to identify a First Nations member/Reef Traditional Owner, to join the governance group for the Crown-of-thorns starfish (COTS) Control Program. This Australian government funded Program operates over large areas of Sea Country and is committed to establishing meaningful partnerships with Reef Traditional Owners. In recognition of the [Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan](#), the Program seeks to strengthen Traditional Owner involvement and leadership opportunities in COTS management through this role.

This strategic role will provide a First Nations perspective on the delivery of this large-scale Reef management program, and help to develop and strengthen its approach to engagement and partnership-building with Reef Traditional Owners. The role will entail attending meetings, reviewing technical documents, and providing strategic advice to guide the Program and is stakeholder relationships as it evolves and expands.

Remuneration will be \$600 per day (\$300 per half day) for contribution to meetings, plus reasonable expenses to prepare for and attend meetings. Meetings are held at least quarterly and are usually delivered online. The minimum term of this appointment is for 12 months from the appointment date with possibility of extension.

In terms of selection criteria, the applicant should:

- identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, preferably a Reef Traditional Owner,
- have familiarity with Traditional Owner governance structures and aspiration as they relate to the Great Barrier Reef and its catchments,
- have experience working with Elders and senior personnel within major organisations, and
- have an interest and/or experience in COTS management.

## About the COTS Control Program

Outbreaks of coral-eating crown-of-thorns starfish (COTS) are a major cause of coral decline on the Great Barrier Reef and future COTS outbreaks are almost certain. The [Reef 2050 Plan](#)

includes management of these outbreaks as an integral part of Australia's long-term strategy for protecting the health of the Great Barrier Reef.

The Program is funded to 2030 with an annual budget of approximately \$20m per year. It is currently delivered as a partnership between the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, the Reef Authority and Reef and Rainforest Research Centre, and co-funded by the Foundation and the Reef Authority.

The [COTS Control Program](#) is the largest scale on-water intervention activity on the Reef that is focused on protecting coral habitats. Under this Program, a fleet of vessels operate from across the northern, central and southern regions of the Reef and manage starfish pests on approximately 150-200 reefs per year. Vessel crews conduct surveys and culling to control COTS numbers and protect the breeding corals that are the foundation for a healthy Reef ecosystem.

The Program currently employs Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples onboard its vessels. There is also a training program underway to further build career pathways for Traditional Owners in COTS management. Future aspirations for the program include the integration of Traditional Owner priorities in the annual plans for the program's operations, and potential fee-for-service arrangements with TO groups to deliver on-water operations.

The Program is informed by cutting-edge science and innovation. There is currently a [COTS Control Innovation Program](#) that works closely with program managers and on-water crews to deliver research that will continuously improve the management approach and outcomes for the health of the Reef and its peoples.

## About the COTS Partnership Group

The COTS Control Program is currently governed by a small committee called the COTS Partnership Group (CPG). This Group provides strategic oversight of the program, including providing input into strategic and operational plans and reports. The Group also provides strategic advice on risks and opportunities and ensures the program is underpinned and adaptively managed by the best-available science and information.

The CPG membership currently includes high-level representation from the three partner organisations involved in delivering the COTS Control Program. These are the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, the Reef Authority and the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre. Meetings are held at least quarterly online and are usually 2 hours in duration. The Group may meet annually in-person if possible.

Please express your interest in this role by sending your CV and covering letter addressing the selection criteria to [applications@barrierreef.org](mailto:applications@barrierreef.org).

If you have questions, please email [grants@barrierreef.org](mailto:grants@barrierreef.org) or phone (07) 3252 7555.

Please note that this role will be contracted through the Reef Authority.

## Applications close at 11:59pm on 17 May 2024.

Further information is available on the Great Barrier Reef Foundation website:

<https://www.barrierreef.org/what-we-do/grants-and-opportunities/expression-of-interest-first-nations-member-for-cots-control-partnership-group>