Late glacial to deglacial variation of coralgal assemblages in the Great Barrier Reef, Australia

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4	Humblet, M. ¹ , Potts, D.C. ² , Webster, J.M. ³ , Braga, J.C. ⁴ , Iryu, Y. ⁵ , Yokoyama, Y. ⁶ ,
5	Bourillot, R. ⁷ , Séard, C ^{8,13} , Droxler, A. ⁹ , Fujita, K. ¹⁰ , Gischler, E. ¹¹ , and Kan, H. ¹²
6	¹ Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, Nagoya University, Nagoya 464-8601, Japan
7	² Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, University of California, Santa Cruz, California
8	95064, USA
9	³ Geocoastal Research Group, School of Geosciences, The University of Sydney, NSW 2006,
10	Australia
11	⁴ Departamento de Estratigrafía y Paleontología, Universidad de Granada, 18002 Granada,
12	Spain
13	⁵ Institute of Geology and Paleontology, Graduate School of Science, Tohoku University,
14	Aobayama, Sendai 980-8578, Japan
15	⁶ Atmosphere and Ocean Research Institute, and Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences,
16	University of Tokyo, 5-1-5, Japan
17	⁷ EA 4592 G&E, Ensegid, Bordeaux INP, Université Bordeaux Montaigne 1, allée F. Daguin, 33
18	607 Pessac Cedex, France
19	⁸ Centre Européen de Recherches et d'Enseignement en Géosciences (Cerege), UMR-CNRS
20	7330, Aix-Marseille Université, 13545 Aix-en-Provence cedex 4, France
21	⁹ Department of Earth Science, Rice University, 6100 Main Street, Houston, TX, 77005, USA
22	¹⁰ Department of Physics and Earth Sciences, University of the Ryukyus,1 Senbaru, Nishihara,
23	Okinawa 903-0213, Japan
24	¹¹ Institut für Geowissenschaften, J.W. Goethe-Universität, 60438 Frankfurt am Main, Germany
25	¹² Graduate School of Integrated Sciences for Global Society Kyushu University, 744 Motooka,
26	Nishi-ku, Fukuoka 819-0395, Japan
27	¹³ Present address : Le Grand Narbonne, 12 Boulevard Frédéric Mistral, 11100 Narbonne,
28	France
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30	Abstract
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33	Integrated Ocean Drilling Program (IODP) Expedition 325 cored submerged reefs
34	along the shelf edge of the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) to study sea-level and
35	environmental changes and their impacts on reef communities and reef growth since
36	the Last Glacial Maximum (LGM). Previous work defined five reef sequences (Reef 1-

5) that span the last 30,000 years. Here we examined the variation in coralgal 37 assemblages and their paleoenvironmental settings in late glacial to deglacial 38 sequences from 23 holes cored seaward of the modern GBR in water depths from 46 39 to 131 m along four transects at three localities: Hydrographers Passage (HYD-01C 40 and HYD-02A), Noggin Pass (NOG-01B), and Ribbon Reef (RIB-02A). We identified 41 three coralline algal assemblages and eight coral assemblages indicating a broad 42 range of reef settings from the shallow reef crest (0-5 m) to the deep forereef slope 43 (>20 m). We document in detail for the first time the distribution and composition of reef 44 communities that grew in the GBR during the LGM from 22,000–19,000 years ago. 45 They included coral taxa that are major reef builders today: Isopora, Acropora gr. 46 47 humilis, Dipsastraea gr. pallida, Porites, and Montipora. Prior to the fall in sea level to the maximum extent of the LGM, late glacial reef communities developed more 48 proximally (landward) to the modern GBR along the shelf edge. Their distribution and 49 composition reflect influences of the older Pleistocene basement depth and possible 50 terrigenous sediment inputs. Post-LGM deglacial reef growth was vigorous in proximal 51 sites and characterized by the accretion of a very shallow high-energy coralgal 52 assemblage composed of medium to robustly branching Acropora, including A. gr. 53 humilis, and thick algal crusts of Porolithon gr. onkodes associated with vermetid 54 gastropods. More distally, reef growth was variably impacted by terrigenous input 55 following deglacial reflooding of antecedent reef terraces. The coralgal succession and 56 57 sedimentary facies in Noggin Pass indicate that an early drowning trend was linked to increased turbidity that was likely controlled by shelf morphology (narrow shelf, steep 58 slope) and/or proximity to a paleo-river mouth. The deglacial succession in Ribbon 59 Reef lacks typical shallow-water indicators, which may reflect influences of the 60 particularly steep slope of the northern GBR shelf edge on reef zonation. A major sea-61 level jump at the onset of the Younger Dryas displaced reef habitats further upslope, 62 forming a barrier reef system mainly composed of robustly branching acroporids 63 distinct from the more distal sites. Our results highlight the importance of sedimentation 64 and shelf morphology in addition to relative sea-level changes in controlling variations 65 in reef community over centennial to millennial timescales. 66 67 68 1. Introduction 69

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72 Coral reefs worldwide are threatened by ocean warming that triggers mass coral

bleaching events, and there are concerns about the ability of coral reefs to recover 73 from mortality events which have recently become more intense and more frequent 74 (Hughes et al., 2018). Global warming also drives sea level rise, which poses another 75 threat to coral reefs already compromised by other factors, such as global warming, 76 pollution, and terrigenous sedimentation (Perry et al., 2018). To understand the 77 potential long-term impacts of these threats, the fossil record can be used to determine 78 how coral reefs and reef communities have responded to rapid environmental changes 79 (Pandolfi, 2011), constrain the conditions of reef initiation and demise, and inform 80 predictive models of reef development and biotic changes (Salles et al., 2018). 81

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83 Offshore drilling of submerged reefs gives rare opportunities to study responses of reefs and reef communities to glacial conditions and rapid post-glacial sea-level rise. In 84 addition, accurate sea-level reconstructions can be based on combining data from 85 paleowater depth indicators (e.g. corals, coralline algae, and vermetid gastropods) and 86 radioisotope dating (Chappell and Polach, 1991; Deschamps et al., 2012). Tectonically 87 88 stable locations far from the poles, such as the GBR and Tahiti, are of particular interest because effects of post-glacial isostatic rebound are minimal (Yokoyama et al., 89 2001a). Individual coral colonies are commonly used for paleoclimate reconstructions 90 based on geochemical proxies (Asami et al., 2009; Felis et al., 2012), and submerged 91 reefs are good candidates for geochemical studies because they are less likely to be 92 93 affected by prolonged subaerial exposure and meteoric diagenesis (Abbey and Webster, 2011). 94

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Submerged reefs exist in the Atlantic (e.g. Lighty et al., 1978; Macintyre et al., 1991), 96 Pacific (e.g. Cabioch et al., 2008; Webster et al., 2004a, 2004b), and Indian Oceans 97 (e.g. Dullo et al., 1998; Vora et al., 1996). The first cores drilled in submerged reefs 98 were from Barbados (Fairbanks, 1989), and their study suggested two brief episodes of 99 very rapid post-glacial sea-level rise punctuated a more gradual deglaciation curve 100 (postulating a constant uplift rate of 0.34 mm yr^{-1}): meltwater pulse MWP-1A at 14.2– 101 13.8 ka and MWP-1B at 11.5–11.1 ka (Deschamps et al., 2012; Abdul et al., 2016). In 102 contrast, studies of onshore and offshore cores from Tahiti, subsiding at a rate of ~0.25 103 mm yr⁻¹, found no evidence for MWP-1B (Bard et al., 2010), but confirmed the 104 existence of MWP-1A (Camoin et al., 2012; Deschamps et al., 2012). Despite the 105 abrupt MWP-1A sea-level rise, reef framework grew without interruption at Tahiti, but 106 there was a shift to fast-growing corals and retrogradation of shallow reef-edge coralgal 107 108 assemblages (Abbey et al., 2011a; Blanchon et al., 2014; Camoin et al., 2012). There

are very limited data on sea-level and reef growth histories during the late glacial to 109 early deglacial period (30–15 ka) before MWP-1A. Corals of Last Glacial Maximum 110 (LGM) age, including shallow-water Acropora species, have been recovered in the 111 Pacific Ocean by dredging submerged reefs and drilling on uplifted terraces (reviewed 112 by Braithwaite, 2016; Camoin and Webster, 2015; Montaggioni, 2005; Woodroffe and 113 Webster, 2014). The new IODP Expedition 325 record of sea level and reef growth in 114 the GBR region over the past 30 ka offers a unique window on reef community 115 changes during the LGM and last deglacial period (Yokoyama et al., 2018; Webster et 116 al., 2018). 117

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119 In eastern Australia, the first evidence of glacial to early deglacial reef growth came from 2D topographic surveys (echo sounder, seismic data) of the seafloor that revealed 120 the extensive distribution of probable submerged reef structures along the shelf edge of 121 the modern GBR (Carter and Johnson, 1986; Harris and Davies, 1989; Hopley, 1982). 122 More recently, high-resolution 3D bathymetric surveys of these features identified them 123 124 as relict barrier reefs and high-relief patch reefs between 40–70 m water depth, or as fringing reefs and low-relief patch reefs between 80–100 m (Abbey et al., 2011b; 125 Beaman et al., 2008; Webster et al., 2008). Dredged samples from the tops of some of 126 these submerged reefs have provided new insights into the responses of mesophotic 127 coralgal communities to deglacial sea-level rise and associated environmental changes 128 129 (Abbey et al., 2013).

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132 IODP Expedition 325 (Exp. 325) in 2010 targeted submerged reefs along the shelf edge of the modern GBR, with the goal of constraining the history of sea level and reef 133 134 growth since the LGM (Webster et al., 2011). The overall chronology of reef growth and reef architecture derived from IODP Exp. 325 data are described by Webster et al. 135 (2018) and Yokoyama et al. (2018), and supported by seismic imaging of the GBR shelf 136 edge (Hinestrosa et al., 2014). Five main reef sequences can be distinguished over the 137 past 30 ka: (1) an early glacial reef sequence between 27 and 22 ka (Marine Isotope 138 Stage 2; MIS2) confined mainly to the inner reef terrace (Reef 2); (2) an LGM-early 139 deglacial reef sequence between 22 and 17 ka confined to the mid and outer terraces 140 (Reef 3a); (3) a deglacial reef sequence between 17 and 13 ka extending landward 141 following reflooding of the inner terrace (Reef 3b); (4) a late deglacial reef sequence 142 between 13 and 10 ka localized further upslope and developing into a proto-barrier reef 143 144 (Reef 4); and (5) the modern GBR reef sequence on the shelf from 10 ka to the

present. The older Pleistocene basement consisting of reef deposits ≥30 ka is defined 145 as Reef1. While a basic description of the coral and algal composition of the reef 146 boundstones is reported in Webster et al. (2018), we now provide the most complete 147 analysis of the Exp. 325 cores, including two transects RIB-02A and HYD-02A not 148 previously described. We present comprehensive, detailed descriptions of the coralgal 149 assemblages in each sequence, discuss their paleoenvironmental significance, and 150 use published age data to constrain the timing of changes in reef biotic composition. 151 We examine the responses of the GBR ecosystem to late glacial to deglacial sea-level 152 changes, based on spatial and temporal variation in coralgal assemblages. More 153 specifically, we offer the first glimpse into the taxonomic composition of the GBR during 154 155 the last glacial period and analyze the impact of deglacial flooding of the shelf on coralgal communities. 156 157 158 2. Methods 159 160 161 2.1. Geologic setting and drilling operations 162 163 The modern GBR lies on the continental shelf of northeastern Australia and extends 164 from 24° 30' S to 9° 30' S (Hopley et al., 2007). The geomorphology of the Eastern 165 Australian Shelf is characterized by a southward increase in shelf width (from ca. 50 166 km to >100 km) and a decrease in the angle of the slope at the shelf break: >30° at 167 Ribbon Reef, 15°–20° at Noggin Pass, and ca. 2° at Hydrographers Passage (Abbey et 168 al., 2011b; Hinestrosa et al., 2016). Reef initiation took place during the Middle 169 170 Pleistocene, and successive highstand reef units formed on the shelf during interglacial periods (Humblet and Webster, 2017). During glacial sea-level lowstands, the area of 171 potential reef accretion was restricted to a narrow band along the shelf edge (Hopley et 172 al., 2007). Bathymetric and seismic surveys have provided robust evidence for the 173 existence of submerged fossil reefs offshore of the modern GBR (e.g., Beaman et al., 174 175 2008; Hinestrosa et al., 2014). The reef structures targeted in this study consist of a double – inner and outer – barrier reef rising from depths of 50 to 70 mbsl and three 176 reef terraces (formed by drowned fringing reefs) below 70 mbsl classified into inner. 177 mid, and outer terraces based on bathymetry (Abbey et al., 2011b; Beaman et al., 178 2008; Hinestrosa et al., 2014). 179 180

A total of 33 holes (M0030A–M0057A) were cored into distinct submerged reef 181 structures in water depths from 46.4 to 131.2 mbsl (meters below sea level, corrected 182 to the Lowest Astronomical Tide, LAT) and one (M0058A) on the forereef slope at 183 170.3 mbsl along the shelf edge of the GBR during IODP Exp. 325 (Webster et al., 184 2011; Harper et al., 2015). Holes were arranged along four transects from landward 185 (proximal) to seaward (distal) in three geographic areas, from north to south: Ribbon 186 Reef (RIB-02A) at 15.5° S (offshore Cooktown and adjacent to Ribbon Reef 3), Noggin 187 Pass (NOG-01B) at 17.1° S (offshore Cairns), and Hydrographers Passage (HYD-01C 188 and HYD-02A) at 19.7°–19.8° S (offshore Mackay) (Fig. 1). Downhole gamma-ray 189 measurements were carried out on four holes and used as a proxy for fine-grained 190 191 terrigenous sediment flux (Webster et al., 2011). The depth of sedimentary and biological constituents in IODP Exp. 325 cores reported in this paper does not account 192 for the uncertainty related to core recovery (for a detailed discussion on the issues of 193 core recoveries and depth uncertainties, see supplementary information in Webster et 194 al., 2018). 195 196 197 198 199 2.2. Core description 200 201 202 Cores were split lengthwise into an archive half and a working half. The former was 203 described visually after taking high-resolution digital images and performing 204 petrophysical measurements (as described by Webster et al., 2011). The present study 205 206 focuses on the late glacial MIS2 to last deglacial reef sequence. The older Pleistocene basement (≥30 ka) was reached in 14 holes and consists mostly of reefal deposits 207 below the barrier reef and inner terrace, and grey packstone and grainstone containing 208 Halimeda segments and larger benthic foraminifers below the deeper terraces 209 (Gischler et al., 2013; Yagioka et al., 2019). Diagenetic alteration of the older 210 Pleistocene basement in holes from the barrier reef and inner terrace indicates 211 subaerial exposure prior to postglacial sea-level rise (Gischler et al., 2013; Webster et 212 al., 2011, 2018). The MIS2 to last deglacial reef sequence penetrated by coring varies 213 greatly in thickness, ranging from ca. 4.76 m in hole M0056A to 34.16 m in M0031A. 214 215 216

217 Visual examination included descriptions of core disturbances (e.g. fracturing, downhole contamination), lithologies, sedimentary and diagenetic features, 218 microbialites, and fossils (e.g., corals, coralline algae, mollusks). Corals were identified 219 to the lowest taxonomic level possible. Species groups were established when several 220 species of the same genus and with similar growth forms could not be distinguished. 221 The taxonomic classification follows Veron (2000) with more recent modifications by 222 Budd et al. (2012), Huang et al. (2014, 2016), and Wallace et al. (2007). Coral growth 223 forms and context (i.e. autochthonous vs. allochthonous) were characterized using 224 criteria detailed in Webster et al. (2011, 2018). A coral colony is described as 225 encrusting if its thickness is <5 cm and massive if >5 cm. The term "platy" refers to 226 colonies less than 5 cm thick with free margins, and the term "laminar" encompasses 227 both the encrusting and platy morphologies. Coral branches are referred to as fine, 228 medium, or robust, based on average diameters of <1 cm, 1–1.5 cm, or >1.5 cm, 229 respectively. Information on the across-shelf and depth distribution of scleractinian 230 corals in the GBR is summarized in Done (1982), Veron (1986, 2000), Veron and 231 232 Pichon (1976, 1979, 1982), Veron and Wallace (1984), and Veron et al. (1977). Identification of coralline algae was based on examination of 385 thin sections, using 233 the same diagnostic criteria to delimit species and species groups that were applied to 234 living coralline algae in the Indo-Pacific areas (Verheij, 1994; Keats, 1995, 1997; Keats 235 et al., 1996, Athanasiadis and Ballantine, 2014; Maneveldt and Keats, 2014; Van der 236 237 Merwe and Maneveldt, 2016; Rösler et al., 2016; Caragnano et al., 2018, Peña et al., 2018; Gabrielson et al., 2018). We followed the taxonomic schemes recently proposed 238 for coralline algae by Nelson et al. (2015), and by Rösler et al. (2016) for the family 239 Corallinaceae, order Corallinales, and the generic classification scheme proposed by 240 Rösler et al. (2016) and Caragnano et al. (2018) for this family. We created species 241 242 groups for species that share common characters observable in fossil corallines but which are separated by features that are not preserved in fossil specimens. The 243 244 paleodepths inferred from coralline algal assemblages were derived from the published distributions of living members of the identified taxa (Adey et al., 1982; Cabioch et al. 245 1999; Littler and Littler, 2003; Payri et al., 2000; Dechnik et al., 2017). Basic information 246 about coralgal assemblages and the distribution of vermetid gastropods has been 247 reported for transects HYD-01C and NOG-01B in Webster et al. (2018). These data are 248 now integrated with the other transects and with new detailed information on the 249 percent volume of coralgal framework, thickness of coralline algal crusts, and the 250 presence/absence of vermetid gastropods at 10 m intervals in all Exp. 325 cores. Our 251 252 new paleowater depth reconstruction is based on integration of all coral, coralline

253 algae, and vermetid gastropod information, all of which have been widely used as depth indicators in reconstructions of Quaternary sea-level changes (Abbey et al., 254 2011a; Braga and Aguirre, 2004; Cabioch et al., 1999; Dechnik et al., 2017; Iryu et al., 255 2010; Webster and Davies, 2003). Occurrences of algal and coral taxa identified in the 256 reef sequences are presented in Table S1. The rates of vertical reef accretion 257 presented in this paper are those reported in Webster et al. (2018) based on the linear 258 visual fit analysis of the *in situ* corals and coralline algae age vs. depth plots for 259 transects HYD-01C and NOG-01B (Table S2). 260

3.1. Coralline algal assemblages and paleoenvironmental interpretations

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3. Results

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In the MIS2 to last deglacial reef sequence in the GBR, coralline algae occur mainly as 268 crusts that build boundstones by growing over and between corals and other 269 encrusting organisms, such as vermetids, bryozoans, serpulid worms and foraminifers. 270 Corallines also appear as fragments within the internal sediment and, very rarely, form 271 small nodules around bioclastic nuclei. Twenty eight species or species groups 272 273 belonging to 15 genera were recognized in this study, although the generic attribution of two species included in Hydrolithon (H. murakoshii and H. breviclavium) needs 274 revision (Table 1). Except for Lithoporella, species that only form thin encrusting thalli 275 (<100 µm thick) have not been identified since preservation of their diagnostic 276 anatomical features is uncommon. In the best preserved transects, HYD-01C and 277 278 NOG-01B, there were totals of 19 species and species groups in both the early glacial (Reef 2) and late deglacial (Reef 4) coralline algal assemblages; totals were slightly 279 higher in the LGM (Reef 3a) and early deglacial assemblages (Reef 3b) with 25 and 22 280 species and species groups, respectively, due to a few rare species not recorded in the 281 other assemblages (Table 1). All identified genera and species were reported in 282 present-day Pacific reefs, some of them under different names from those currently 283 accepted (Verheij, 1994; Adey et al., 1982; Cabioch et al., 1999; Payri et al., 2000; 284 Ringeltaube and Harvey, 2000; Littler and Littler, 2003; Rösler et al., 2016; Dechnik et 285 al., 2017; Caragnano et al., 2018; Peña et al., 2018). Because some extant species or 286 species groups only live in relatively narrow depth ranges, their present-day 287 288 distributions can be used to infer the paleodepth of boundstone formation. Three

different coralline algal assemblages are recognized with characteristic paleodepthranges (Table 2 and Fig. 2).

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Assemblage aA1 indicates paleodepths of less than 10 m and is characterized by 292 293 thick crusts of *Porolithon* gr. onkodes. At One Tree Reef (near the southern end of the 294 GBR at 23° S), thick crusts of P. gr. onkodes are abundant and often the dominant coralline algae encrusting coral colonies in the shallowest settings (less than 10 m), 295 and thin crusts of this species occur down to 20 m (Dechnik et al., 2017). P. gr. 296 onkodes is similarly abundant in the shallowest coralline algal assemblages of many 297 other Pacific reefs (Adey et al., 1982; Verheij, 1994; Iryu et al., 1995; Cabioch et al., 298 299 1999; Payri et al., 2000; Littler and Littler, 2003). Common accessory components of aA1 include Porolithon gardineri, Lithophyllum gr. kotschyanum and Neogoniolithon gr. 300 fosliei. Others species, more common in assemblage 2 (see below), can also be 301 accessories in aA1. 302

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304 Assemblage aA2 is characterized by several species. Key components are P. gardineri with occasional thin crusts of P. gr. onkodes, while additional components 305 include Harveylithon gr. munitum, Hydrolithon boergesenii (= H. reinboldii), 306 Neogoniolithon gr. fosliei, Dawsoniolithon conicum (= Pneophyllum conicum in Keats et 307 al., 1997 and Porolithon conicum in Bittner et al., 2011) and Lithophyllum gr. 308 309 prototypum (reported as Titanoderma tessellatum by Cabioch et al., 1999). P. gardineri can extend down to 20 m depth (Littler and Littler, 2003), which is also the maximum 310 depth for P. gr. onkodes (Cabioch et al., 1999, Payri et al., 2000). Other species in the 311 312 assemblage can be found in deeper settings.

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Assemblage aA3 is defined primarily by the absence of shallower coralline species
characteristic of assemblages aA1 and aA2, and indicates paleoenvironments below
20 m. Key components are knobby *Melyvonnea* gr. *erubescens*, and foliose *Mesophyllum*, mainly *M. funafutiense*, while accessory species include *Lithothamnion prolifer*, *Lithophyllum* gr. *prototypum*, thinly encrusting *Lithoporella*, and laminar *Lithothamnion* sp. crusts.

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- **322 3.2. Coralgal assemblages and paleoenvironmental interpretations**
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325 A total of 58 species or species groups of zooxanthellate scleractinian corals were 326 identified from 35 genera in 11 families (Table 1). After combining data from the two best preserved transects, HYD-01A and NOG-01B, the total numbers of species or 327 species groups identified on each reef were: early glacial (Reef 2), 30 species; LGM 328 (Reef 3a), 27 species; early deglacial (Reef 3b), 27 species; and late deglacial (Reef 329 4), 25 species. The dominant corals in transects NOG-01B, HYD0-1C, and HYD-02A 330 are massive Isopora, branching Acropora and Seriatopora, encrusting to massive 331 merulinids, Porites and Montipora, and encrusting agariciids. The octocorallian 332 *Tubipora musica* is also common in these transects. Robustly branching *Isopora* is 333 common in the barrier reefs in transects HYD-01C (M0034A) and NOG-01B (M0057A). 334 335 In contrast, the taxonomic composition of coral assemblages at RIB-02A differs from that of the three other transects as it lacks massive *lsopora*, is dominated by encrusting 336 Porites and Montipora, and contains only a few branching Acropora. 337

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Eight coral assemblages were defined based on the taxonomic and morphological compositions of dominant and associated coral taxa. Their paleoenvironments are interpreted based on the distributions of their modern analogues in the GBR, the morphology and taxonomic composition of co-occurring coralline algae, and the presence or absence of vermetid gastropods (Table 2 and Fig. 3).

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345 Assemblage cA1 is dominated by massive *Isopora* and branching corymbose to digitate Acropora gr. humilis associated occasionally with A. monticulosa and 346 encrusting *Porites*. These corals coexist with thick crusts of *P*. gr. onkodes (aA1) and 347 vermetid gastropods. On modern reefs, this coral community lives in upper forereef 348 slope and reef crest environments between 0 and 10 m water depth, but is most 349 350 common between 0 and 5 m (Cabioch et al., 1999; Done, 1982,1983; Veron, 1986). The occurrence of thick crusts of *P*. gr. onkodes (aA1) and vermetid gastropods is also 351 suggestive of a depth range of 5 m or less. In Indo-Pacific reefs, thick coralline algal 352 crusts and abundant vermetid gastropods are characteristic of the shallowest (<5-6 m) 353 high-energy reef setting (Cabioch et al., 1999). Vermetid gastropods are considered a 354 robust sea-level indicator in Indo-Pacific and Caribbean reefs (Montaggioni and 355 Braithwaite, 2009), and their association with thick coralline crusts is a common feature 356 of Holocene high-energy reef facies (Dechnik et al., 2015; Gischler et al., 2016) 357 358

Assemblage cA2 is characterized by robustly branching and massive *Isopora*.
 Accessory constituents are *Acropora* gr. *humilis*, and *A.* gr. *robusta*. These robustly

branching acroporids are all characteristic of shallow-water, high-energy reef settings,
probably less than 5 m deep, and certainly no deeper than 10 m (Montaggioni, 2005).
We restrict the paleowater depth of cA2 to 0–5 m when it is associated with thick algal
crusts of *P*. gr. *onkodes* and vermetid gastropods.

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Assemblage cA3 is characterized by massive *Isopora* and branching *Acropora* species. Accessory corals are encrusting *Porites*. The depth limit of this assemblage is determined by the range of *Isopora*, usually between 0 and 20 m (Done, 1982), but occasionally extends to 40 m (Muir et al., 2015). We restrict the paleowater depth to < 10 m, when corals are associated with thick crusts of *P*. gr. *onkodes* and vermetid gastropods.

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Assemblage cB is dominated by branching Seriatopora and a diverse array of 373 Acropora species with branch diameters <1 cm. Associated corals include variable 374 proportions of massive *Isopora*, branching *Stylophora*, encrusting *Porites* and 375 376 Montipora, massive Tubipora, and to a lesser extent, encrusting to massive merulinids. Seriatopora is common in sheltered environments on the shallow leeward side of reef 377 islands, and in deeper settings on the windward forereef slope (Done, 1982). The 378 association of Seriatopora with Acropora is common in a broad range of protected 379 environments down to the mesophotic zone, below 30 m (Bridge et al., 2012). The 380 381 presence of *Isopora* restricts the depth range to 0–20 m, and thick crusts of *P*. gr. onkodes and vermetid gastropods further constrain depths to 0-10 m 382

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Assemblage cC is dominated by encrusting to massive merulinids, mainly *Dipsastraea* 384 and less commonly Cyphastrea and Platygyra. Associated corals are finely branching 385 386 Acropora, encrusting Porites and Montipora, and Hydnophora. Merulinids can be dominant in very shallow reef settings in the GBR, such as shallow reef flat to back reef 387 area in less than 6 m depth (Done, 1982). Merulinids are associated with a coral 388 community dominated by tabular Acropora on the forereef slope of Indo-Pacific reefs 389 from 6 to 15 m (Cabioch et al., 1999), and *Dipsastraea* species are often common 390 down to at least 25 m on forereef slopes of the GBR (Done, 1982) and also in shallow, 391 turbid environments (Veron, 1986). Cyphastrea and Hydnophora are sediment-tolerant 392 genera, often associated with Dipsastraea and other corals, such as Goniopora and 393 Turbinaria, in turbid, low energy, inner-shelf reefs of eastern Australia (Perry et al., 394 2009). Assemblage cC may represent a depth range of 0–30 m, but less in shallow 395 396 turbid environments. The depth range is restricted to 0–10 m when associated with

thick crusts of *P.* gr. *onkodes* and vermetid gastropods.

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Assemblage cD is characterized by massive Porites (5–20 cm thick) associated 399 mainly with encrusting *Montipora* and encrusting merulinids. The label cD is also used 400 401 to refer to single massive *Porites* colonies growing immediately above the postglacial reef sequence in several holes (M0033A, M0034A, M0039A, and M0055A). Porites has 402 a wide environmental range (Veron and Pichon, 1982) but massive *Porites* may 403 dominate shallow semi-exposed to sheltered habitats (Done, 1982), also in turbid 404 inshore environments (Potts et al., 1985). Porites with flattened growth forms occur 405 with Montipora and Pachyseris speciosa on steep slopes below 10 m in Coral Sea 406 407 reefs (Done, 1982), and down to 60 m in the GBR (Bridge et al., 2012). Assemblage cD indicates a wide depth range between 0 and 60 m, and other criteria, such as the 408 composition and thickness of algal crusts and the presence or absence of vermetid 409 gastropods, are used to constrain the depth range of this assemblage. 410

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Assemblage cE is dominated by encrusting Montipora and Porites associated with 412 encrusting merulinids (mainly Cyphastrea) and small finely branching Acropora 413 colonies. This assemblage is commonly associated with thin crusts of aA3, devoid of 414 vermetid gastropods. A similar assemblage has been recorded in the GBR mesophotic 415 zone below 40 m (Abbey et al., 2013; Bridge et al., 2012). Assemblage cE combined 416 417 with aA3 indicates a forereef slope habitat deeper than 20 m to at least 100 m. However, this assemblage may extend into shallower waters on steep slopes, or in 418 higher turbidity (Done, 1982, Browne et al., 2012). 419

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Assemblage cF is dominated by agariciids (e.g. Leptoseris gr. yabei, Pachyseris 421 422 speciosa) associated with encrusting Montipora and Porites. Leptoseris and Pachyseris speciosa are important constituents of mesophotic coral communities of the GBR 423 (Abbey et al., 2013; Bridge et al., 2012). Like assemblage cE, the depth distribution of 424 assemblage cF is constrained to >20 m when associated with thin crusts of aA3 devoid 425 of vermetids. Both mesophotic assemblages, cE and cF, have a greater diversity of 426 coral species above 60 m than from 60 m to 102 m (Bridge et al., 2011a, b; Abbey et 427 al., 2013). 428 429

430

431 **3.3. Spatial and temporal variations in coralgal assemblages**

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433 **3.3.1. Hydrographers Passage (transects HYD-01C and HYD-02A)**

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435 **3.3.1.1**. Northern transect (HYD-01C)

436

437 Late glacial MIS2 reef growth (27-22 ka, Reef 2) initiated on the inner terrace in holes M0031A–33A (Webster et al., 2018) on a basement substrate overlain by 438 unconsolidated granule- to pebble-sized bioclasts of corals, Halimeda, mollusks, 439 echinoids, and larger foraminifers (Figs. 4 and 5). The unconsolidated sediment is 440 overlain in M0032A and M0033A (at ca. 116.2–114.4 mbsl) by a coralgal-microbialite 441 442 boundstone composed mainly of encrusting to massive merulinids (e.g. Dipsastraea, Cyphastrea), encrusting Hydnophora, and finely branching Acropora (cC) associated 443 with thin crusts of aA3. Coralline algae shift to thicker crusts of P. gr. onkodes 444 containing vermetid gastropods at ca. 109.2 mbsl, which coincides with the coral 445 community changing from cC to an assemblage composed of massive Isopora and a 446 few (possibly in situ) branching Seriatopora (cB?) (Figs. 4 and 6A). The average 447 accretion rate on the inner terrace is ca. 1.9–3.4 mm yr⁻¹ until 22.9 ka, falling to 0.1 mm 448 yr-1 between 22.9 and 22.1 ka (Table S2), with little accretion on the mid and outer 449 terraces between 27 and 22 ka. In M0035A, the basement substrate is covered with 450 microbialite boundstone containing few thin laminar agariciids (cF), while in M0036A it 451 is covered by a coralgal boundstone composed of encrusting corals, such as Montipora 452 453 and *Cyphastrea* (cE), thinly encrusted with aA3. On the inner terrace, a major hiatus in reef growth at ca. 106.5–105.3 mbsl was caused by the rapid sea-level fall leading to 454 the LGM, and marks the termination of Reef 2 (Webster et al., 2018). 455

456

The abrupt LGM sea-level fall displaced shallow reef facies seaward at an average rate 457 458 of 1.5 m/year (Webster et al., 2018; Yokoyama et al., 2018). Consequently, LGM to early deglacial reef growth (22–17 ka, Reef 3a) is confined to the mid and outer 459 terraces. LGM coralgal-microbialite boundstone began to accumulate at ca. 127.5 mbsl 460 in M0035A, ca. 128.8 mbsl in M0036A, and ca. 130.0 mbsl in M0039A. LGM corals 461 (22–19 ka) are diverse, and include Acropora (e.g. finely branching species and A. gr. 462 humilis), encrusting to massive merulinids (e.g. Dipsastraea gr. pallida, Cyphastrea), 463 branching Seriatopora, encrusting Porites and Montipora, massive Tubipora and 464 Isopora (i.e. cC? in M0035A, cB in M0036A, and cE/cC? in M0039A) (Figs. 4, 5 and 465 7A). The associated algal assemblages are composed of crusts of aA1 reaching 1 cm 466 thick with vermetid gastropods in M0035A and M0036A and thinner crusts of aA3 with 467 468 no vermetid gastropods in M0039A. A notable change in the coral assemblage in

469 M0035A, at ca. 121.5 mbsl, marks the initiation of a ca. 10 m thick interval dominated by massive Isopora and branching Seriatopora associated with encrusting Montipora 470 and few Acropora gr. humilis (Isopora-rich cB). The thickness of algal crusts and the 471 frequency of vermetid gastropods increase upward. There is a similar trend in M0036A. 472 473 The corresponding stratigraphic interval in M0039A is composed of finely branching 474 Acropora, Seriatopora and encrusting Porites and/or Montipora (Acropora-rich cB) from 126.5 to 116.5 mbsl. The frequency of vermetid gastropods increases upward, as in the 475 two other holes, but the vertical trend in coralline algae is more complex. The algal 476 assemblage is composed of thin and thick crusts of aA1, except between 120.8 and 477 118.4 mbsl, where algal crusts are thinner and consist of aA3 and the coral 478 479 assemblage is characterized by branching *Echinopora*. The average accretion rate of Reef 3a on the mid and outer terraces at HYD-01C is ca. 4-4.3 mm yr⁻¹ (Table S2). 480 481

Postglacial reef growth resumed on the inner terrace (17–13 ka; Reef 3b; Webster et 482 al., 2018) at ca. 106.5–105.3 mbsl with deposition of a coralgal-microbialite boundstone 483 484 containing encrusting and massive *Isopora* commonly associated with aA1 (up to 2 cm thick in M0033A) and vermetid gastropods (Figs. 4 and 5). Isopora occurs with 485 Acropora gr. humilis (cA1) in M0031A, with A. gr. humilis and A. monticulosa (cA1) in 486 M0033A, and with Stylophora and Seriatopora (cB) in M0032A. These shallow reef 487 facies have high average accretion rates of up to 39.4 mm yr⁻¹ (Table S2). On the mid 488 489 and outer terraces, the facies is mostly bioclastic and comprised of *lsopora* and Acropora fragments (cA3, see bioclastic rudstone in Fig. 4). Massive colonies of 490 Porites, probably in situ, are present in M0039A. 491

492

Subsequent reef growth (13–10 ka, Reef 4) took place further upslope where a ca. 19 493 494 m thick coralgal-microbialite boundstone was recovered from M0034A on the outer barrier reef (Webster et al., 2018). On the inner and outer terraces, the tops of 495 M0032A, M0033A and M0039A correlate with Reef 4, and are occupied by massive 496 Porites (cD) or encrusting Montipora (cE). Porites is associated with thin crusts of aA3 497 in M0033A (Figs. 4 and 5). In M0034A on the outer barrier reef, the coralgal 498 assemblage between 71.7 and 57.3 mbsl consists mainly of massive and robustly 499 branching *Isopora* associated with *Acropora* (e.g. A. gr. *humilis*, A. gr. *hyacinthus*) 500 (cA2) and 1 cm thick crusts of aA1 with vermetid gastropods. The average accretion 501 rate is 4.5–11.4 mm yr⁻¹ (Table S2). In contrast, the top 2 m of the core grew at a slower 502 rate of 4.1 mm yr^1 or less, and consists of an assemblage of encrusting to massive 503 504 merulinids (e.g. Platygyra), branching Stylophora, and encrusting Montipora (cC?),

overlain by a ca. 30 cm thick *Porites* colony (cD) on top of the postglacial sequence;
this marks the end of reef growth in M0034A.

507

508 **3.3.1.2.** Southern transect (HYD-02A)

509

510 Reef boundstone of MIS2 age (Reef 2; 27–22? ka), composed mainly of microbialite, was recovered only from hole M0040A on the outer terrace between ca. 144 and 142.1 511 mbsl. Corals in this interval are primarily laminar Pachyseris speciosa (cF) associated 512 with algal assemblage aA3 (Figs. 8 and 9). Most material recovered from the mid reef 513 514 terraces is a coralgal and coralgal-microbialite boundstone containing mainly *Isopora*, 515 branching Acropora, and branching Seriatopora (cA and cB) that accumulated between 22 and 15? ka (Reef 3a/b) (Figs. 7B and 8). In contrast, material recovered from 516 M0040A and M0041A on the outer terrace is composed of a microbialite boundstone 517 formed mostly between 27 and 14 ka (Webster et al., 2018) in which agariciids (cF) are 518 replaced by encrusting *Porites* and *Montipora* (cE) at ca. 140.3 mbsl in M0040A and 519 138.5 mbsl in M0041A. The algal assemblages also vary along the transect with aA1 520 characteristic of proximal holes (M0042A, M0043A, and M0044A), and aA3 more 521 common in distal holes (M0046A and M0040A). A 2 m thick layer of unconsolidated 522 sediment, mostly mud, covers the postglacial reef sequence in M0040A and M0041A. 523 The tops of the mid-terrace holes consist of a coralgal boundstone with common 524 525 encrusting *Porites* (cE?) thinly encrusted by aA3, except in M0044A which is capped by a bioclastic packstone. Following reef growth termination on the mid and outer 526 terraces, a new phase of reef growth began further upslope in M0042A (Reef 4). The 527 postglacial reef sequence in M0042A begins at 69.3 mbsl with unconsolidated 528 bioclastic sediment containing pebble-sized coral fragments (e.g. Porites and 529 530 Montipora); a coralgal microbialite boundstone begins at 60.5 mbsl. The coral fauna around 59.3 mbsl includes robustly branching Acropora monticulosa (cA1) associated 531 with thin and thick crusts of aA1 and vermetid gastropods. The previous coralgal 532 assemblage is replaced at 58.1 mbsl by an association of encrusting to massive 533 merulinids and branching Acropora (cC?) thinly encrusted by aA3 before the reef finally 534 535 drowned.

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537

3.3.2. Noggin Pass (transect NOG-01B)

538

The initial late glacial MIS2 reef growth (Reef 2) is recorded in M0055A and M0053A on the inner and mid terrace, respectively, and in M0054B on the outer terrace (Webster et 541 al., 2018). The reef boundstone above the basement between 112 and 107 mbsl in M0055A is an algal bindstone composed primarily of thick, heavily bored, coralline algal 542 crusts (aA1) associated with vermetid gastropods. Some corals are diagenetically 543 altered, and include massive Goniopora, branching Acropora, and Stylophora? (Figs. 544 545 6B, 10 and 11). A coral community dominated by massive *Porites* associated with encrusting to massive merulinids (e.g. Goniastrea?) (cD) occupies the overlying 2 m 546 interval (at 105.3 mbsl) in which microbialite becomes part of the reef framework. 547 Subsequently, the coral fauna changes into a diverse assemblage of Lobophyllia 548 corymbosa, encrusting Isopora, massive Tubipora, and branching Seriatopora and 549 Acropora (cB). In contrast with the variable coral fauna, the algal assemblage (up to 5 550 551 cm thick crusts of *P.* gr. onkodes) and the abundance of vermetid gastropods remain unchanged. Reef 2 grew at average rates of 0.5–3.5 mm yr⁻¹ until 24 ka, falling to 0.6 552 mm yr⁻¹ between 24 and 21.8 ka (Table S2). Late glacial reef growth in M0053A is 553 characterized by a microbialite boundstone between 127.8 and 122.7 mbsl composed 554 of encrusting Porites and Montipora, encrusting to massive merulinids (e.g. 555 Cyphastrea, Favites gr. abdita), and finely branching Acropora (cE) associated with 556 less than 1 cm thick algal crusts (mostly aA3). Reef 2 in M0054B has a similar 557 association of encrusting *Porites* and *Montipora*, finely branching *Acropora* (cE), and 558 thin algal crusts (mainly aA2 and aA3). The top of Reef 2 in M0054B may extend to 559 126.5 mbsl, based on the available age data. A major hiatus in reef growth at ca. 103 560 561 mbsl in M0055A marks the termination of Reef 2 (Webster et al., 2018).

562

LGM to early deglacial reef growth (Reef 3a) is limited to the mid and outer terraces 563 (M0053A, M0054A/B). The LGM reef initiated at ca. 122 mbsl in M0053A and at ca. 564 126.5 mbsl in M0054B. Microbialite dominates the LGM reef framework in M0054B, but 565 566 is less abundant in M0053A. The LGM coralgal community (22–19 ka) in M0053A is diverse and composed of massive Isopora, branching Acropora, massive Tubipora, and 567 encrusting Montipora (cA3) associated with up to 1 cm thick crusts of aA3. In this hole, 568 Reef 3a grew at an average rate of 3.8 mm yr⁻¹ before slowing to 1.8 mm yr⁻¹ at around 569 19 ka (Table S2). In contrast, the LGM reef in M0054B is composed primarily of 570 encrusting Porites and Montipora associated with finely branching Acropora (cE) and 571 algal crusts composed mainly of aA2 and aA3 and generally less than 1 cm thick (Figs. 572 7C and 10). During the early phase of deglacial reef growth in M0054A/B, the coralgal 573 assemblage changes at 124.55 mbsl with the appearance of branching Seriatopora, 574 encrusting to massive Isopora, branching Acropora (cB), and the development of 575 576 thicker algal crusts of *P*. gr. onkodes with vermetid gastropods. A similar coralgal

assemblage accumulated over 5.8 m in M0053A and is overlain at 111.8 mbsl by
massive *Isopora* and *Acropora* gr. *humilis* (cA1). Thin algal crusts of aA3, devoid of
vermetid gastropods and associated with massive *Platygyra*? and *Hydnophora* (cC),
replace the previous algal assemblage at ca. 109.7 mbsl.

581

Reef growth resumed on the inner terrace (Reef 3b) at ca. 103 mbsl in M0055A. On the 582 mid terrace, the Reef 3b interval occupies the top 3 m of M0053A, and consists of 583 carbonate sand overlain by encrusting Porites and/or Montipora (cE) in association with 584 aA3. In M0055A, the initial coralgal assemblage is composed of massive *Isopora*, 585 branching Seriatopora, massive Tubipora, and branching Stylophora (Isopora-rich cB) 586 587 associated with thick crusts of P. gr. onkodes and vermetid gastropods (Figs. 6B and 10). This coral assemblage accumulated over 2.2 m and is overlain at 100.8 mbsl by a 588 2 m thick interval containing various medium to robustly branching Acropora species, 589 including Acropora gr. humilis and possibly A. monticulosa (cA1). More proximally, on 590 the inner terrace, Reef 3b in M0056A overlies the older Pleistocene basement at 88.5 591 592 mbsl and is composed of massive merulinids (e.g., massive Cyphastrea) (cC). The postglacial corals of Reef 3b in M0056A are associated with thin and thick crusts of 593 aA1 with no vermetid gastropods except at the base of the sequence. Reef 3b at NOG-594 01B grew at average rates of 0.1–3.9 mm yr^{-1} with a brief peak at 7.3 mm yr^{-1} in 595 M0055A (Table S2). 596

597

The next reef sequence (Reef 4) is recorded on the inner barrier reef in M0057A and 598 more distally on the tops of M0053A, M0055A, and M0056A (Figs. 10 and 11). Hole 599 M0053A is capped by a thin veneer of Reef 4 material containing encrusting or platy 600 Porites and Montipora (cE). The top of M0055A is occupied by a massive Porites 601 602 colony (cD) with thin crusts of aA2, while encrusting Porites and Montipora (cE) form the top 1.5 m of M0056A. In M0057A, the older Pleistocene basement is overlain by a 603 13.8 m thick coralgal boundstone composed mostly of massive and robustly branching 604 Isopora and Acropora gr. robusta (cA2) associated with thick crusts of aA1 and 605 vermetid gastropods (Fig. 6A). Reef 4 accumulated at an average rate of 4.5–7.9 mm 606 yr¹ (Table S2). The top of the postglacial reef sequence in M0057A (Reef 5) consists of 607 encrusting Porites and/or Montipora (cE) associated with thin crusts of aA3 and is 608 marked by a lower accretion rate of 0.1-1.3 mm yr⁻¹ (Table S2). 609

610

611 3.3.3. Ribbon Reef (transect RIB-02A)

612

613 A preliminary chronology based on a limited number of radiometric ages suggests that 614 coring may have penetrated the older Pleistocene (≥30 ka) in M0049B. Postglacial coralgal-microbialite boundstone (16–12 ka) was recovered down to 111.8 mbsl in 615 M0049B and 106.9 mbsl in M0050A (Figs. 10 and 11). Below ca. 111.8 mbsl in M0049B 616 the older Pleistocene reef boundstone has evidence of episodic subaerial exposure, 617 such as dissolution cavities and red staining (Webster et al., 2011). Microbialite is 618 volumetrically more abundant than corals and coralline algae. Corals are mainly 619 encrusting Porites and Montipora (cE). Above 111.8 mbsl, the proportions of corals, 620 coralline algae, and microbialite vary. The base of the post-glacial section in M0049B is 621 622 characterized by massive Porites and Astreopora (cD?). From 108.9 to 103.6 mbsl, 623 encrusting *Porites* and *Montipora* are common and associated with agariciids and, to a lesser extent, merulinids (cE). A similar assemblage was recovered in M0050A. In 624 M0049B, a massive *Porites* colony (cD) is present at 102.2 mbsl, and algal crusts are 625 thin and composed mainly of aA2 and aA3, except for aA1 at ca. 108.8 mbsl. The 626 postglacial reef boundstone recovered from transect RIB-02A lacks in situ Isopora, 627 628 Acropora, and Seriatopora, in striking contrast to the other sites where these corals are 629 common.

630

3.4. Integration of coralline and coral interpretations

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633 There is usually good agreement between alga- and coral-based paleoenvironmental interpretations. The shallowest reef facies (0-5 m) is typically composed of an 634 association of Acropora gr. humilis (cA1) and/or other acroporids with robust branches 635 (cA2), thick crusts of P. gr. onkodes (aA1), and abundant vermetid gastropods (Table 636 2). Coral assemblages on the shallow to mid-depth forereef slope (0-20 m) are 637 composed of various proportions of massive *Isopora*, branching Acropora and 638 Seriatopora (cA3, cB), and they are associated with aA1 or aA2 crusts of variable 639 thickness. The deep (>20 m) forereef coral assemblages dominated by encrusting 640 Porites and Montipora (cE) and agaricids (cF) are typically associated with thin crusts 641 of aA3. The paleowater depths of coral assemblages with broader depth ranges (cC, 642 cD) can be further constrained using the composition and morphology of associated 643 coralline algal crusts and the presence or absence of vermetid gastropods. Since the 644 distribution of coralline algae is controlled by irradiance, the typically deeper algal 645 assemblage aA3 may occur in less than 20 m depth in cryptic habitat like crevices, 646 undersides of coral colonies, shaded spaces between adjacent coral colonies, or under 647 648 turbid conditions (Abbey et al., 2011a). In such cases, more reliable paleowater depths

are provided by shallow-water coralgal components in the same core (Abbey et al.,

650 **2011a**).

651

652 653 **4. Discussion**

654

4.1. Coralgal assemblages during the late glacial (MIS2) reef (Reef 2; 27–22 ka)

- 4.1.1. The inner terrace prior to the 22–17 ka hiatus
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In transect HYD-01C, the late glacial (MIS2) Reef 2 is composed of coralgal 659 microbialite boundstone resting on unconsolidated sediments of granule-, pebble-, and 660 sand-sized bioclasts. Inception of Reef 2 was likely influenced by increased terrigenous 661 inputs, based on the downhole gamma-ray profile of M0031A (Fig. S1 in Webster et al., 662 2018; Fig. 4 in Hinestrosa et al., 2019). The initial coral assemblages in M0032A and 663 664 M0033A are dominated by various encrusting merulinids (e.g. Dipsastraea, *Cyphastrea*) and *Hydnophora* associated with thin crusts of aA3 (Figs. 4 and 6A). 665 Hydnophora is relatively tolerant of sedimentation (McClanahan and Obura, 1997). 666 Dipsastraea and Cyphastrea are constituents of nearshore communities influenced by 667 terrigenous sedimentation in the GBR (Perry et al., 2009) and they also occur, with 668 669 Hydnophora, on turbid high-latitude reefs in Japan (Yamano et al., 2012). Therefore it is likely that both depth and sedimentation have influenced the timing and composition of 670 the initial coral assemblage on the inner terrace of HYD-01C. Fewer corals, probably 671 allochthonous, were recovered from M0031A, where deposits consisting mainly of 672 unconsolidated sediments, including a thick layer of Halimeda-rich, pebble-sized 673 674 bioclasts, are coeval with high terrigenous input (indicated by the gamma-ray signal). The late glacial production of Halimeda segments resembles modern mid- and outer-675 shelf reef environments of the GBR where *Halimeda* is particularly common (Drew, 676 1983) and may be linked to high nutrient levels (Marshall and Davies, 1988). High 677 nutrient inputs also may have favored *Halimeda* growth in some areas of the inner 678 679 terrace at Hydrographers Passage (Abbey et al., 2013). 680 The initial late glacial (Reef 2) coralgal community in Noggin Pass (M0055A) consists 681 of very few corals in an algal bindstone composed of thick, heavily bored crusts of P. gr. 682

- *onkodes* and vermetid gastropods (Figs. 6B and 10). This association is typical of
- shallow exposed reef crests (Blanchon, 2011; Blanchon et al., 2014) and suggests a

685 shallower reef setting than the coeval reef facies on the inner terrace of transect HYD-01C. These differences in reef community composition probably reflect the shallower 686 depth of the older Pleistocene basement at Noggin Pass (Fig. 11, Webster et al., 2018) 687 where the algal bindstone is overlain by a *Porites*-dominated assemblage (cD, Fig. 6B 688 and 10). Some massive *Porites* species are sediment-tolerant corals common in 689 nearshore communities of the modern GBR (Browne et al., 2012), and may indicate the 690 influence of sedimentation, as the merulinids do in transect HYD-01C. Massive *Porites* 691 colonies are also common near the base of the outer cores of Tahiti Exp. 310, and 692 were interpreted as indicative of inimical conditions at the beginning of reef growth 693 (Abbey et al., 2011a). The development of coralgal communities in Reef 2 on the inner 694 695 terrace of transect HYD-01C involves a shift from assemblage cC to assemblage cB? (with the latter associated with aA1 and vermetid gastropods) that reflects a shallowing 696 trend interpreted as a catch-up mode of reef growth (Webster et al., 2018; Fig. 5). A 697 similar shift to assemblage cB in M0055A at Noggin Pass was not associated with 698 changes in abundance of encrusting algae and vermetids, and this indicates a 699 700 continuously shallow reef setting and a keep-up mode of reef growth (Webster et al., 2018; Fig. 11). In addition, a decrease in terrigenous input, indicated by the downhole 701 gamma-ray profile of M0031A (Webster et al., 2018; Hinestrosa et al., 2019), may have 702 promoted colonization by species less tolerant of sediments, such as *Isopora* and 703 Tubipora (Fabricius and Alderslade, 2001; Kojis and Quinn, 1984). The different modes 704 of reef growth on the inner terraces of HYD-01C and NOG-01B are probably related to 705 their different reef initiation depths, which also may have determined accretion rates of 706 3.4 mm yr⁻¹ in Hydrographers Passage and 0.5 mm yr⁻¹ in Noggin Pass (Table S2). The 707 inner terrace was exposed and Reef 2 terminated at ca. 22 ka, when sea-level dropped 708 to its peak LGM position (Webster et al., 2018). Reef growth re-initiated on the inner 709 710 terrace at ca. 17 ka (Reef 3b) during the postglacial sea-level rise.

- 711
- 712 4.1.2. The mid and outer terraces
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Unlike the coralgal assemblages of the inner terrace, compositions of those on the mid and outer terraces have limited variation within and among sites. These assemblages are either cE (M0036A, M0053A) or cF (M0035A, M0040A), and most algal crusts are composed of aA3, both of which indicate deeper environments, consistent with their deeper, more distal positions along the transects (Figs 5, 9 and 11).

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4.2. Coralgal assemblages during the LGM and early deglacial (Reef 3a; 22–17

721	ka)
722	
723	4.2.1. The LGM reef (Reef 3a; 22–19 ka)
724	
725	The peak of the Last Glacial Maximum (LGM) when ice sheets reached their maximum
726	extent and sea level was lowest ~118 m occurred at 20.5 ka (Yokoyama et al., 2018).
727	In the GBR region, despite the extreme conditions of the LGM, sea surface
728	temperatures (SSTs) inferred from a multiproxy study of marine sediment cores were
729	only 1 to 2.5°C cooler than today (Reeves et al., 2013). This contrasts with a recent
730	SST reconstruction suggesting 4–5°C cooling, based on Sr/Ca records of LGM corals
731	collected during IODP Exp. 325 (Felis et al., 2014). Based on similar estimates of no
732	more than 5°C cooling, Veron (2008) surmised that LGM SSTs had little impact on the
733	survival of reef corals in eastern Australia. A much greater disturbance for coral reefs
734	was the drastic landscape modification driven by sea-level fall that exposed most of the
735	continental shelf and restricted reef growth to a narrow band below the current shelf
736	break (Hinestrosa et al., 2014, Hopley et al., 2007; Veron, 2008; Webster et al., 2018).
737	The decreasing angle of slope at the shelf break determined the extent of available
738	substrate and also influenced the effects of deglacial sea-level rise on subsequent reef
739	growth and distribution (Abbey et al., 2011b). Coral reefs must maintain higher growth
740	rates to track sea-level rise on steeper slopes where less space is available for
741	landward migration by establishing new reefs in shallower water (Neumann and
742	Macintyre, 1985). Davies et al. (1985) and Davies and McKenzie (1993) suggested that
743	the slope steepness and the unconsolidated, possibly muddy nature of the pre-LGM
744	substrate probably led to development of specialized reef communities very different
745	from those of the modern GBR. They concluded that an external refuge, such as the
746	Queensland Plateau in the middle of the Coral Sea, was necessary as a source of
747	coral larvae for recolonizing the shelf during the postglacial sea-level rise. In contrast,
748	Veron (2008) hypothesized that most corals were able to withstand LGM conditions,
749	and continued to recruit on the slope, with or without building reefs. While LGM reefs
750	have been reported from several locations throughout the tropics (Montaggioni, 2005),
751	previous evidence of LGM reef growth in the GBR region was restricted to the
752	identification of probable submerged reef structures along the shelf edge (Abbey et al.,
753	2011b; Beaman et al., 2008; Harris and Davies, 1989).
754	

Data from IODP Exp. 325 now provide the first direct evidence that an LGM reef
system existed along the shelf edge of the GBR (Webster et al., 2011, 2018). LGM reef

757 material was recovered from eight holes on the mid and outer terraces: two at Noggin Pass (M0053A, M0054B) and six at Hydrographers Passage (M0035A, M0036A, 758 M0039A, M0047A, M0043A, and M0040A) (Fig. 7). The LGM correlates with the base 759 of Reef 3a (22–17 ka) in the chronological reef growth scheme delineated in Webster 760 761 et al. (2018). The LGM reef (22–19 ka) varies in thickness from 3.5 m (M0036A) to 8 m (M0053A) and the LGM lithologies comprise coralgal-microbialite and microbialite 762 boundstone, bioclastic packstone, and unconsolidated carbonate granules, pebbles 763 and sand. Timing of the initiation of LGM reef growth varies spatially. Early LGM reef 764 framework material was recovered in Noggin Pass where a microbialite boundstone 765 (cA3) contains an Isopora colony at ca. 121 mbsl in M0053A dated to 21 ka (Fig. 7B). 766 767 In holes M0036A and M0039A in Hydrographers Passage, reef initiation was delayed and fewer corals of LGM age were recovered. The oldest pioneer corals include a 21.8 768 ka Cyphastrea and several Acropora colonies with ages of 20.2-20.3 ka in M0035 (Fig. 769 7A). In M0039A the first coralgal community (cE/C?/aA3) indicates that reef growth 770 began later (19.1 ka), and probably in a relatively deeper setting (Fig. 7A). The gamma-771 ray profile of M0036A contains no evidence that the initiation lag in HYD-01C is related 772 to increased terrigenous input during the LGM. Instead, it is likely that the steeper 773 latitudinal SST gradient during the LGM, with substantially lower SSTs in the southern 774 GBR may have retarded development of reef communities at HYD-01A (Felis et al., 775 2014). Conversely, at Noggin Pass, the gamma-ray of M0054B, on the outer terrace of 776 NOG-01B, indicates a pulse of terrigenous sediments at ca. 20 ka (Webster et al., 777 2018; Hinestrosa et al., 2019). This conclusion is supported by the siliciclastic content 778 of microbialites in M0054B being higher than in any other hole studied (Webster et al., 779 2018; Braga et al., 2019), and by the LGM reef growing at 1.8 mm yr⁻¹ in M0054B, 780 which is less than in hole M0053A (ca. 3.8 mm yr⁻¹) and about half the rate (4–4.3 mm 781 782 yr¹) in HYD-01C holes (Table S2). A marked coralgal shift from cA3/aA3 to cB/aA1 and cE/aA3 to cB/aA1 around 20.5 ka in M0053A and M0054B, respectively, indicates 783 upward shallowing (Figs. 7C and 11). This community change is also synchronous with 784 a shift in the gamma-ray signal in M0054B that might indicate a slight decrease in 785 terrigenous input (Webster et al., 2018; Hinestrosa et al., 2019). While less terrigenous 786 sediment might increase recruitment of more vulnerable taxa (e.g., Isopora and 787 Tubipora) (Fabricius and Alderslade, 2001; Kojis and Quinn, 1984; Fig. 7C), the 788 siliciclastic content in microbialites did not decline in this hole (Webster et al., 2018; 789 Braga et al., 2019), and another explanation for the gamma-ray change must be 790 invoked. 791

792

793 In conclusion, our data show that oceanographic conditions and modifications of 794 coastal physiography associated with the LGM did not preclude survival of the key reefbuilding corals prevailing on today's GBR, including Isopora (M0053A), Acropora gr. 795 humilis (M0035A, M0036A), Dipsastraea gr. pallida (M0035A), and Porites and 796 797 Montipora (M0054B) (Fig. 7). At least in areas like Noggin Pass, LGM conditions were suitable for early colonization by a diverse coral fauna and for fast relocation of coralgal 798 communities across the shelf edge as sea level fell rapidly. We propose that these 799 areas were refuges that became important local sources of coral larvae for recolonizing 800 new substrates during the postglacial sea-level rise (Webster et al., 2018), and may 801 802 have ensured the resilience of the GBR over multiple glacial-interglacial cycles 803 (Humblet & Webster, 2017).

804

4.2.2. Early deglacial coralgal assemblages (Reef 3a; 19–17 ka) 805

806

The earliest deglacial development of reef communities on the mid and outer terraces 807 808 of HYD-01C is characterized by the predominance of coral assemblage cB and thin to thick algal crusts (aA1) associated with vermetid gastropods (Fig. 5). The proportion of 809 finely branching Acropora and, to a lesser extent, merulinids increases seaward (e.g. 810 Acropora-rich cB in M0039A); the trend is opposite for massive Isopora and branching 811 Seriatopora (e.g. Isopora-rich cB in M0035A). A similar shallow coralgal assemblage 812 813 developed in hole M0043A on transect HYD-02A (Fig. 9). In contrast, the early deglacial coralgal assemblage in M0040A and M0041A in the same transect is 814 dominated by encrusting Porites and Montipora (cE) associated with aA3, reflecting 815 their deeper, more distal locations relative to other sites in Hydrographers Passage 816 (Fig. 9). Shallow coralgal assemblages are also recorded on the mid and outer terraces 817 818 in Noggin Pass (cA1/aA1 in M0053A and cB/aA1 in M0054A, Fig. 11). Deglacial sections continuously recording a shallow coralgal assemblage have been reported 819 elsewhere and reflect a keep-up mode of reef growth (Montaggioni and Braithwaite, 820 2009). In several holes along transects HYD-01C and NOG-01B, upward increases in 821 algal crust thickness (M0035A, M0054A/B) and in abundances of vermetid gastropods 822 (M0035A. M0036A, and M0039A) (Figs. 4 and 10) suggest some shallowing (Cabioch 823 et al., 1999). 824

825

In contrast with the continuous shallow reef sequence recorded in other sites, hole 826

- M0039A has a brief interval at around 120 mbsl dominated by the aA3 algal 827
- 828 assemblage. This algal interval, however, is not correlated with a change in the coral

assemblage (cB) and may be due to sampling algae growing in cryptic habitats (Fig. 5).

4.3. Deglacial coralgal assemblages after the inner terrace reflooding (Reef 3b;

- 832 **17–13 ka)**
- 833

830

4.3.1. Recolonization of the inner terrace after the 22–17 ka hiatus

835

The unconformable contact between the late glacial Reef 2 and deglacial Reef 3b was 836 penetrated on the inner terrace of transect HYD-01C at ca. 106.5–105.3 mbsl 837 (M0031A, M0032A, and M0033A) and transect NOG-01B at ca. 103 mbsl (M0055A). 838 839 The composition of Reef 3b above the hiatus is consistent among all sites. The initial coral community is dominated by massive Isopora, and branching Acropora gr. humilis, 840 Stylophora and Seriatopora (cA1 and cB), in association with aA1 crusts and vermetid 841 gastropods (Fig. 6). Similarities in reef community composition before and after the 842 hiatus, such as the reoccurrence of massive Isopora and branching Seriatopora, aA1 843 844 algal crusts, and vermetid gastropods (Fig. 6, see also section 4.2.1.), point to broadly similar shallow-water reef settings before and after the hiatus. There are also some 845 conspicuous differences, including disappearance of *Tubipora* in M0055A and 846 increased abundance of fast-growing corals (e.g. Isopora, Acropora gr. humilis and 847 Seriatopora) above the hiatus (Fig. 6). These changes also coincide with a sharp 848 849 increase in the vertical accretion rate, from 0.1-1.9 to 1.1-7.4 mm yr¹, on the inner terrace of HYD-01C (Table S2). The contexts in which reef communities developed 850 before and after the hiatus also differ: the late glacial sea-level lowstand prior to the 851 LGM sea-level fall led to terrace emersion and reef turn-off at 22 ka, while the 852 subsequent deglacial sea-level rise led to terrace inundation and reef turn-on at 17 ka 853 854 (Webster et al., 2018). This reflooding of the inner terrace correlates with an increase in the gamma-ray signal in M0031A and M0036A, and is consistent with a large input of 855 856 fine terrigenous sediments eroded during terrace inundation (Webster et al., 2018; Hinestrosa et al., 2019), although this input is not reflected in the siliciclastic content of 857 microbialites in M0039A, the furthest offshore hole of HYD-01C (Braga et al., 2019). 858 Reef 3b began growth slightly earlier on the inner terrace at Noggin Pass (M0055A, 859 Fig. 6), even though the substrate at that location is shallower (103 mbsl) than at HYD-860 01C (106.5–105.3 mbsl). Delayed reef initiation may be related to inundation of a 861 broader coastal area and resuspension of a greater sediment load at HYD-01C (Abbey 862 et al., 2011b; Hinestrosa et al., 2014, 2019). At Noggin Pass, reflooding of the inner 863 864 terrace coincided with incipient reef drowning on the mid and outer terraces (see

865 section 4.3.2), but resuspension did not have a lasting impact on reef growth on the 866 inner terrace. Conditions favoring vigorous reef growth, including increased accommodation space and higher SSTs, then promoted colonization by fast-growing 867 corals and enabled Reef 3b to keep up with sea-level rise (Felis et al., 2014). The thick 868 869 crusts of *P*. gr. onkodes, abundant vermetid gastropods, and medium to robust branching Acropora (cA1) in M0033A of HYD-01C and M0055A of NOG-01B indicate 870 very shallow reef settings exposed to strong wave action (Figs. 5, 6, and 11). On the 871 inner terrace of HYD-01C, where reef initiation was delayed, accretion rates much 872 higher (up to 39.4 mm yr⁻¹) than in NOG-01B (up to 7.3 mm yr⁻¹) enabled the 873 874 Hydrographers reef to quickly catch up with sea-level rise (Table S2).

875

876 Reef growth at the most proximal site of the inner terrace of NOG-01 (M0056A) was delayed by the higher elevation of the older Pleistocene basement. Consequently, only 877 3.7 m of coralgal boundstone accumulated at this site prior to the Younger Dryas sea-878 level jump (Webster et al., 2018). The coral assemblage is associated with thick crusts 879 880 of P. gr. onkodes, suggesting a very shallow-water environment, but it lacks coral taxa typical of high-energy shallow water, such as *Isopora* and *A.* gr. *humilis*. Instead, the 881 dominant corals are massive merulinids (e.g., Cyphastrea and Platygyra). Cyphastrea 882 is a locally important component of turbid nearshore communities in the GBR (Perry et 883 al., 2009), and its presence at the base of Reef 3b in M0056A may indicate that 884 885 conditions on the high-angle slope during the late glacial sea-level rise were unfavorable. 886

887

4.3.2. Recolonization of mid and outer terraces

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890 Coralgal communities at different locations on the mid and outer terraces responded in various ways to reflooding of the inner terrace (Figs. 5, 9 and 11). In HYD-02A and 891 NOG-01B, reflooding coincides with reef drowning in distal holes (Figs. 9 and 11). 892 Holes M0040A and M0041A, on the outer terrace of HYD-02A, lie well below the shelf 893 break at depths of 100–110 mbsl at Noggin Pass and Hydrographers Passage (Abbey 894 et al., 2011b). Coralgal successions are consistent with a deep forereef setting at the 895 LGM that persisted throughout the deglacial sequence (22–14 ka); their location on the 896 shelf margin may have been too deep for reef-building organisms to keep up with rapid 897 sea-level rise. While M0054A and B on NOG-01B also occupy a relatively deep 898 position, a community shift from cE/aA2 and aA3 to cB/aA1 and vermetids at 124.55 mbsl 899 900 suggests that these coralgal communities were able to catch up, and then keep up with

901 early deglacial sea-level rise before drowning around 17–16 ka. Despite being a relatively shallow site, M0053A also records a drowning trend (shift from cA1/aA1 to 902 cC/aA3) around 17–16 ka at ca. 110 mbsl. In contrast, the mid and outer terraces in 903 HYD-01C (M0035A, M0036A and M0039A) are characterized by bioclastic slope 904 905 deposits with some, possibly in situ, Porites colonies in M0039A. Reflooding of the inner terrace increased sediment input, probably at all sites (Webster et al., 2018). In 906 the Reef 3b section in M0053A of NOG-01B, silt- to fine sand-sized calcareous grains 907 fill constructional voids and the core top is enriched in mud; this section has coarser 908 sediments on the mid and outer terraces of HYD-01C (Webster et al., 2011). These 909 observations suggest conditions were more turbid on the mid terrace in NOG-01B 910 911 during the late deglacial sea-level rise, and this is a possible cause of reef demise (Hallock and Schlager, 1986; Sanders and Baron-Szabo, 2005). Lower turbidity in 912 HYD-01C may be due to the greater distance from the coastline, the gentler slope of 913 the continental shelf, and the presence of back-reef depressions that would have 914 limited transport of resuspended sediments to offshore sites (Abbey et al., 2011b; 915 916 Hinestrosa et al., 2014). In addition, NOG-01B is 9 km north of a relict fluvial system that may have supplied siliciclastics to the Noggin Pass area (Abbey et al., 2011b). 917 There are no large fluvial systems near HYD-01C (Hinestrosa et al., 2016). Late 918 deglacial reef growth in M0039A, on the outer terrace of HYD-01C, is characterized by 919 the occurrence of massive, up to 22 cm thick *Porites* colonies (Fig. 5) which, when 920 921 compared with the timing of shallow reef accretion in more proximal holes, probably reflects a deeper, more protected reef setting. 922

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924 **4.3.3. The Ribbon Reef transect**

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926 The late deglacial reef sequence in the Ribbon Reef transect (M0049B and M0050A) lacks the typical high-energy shallow-water coralgal communities of Isopora and 927 928 Acropora gr. humilis associated with aA1 crusts. Instead it is characterized by encrusting to massive *Porites* and encrusting *Montipora* (cD and cE, Fig. 11) that were 929 themselves encrusted by aA2 and aA3. The Ribbon Reef terraces are narrow and 930 adjacent to a very steep shelf break slope (Abbey et al., 2011b) that may have 931 influenced reef zonation in RIB-02A. On steeper slopes or more turbid inner-shelf reefs, 932 the distribution of coral assemblages adapted to lower irradiance may extend into 933 shallower parts of the reef slope (Done, 1982), displacing the shallow reef communities 934 observed in other localities. Consequently, these communities may have occupied 935 936 shallower paleowater depths than the interpreted intervals in Fig. 11. Further, the

- deglacial reef deposits directly overlying the older Pleistocene basement (≥30 ka) at
 112.4 mbsl in M0049B suggests there was a hiatus in reef growth during MIS2 at this
 location the steep slope of the shelf edge at Ribbon Reef may not have been suitable
 for re-establishment of reef-building communities after a sea-level fall.
- 941

942 4.4. Late deglacial coralgal assemblages (Reef 4; 13–10 ka)

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Following the sea-level jump preceding the Younger Dryas at ca. 13.4 ka (Webster et 944 al., 2018), reef growth reinitiated further upslope and formed a barrier reef system 945 946 rising from depths that are now 50-70 mbsl (Abbey et al., 2011b; Hinestrosa et al., 947 2016; Webster et al., 2018). However, due to rapid retrogradation/backstepping we are unable to see the fringing to barrier transition directly in the cores. The proto-barrier 948 consists of approximately 15 m of reef framework dominated by robustly branching 949 acroporids (cA2) with thick crusts of P. gr. onkodes and vermetids (aA1) accumulated 950 over the older Pleistocene basement in M0034A of HYD-01C and M0057A of NOG-01B 951 952 (Figs. 5 and 11). A similar facies is recognized in M0042A of HYD-2A, although limited recovery means the prevalence of cA2 cannot be confirmed in this hole. This facies is 953 typical of shallow, high-energy reef settings (Montaggioni, 2005), and the continued 954 accumulation of a single shallow-water assemblage in these holes indicates a keep-up 955 mode of reef growth (Montaggioni and Braithwaite, 2009). Reef 4 grew at average 956 rates of 0.1-11.4 mm yr⁻¹ at HYD-01A and 0.9-7.9 mm yr⁻¹ at NOG-01B (Table S2). 957 The taxonomic composition and abundance of robustly branching acroporids in 958 M0034A of HYD-01C, M0057A of NOG-01B, and probably M0042A of HYD-02A, have 959 no equivalents in other holes, but their tops show a common deepening trend prior to 960 final reef drowning. This deepening is seen in the occurrence of aA3 associated with 961 962 encrusting *Porites* and *Montipora* in M0057A (cE), massive *Porites* in M0034A (cD), and fragments of merulinids in M0042A (cC?). Reconstructions of slope sedimentation 963 rates and shelf flooding history (Webster et al., 2018) suggest that drowning of Reef 4 964 probably resulted from the combined effects of a rapid sea-level rise and a massive 965 input of terrigenous sediments associated with flooding of the continental shelf. 966 967 968

500

969 4.5. Responses of reef corals to glacial and deglacial conditions

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obtained from a stable margin in the Indo-Pacific region (Fig. 12). Another long record,

973 obtained by onshore drilling 2000 km east of the GBR at Tasmaloum on Espiritu Santo Island, Vanuatu, shows reef turn on at 24 ka, but the history of reef growth was 974 influenced by multiple uplift events (Cabioch et al., 1998). The Tasmaloum record, and 975 a nearby record from a more sheltered site at Urelapa, both contain a succession of 976 977 shallow-water facies dominated by Acropora spp., with intervals rich in A. gr. robusta at the more exposed Tasmaloum site. LGM reef material has been recovered from other 978 Indo-Pacific localities using various sampling techniques: onshore drilling on Mururoa 979 (French Polynesia; Camoin et al., 2001), Rendova (Taylor et al., 2005) and the Huon 980 Peninsula (Papua New Guinea; Cutler et al., 2004); sampling from a submersible off 981 Mayotte (Comoro Islands; Dullo et al., 1998); and offshore drilling near Irabu-jima, 982 983 Ryukyu Islands (Japan; Sasaki et al., 2006). In addition, bathymetric surveys suggest possible LGM/early deglacial reef growth exists at several other localities: Hawaii 984 (Webster et al., 2004a); Huon Gulf (Papua New Guinea; Webster et al., 2004b); 985 western India (Rao et al., 2003); and the Maldives (Rovere et al., 2018). These 986 observations all point to the resilience of coral reef ecosystems in various tectonic 987 988 settings during the last glaciation, and to their ability to track sea-level changes. 989

Despite this apparent resilience, the potential to rebuild a reef is influenced by the 990 antecedent topography, as shown in Mayotte and Mururoa where the steepness of the 991 slope prevented thick accumulations during the last glacial to early deglacial period 992 993 (Camoin et al., 2001; Dullo et al., 1998). The IODP 325 record highlights the importance of antecedent topography in controlling the depths at which reef-builders 994 colonize substrates and, therefore, the nature of the initial reef communities (Fig. 12). 995 Our data also strongly suggest that shelf morphology and the presence or absence of 996 nearby rivers influenced glacial-deglacial coralgal successions by controlling 997 998 sedimentation regimes along the shelf (Hinestrosa et al., 2016, 2019), and perhaps even preventing MIS2 reef growth locally (e.g. at Ribbon Reef). Although lower SSTs 999 during the LGM clearly did not inhibit all reef growth, a steeper SST latitudinal gradient 1000 in the central GBR region may have delayed reef initiation at Hydrographers Passage 1001 (Felis et al., 2014), and SST impacts may have been even more pronounced at 1002 1003 localities south of Hydrographers Passage. Variation in SST during glacial-interglacial cycles is linked to changes in the geographic distribution of coral species. For example, 1004 warmer SSTs at high latitudes during the last interglacial, expanded the latitudinal 1005 range of tropical coral species in Western Australia (Greenstein and Pandolfi, 2008). 1006 Since the IODP 325 holes are all well within the tropics, they are unlikely to record 1007 1008 possible expansion or contraction of the range of individual coral species.

1009

1010

Little is known about the composition of reef communities during glacial sea-level 1011 lowstands. Tager et al. (2010) analyzed multiple generations of submerged reef crest 1012 1013 communities in the Huon Gulf (PNG) that formed during successive glaciations and 1014 compared those to the uplifted Huon Peninsula highstand reef terraces. Their results 1015 show gradual shifts in species composition of coral assemblages from one glacial period to the next, and differences between lowstand and highstand communities, 1016 apparently related to changing environmental conditions during the progressive closure 1017 1018 of the Huon Gulf (Tager et al., 2010). In the IODP 325 record, temporal variations in 1019 coralgal assemblages are most easily explained by the influence of changing hydrodynamic conditions controlled by the interplay of reef growth and sea-level 1020 change. One notable trend is the peak in abundance of Seriatopora (cB) in shallow 1021 water facies between 16 and 19 ka; Isopora and medium to robustly branching 1022 Acropora (cA1/2) dominate shallow-water assemblages after 16 ka (Fig. 12). Since 1023 1024 Seriatopora is more common in protected environments in the modern GBR (Done, 1982), increases in the abundance of this genus during the last deglaciation may 1025 indicate that reef growth was lagging behind sea-level rise, so that reef tops remained 1026 below the high energy surf zone. The shift from cB (lower exposure to waves) to aA1 1027 (higher exposure to waves) in M0053A (Reef 3a) and M0055A (base of Reef 3b) 1028 1029 probably reflects a slight shallowing trend during a catch-up mode of reef growth. Another possibility is that the observed vertical succession was not caused by shift in 1030 coral community structure, but rather by lateral migration of a shallow, exposed reef 1031 1032 front retrograding as it kept up with sea-level rise (i.e., in keeping with Walther's Law; Webster and Davies, 2003; Blanchon and Blakeway, 2003). 1033

1034

The roles of intrinsic ecological factors, such as larval dispersal ability and substrate 1035 1036 preferences, may also have influenced coral community structure during glacial and early deglacial periods (Tager et al., 2010). The IODP 325 record shows that responses 1037 of coral communities to sea-level rise along the shelf varied over a latitudinal gradient. 1038 1039 Glacial to early deglacial reefs grew adjacent to the shelf edge and probably were more directly affected by terrigenous input from nearby rivers, a configuration that may have 1040 created a more discontinuous reef tract that may have limited the potential of larval 1041 dispersal from one reef to another. In this context, coral species with brooded larvae 1042 able to settle immediately after release including Seriatopora and Stylophora may have 1043 1044 been able to rebuild populations more quickly after the LGM sea-level drop than

species that broadcast gametes and larvae into the plankton (Knowlton, 2001).
Because corals like *Seriatopora* live in a wide depth range extending to the mesophotic
zone (Sinniger et al., 2012), they may potentially survive at depth when shallow
populations are subaerially exposed. This may have contributed to the success of *Seriatopora* after the LGM disturbance (Humblet & Webster, 2017). This reasoning
invokes the concept of deep reef refugia proposed by several previous authors (see
Bongaerts et al., 2010 for a review).

1052

Finally, the IODP 325 record highlights the interdependence of reef morphology and 1053 1054 coral community structure. The barrier reef (Reef 4) framework consists mostly of 1055 robustly branching acroporids, unlike the composition of shallow facies during earlier reef-building episodes (Reef 2, 3a, and 3b) (Fig. 12). Blanchon et al. (2014) inferred a 1056 comparable, possible fringing to barrier reef transition in Tahiti, where the barrier reef 1057 formed on the edge of an older Pleistocene reef platform concurrently with creation of a 1058 lagoon that, by acting as a sediment trap, promoted fast-growing coral species on the 1059 1060 exposed reef front. A similar scenario may explain the formation of Reef 4 along the shelf edge of the modern GBR. However, unlike the Tahiti reef, development of Reef 4 1061 terminated at ca. 10 ka, which has been linked to increased sedimentation and decline 1062 1063 in water quality as most of the shelf became flooded by 10 ka (Webster et al., 2018). 1064

1065 **5. Conclusions**

1066

Our study of cores extracted from submerged reefs along the shelf edge of the Great Barrier Reef enabled us to examine the evolution of reef communities since the late glacial period over a broad latitudinal range at three localities with different shelf morphologies. The following conclusions can be drawn from our investigations:

1072 1. We identified three algal assemblages and eight coral assemblages. The taxonomy 1073 and morphology of corals and algal crusts, and the presence or absence of vermetid 1074 gastropods, were used to constrain paleoenvironments. Based on analogies with 1075 modern reefs, we distinguish three basic reef slope environments: reef crest to shallow 1076 upper reef slope (0–5 m or 0–10 m), shallow to medium-depth reef slope (0–20 m), and 1077 deep forereef slope (>20 m).

1078

1079 2. Reef communities relocated across the shelf edge in response to sea-level changes.1080 During the Last Glacial Maximum the shelf edge provided a refuge for a diverse coral

fauna that included the key reef builders of modern GBR reefs, i.e. *Isopora*, *Acropora*gr. *humilis*, *Dipsastraea* gr. *pallida*, *Porites*, and *Montipora*. These corals may have
been an important source of coral larvae that reseeded the reef during the postglacial
sea-level rise. The timing of reef turn-on at lower elevations following the LGM sea
level fall varied geographically.

1086

3. The depth of the pre-MIS2 basement and possibly terrigenous input influenced the composition of the late glacial MIS2 reef communities and the mode of reef growth. On the inner terrace, late glacial reef growth was terminated at ca. 22 ka when sea-level dropped to its LGM position and reef growth became restricted to the mid and outer terraces until sea level reinvaded the inner terrace at ca. 17 ka. Deglacial sea-level rise promoted recolonization of the inner terrace by fast-growing corals, such as *Isopora*, *Acropora* gr. *humilis*, and *Seriatopora*, despite sediment resuspension.

1094

4. Shelf morphology greatly influenced the survival of coralgal communities in distal 1095 1096 sites following the reflooding of the inner terrace at 17 ka. In Hydrographers Passage where the shelf is widest and the shelf break is gently sloping, reef growth was delayed 1097 on the inner terrace, while bioclastic slope deposits and local in situ coral growth 1098 occurred on the mid and outer terraces. In Noggin Pass, where the shelf is narrow and 1099 the shelf break is steep, reef growth initiated early on the inner terrace but ceased 1100 1101 prematurely on the mid and outer terraces due to increased turbidity. Terrigenous sediments may have been supplied by a nearby fluvial system revealed by bathymetric 1102 and seismic data. 1103

1104

5. Following the sea-level jump preceding the Younger Dryas, reef habitats migrated

1106 further upslope, forming a barrier reef system composed of a robustly branching

acroporid assemblage not seen in more distal terrace holes.

- 1108 Retrogradation/backstepping prevented the formation of direct superposition of 1109 fringing-to-barrier reef transitions in cores.
- 1110

6. The dominance of *Porites* and *Montipora* in the late deglacial sequence at Ribbon
Reef may be caused by a shallowing of the deep forereef coral fauna related to the
steepness of the shelf break at this locality.

1114

7. Reef drowning signatures are consistent across all sites, and are composed ofencrusting to massive *Porites* and/or encrusting *Montipora* with thin encrustations of a

deep forereef, coralline algal assemblage covering the deglacial sequence.

1118

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1531 Figure captions

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Fig. 1. A. Locations and bathymetric profiles of transects and all IODP Exp. 325 holes.
Holes not included in this study are shaded grey. The map is from Camoin and Webster
(2015) and has been modified to show the modern GBR (in shaded grey). B.
Schematic section of the continental shelf of eastern Australia showing the location of
the modern GBR (Reef 5), and stratigraphic distribution of fossil submerged reef
sequences (Reef 1-4) occurring along the shelf edge (inset 1) and described in
Webster et al. (2018).

1540

Fig. 2. Examples (thin sections) of coralline algal assemblages identified in this study.
A. Thick thallus of *Porolithon* gr. *onkodes*, the key component of assemblage aA1,
growing on a vermetid shell (lower part). Note trichocyte (hair cell) fields (arrowheads)
typical of this species. B. Thallus of *Harveylithon* gr. *munitum*, common in assemblage

- aA2, and accessory in aA1. C. Foliose branches (thalli) of *Dawsoniolithon conicum*
- 1546 (lower part), a common component of assemblage aA2 and accessory in aA1. Note
- 1547 preserved conceptacles (arrowheads) that are usually shed after spore release. Arrows
- indicate encrusting thalli of *Lithophyllum*. D. Foliose branches or thalli of *Mesophyllum*

funafutiense, characteristic of assemblage aA3, intergrown with encrusting foraminifers(arrows).

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Fig. 3. Examples (core sections) of the eight coral assemblages identified in this study.
Upper labels name assemblages and lower labels identify hole and core. The
taxonomic names of fossil corals are indicated next to each core section. A HUM *Acropora* gr. *humilis*, B ISO branching *Isopora*, BF ACRO finely branching *Acropora*,
DIPSA *Dipsastraea*, EN ISO encrusting *Isopora*, M ISO massive *Isopora*, EN MON
encrusting *Montipora*, EN PO encrusting *Porites*, HYDN *Hydnophora*, M PO massive *Porites*, PACHY *Pachyseris speciosa*, SERIA *Seriatopora*.

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Fig. 4. Distribution of coralgal assemblages, vermetid gastropods, algal crust
thickness, and percentage of coralgal framework in cores recovered from transect
HYD-01C.

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Fig. 5. Coralgal-based interpretations of paleowater depths of reef sequences in coresfrom transect HYD-01C.

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Fig. 6. Temporal distribution of coral taxa in the late glacial (MIS2) reef sequence (Reef
2), and the deglacial reef sequence after reflooding of the inner terrace (Reef 3b) in
transects HYD-01C and NOG-01B. The context of each coral is categorized as IS (*in situ*) or IS? (probably *in situ*), ISN (context unknown), or ISX (not *in situ*) or ISX?
(probably not *in situ*). Colored intervals indicate the distributions of the coral
assemblages illustrated in Figs. 3–5. Time is indicated in thousands of years (ka). Stars
indicate age controls.

1574

Fig. 7. Temporal distribution of the coral taxa in the LGM reef sequence (Reef 3a) in
transects HYD-01C, HYD-02A, and NOG-01B. The context of each coral is categorized
as IS (*in situ*) or IS? (probably *in situ*), ISN (context unknown), or ISX (not *in situ*) or
ISX? (probably not *in situ*). Colored intervals indicate the distribution of coral
assemblages illustrated in Figs. 3–5. Time is indicated in thousands of years (ka).

Fig. 8. Distribution of coralgal assemblages, vermetid gastropods, algal crust
thickness, and percentage of coralgal framework in cores recovered from transect
HYD-02A.

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Fig. 9. Coralgal-based interpretations of paleowater depths of reef sequences in coresfrom transect HYD-02A.

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Fig. 10. Distribution of coralgal assemblages, vermetid gastropods, algal crust
 thickness, and percentage of coralgal framework in cores recovered from transects
 NOG-01B and RIB-02A.

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Fig. 11. Coralgal-based Interpretations of paleowater depths in cores from transects
 NOG-01B and RIB-02A. Due to the steepness of the shelf break slope, interpreted
 paleowater depths in cores of transect RIB-02A may be overestimated.

1598

Fig. 12. Schematic representation of the trends in coralgal assemblages in IODP Exp.
325 holes in the three geographic areas studied (Hydrographers Passage, Noggin
Pass, and Ribbon Reef), their chronostratigraphic relationships, and variations in
paleo-water depth. Ages of reef sequence boundaries are indicated in grey next to the
logs. The blue curve is the combined relative sea level curve based on IODP Exp. 325
core material from HYD-01A and NOG-01B (derived from Fig. 3 in Yokoyama et al.,
2018).

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1608 **Table captions**

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Table 1. Coralline algae and corals identified in post-MIS3 core sections of IODP Exp.
 325. See Webster et al. (2018) and the text of the present paper for definitions of reef
 sequences: R2 Reef 2, R3a Reef 3a, R3b Reef 3b, R4 Reef 4. BR branching, COR
 corymbose, EN encrusting, FBR fine branching, M massive, PL platy.

1614

1615 **Table 2.** Algal and coral assemblages and their paleoenvironmental interpretations.

1616 The paleowater depths of coral assemblages are divided into two columns. Paleowater

depths listed in the first column (left) are based solely on the association of coral

species; those listed in the second columns (right) are further constrained by the

1619 occurrence of thick crusts of *Porolithon* gr. *onkodes* and vermetid gastropods.

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1621

1622 Supplementary material

1623

Table S1. Occurrences of algal and coral taxa identified in the reef sequences 2 (R2, 27-22 ka), 3a (R3a, 22-17 ka), 3b (R3b, 17-13 ka), and 4 (R4, 13-10 ka). Grey cells correspond to one occurrence or more. Question marks indicate uncertainty in the taxonomic identification or the age. If a taxon occurs only in one core section, the name of the core section is indicated next to column R4. BR branching, COR corymbose, EN encrusting, FBR fine branching, M massive, PL platy.

1630

Table S2. Vertical reef accretion rates calculated at HYD-01A and NOG-01B (derived from Table S2 of Webster et al., 2018). The rates were calculated between successive

1633 inflection points identified on the maximum relative sea level curves constructed for HYD-

1634 01A and NOF-01B (visual fit method). For details about the method, see Webster et al.

1635 (2018).

























Table 1

CORALLINE ALGAE

Order CORALLINALES Family CORALLINACEAE

Subf. NEOGONIOLITHOIDEAE

- 1. Neogoniolithon gr. fosliei
- Neogoniolithon sp.
- 2. Spongites sulawesiensis
- 3. Spongites sp.

Subf. HYDROLITHOIDEAE

- 4. Adeylithon bosencei
- 5. Hydrolithon boergesenii
- (= H. reinboldii)

Subf. METAGONIOLITHOIDEAE

- 6. Harveylithon gr. munitum
- 7. Harveylithon rupestre
- 8. "Hydrolithon" murakoshii
- 9. Dawsoniolithon conicum
- 10. Porolithon gardineri
- 11. Porolithon gr. onkodes

SCLERACTINIAN CORALS

Family MERULINIDAE

Subf. LITHOPHYLLOIDEAE

12. Lithophyllum acrocamptum

15. Lithophyllum gr. kotschyanum

16. Lithophyllum gr. prototypum

17. Lithophyllum gr. pustulatum

19. "Hydrolithon" breviclavium

13. Lithophyllum cuneatum

14. Lithophyllum insipidum

Lithophyllum sp.

18. Paulsilvella sp.

20. Lithoporella sp.

Subf. UNCERTAIN

Family ACROPORIDAE 1. Acropora gr. FBR COR 2. Acropora gr. humilis 3. Acropora gr. hyacinthus 4. Acropora gr. robusta 5. Acropora monticulosa 6. Astreopora sp. 7. Isopora gr. BR 8. Isopora gr. M 9. Montipora gr. BR? 10. Montipora gr. EN/PL 11. Montipora gr. M Family AGARICIIDAE 12. Leptoseris explanata? 13. Leptoseris foliosa 14. Leptoseris gr. scabra 15. Leptoseris gr. yabei 16. Leptoseris papyracea 17. Pachyseris speciosa 18. Pavona clavus 19. Pavona maldivensis Family FUNGIIDAE 20. Cycloseris sp.? 21. Fungia sp. Family DENDROPHYLLIIDAE 22. Turbinaria frondens 23. Turbinaria mesenterina? 24. Turbinaria peltata 25. Turbinaria reniformis Family LOBOPHYLLIIDAE 26. Lobophyllia corymbosa

- 27. Astrea curta 28. Caulastrea sp.? 29. Cyphastrea gr. serailia 30. Cyphastrea microphtalma 31. Dispastraea gr. laxa? 32. Dispastraea gr. pallida 33. Echinopora lamellosa 34. Echinopora mammiformis? 35. Favites flexuosa? 36. Favites gr. abdita 37. Favites pentagona 38. Favites valenciennesi 39. Goniastrea pectinata? 40. Goniastrea stelligera? 41. Hydnophora exesa 42. Leptoria phrygia 43. Platygyra gr. daedalea 44. Platygyra pini? Family OCULINIDAE 45. Galaxea fascicularis Family POCILLOPORIDAE 46. Pocillopora damicornis 47. Seriatopora hystrix
 - 48. Stylophora pistillata
- Family PECTINIIDAE
 - 49. Echinophyllia sp.?
 - 50. Mycedium elephantotus
- Family PORITIDAE
 - 51. Alveopora verrilliana
 - 52. Goniopora gr. M

Order HAPALIDIALES Family HAPALIDIACEAE

Subf. MELOBESIOIDEAE

- 21. Lithothamnion muelleri
- 22. Lithothamnion prolifer
- 23. Lithothamnion sp. 1 (34A-11-1) Lithothamnion sp. 2
- 24. Melyvonnea gr. erubescens
- 25. Mesophyllum funafutiense
- 26. Mesophyllum sp. 1 (55A- 5-CC) Mesophyllum sp. 2

Order SPOROLITHALES

Family SPOROLITHACEAE

- 27. Sporolithon ptychoides
- 28. Sporolithon sp.
- 53. Porites gr. BR
- 54. Porites gr. EN/PL
- 55. Porites gr. M
- Family SIDERASTREIDAE
 - 56. Coscinaraea columna
 - 57. Psammocora sp.?
- INCERTAE SEDIS

58. Leptastrea pruinosa

NON-SCLERACTINIAN CORALS

Family HELIOPORIDAE? Heliopora coerulea?

Family TUBIPORIDAE Tubipora musica

Family MILLEPORIDAE Millepora sp.

Family ALCYONIDAE (soft corals) Spiculite (Sinularia sp.?)

Table 2

ALGAL ASSEMBLAGE	Key components	Accessory components	Paleowate	er depth
Assemblage aA1	Thick crusts of Porolithon gr. onkodes	Porolithon gardineri , Lithophyllum gr. kotschyanum , and Neogoniolithon gr. fosliei	0–10 m	
Assemblage aA2	Thin crusts of <i>Porolithon</i> gr. onkodes, Porolithon gardineri and Harveylithon gr. munitum	Hydrolithon boergesenii, Neogoniolithon gr. fosliei and Dawsoniolithon conicum, Lithophyllum gr. prototypum	0–20 m	
Assemblage aA3	Knobby <i>Melyvonnea</i> gr. <i>erubescens</i> and foliose <i>Mesophyllum funafutiense</i> , lack of key components of aA1and aA2	Lithothamnion prolifer, L. gr. prototypum, thin encrusting Lithoporella sp. and laminar Lithothamnion	>20 m	
CORAL ASSEMBLAGE	Key components	Accessory components	Paleowate	er depth
Assemblage cA1	Encrusting to massive <i>Isopora</i> and medium branching <i>Acropora</i> gr. <i>humilis</i>	Medium to robust branching <i>Acropora</i> , encrusting <i>Porites</i>	0–10 m	0–5 m
Assemblage cA2	Branching and massive Isopora	Medium branching <i>Acropora</i> gr. <i>humilis</i> and robust branching <i>Acropora</i> gr. <i>robusta</i>	0–10 m	0–5 m
Assemblage cA3	Encrusting to massive <i>Isopora</i> and branching <i>Acropora</i>	Encrusting Porites and Montipora	0–20 m	0–10 m
Assemblage cB	Branching Seriatopora and Acropora	Encrusting to massive <i>Isopora</i> and <i>merulinids</i> , branching <i>Stylophora</i> sp., massive <i>Tubipora</i> , encrusting <i>Porites</i> and <i>Montipora</i>	0–20 m	0–10 m
Assemblage cC	Encrusting to massive merulinids (e.g. Dipsastrea gr. pallida, Hydnophora sp.**)	Encrusting <i>Porites</i> and <i>Montipora</i> , branching (fine br.) <i>Acropora</i>	0–30 m	0–10 m
Assemblage cD	Massive Porites	Encrusting <i>Montipora</i> and merulinids (e.g. <i>Platygyra</i>)	0–60 m	0–10 m
Assemblage cE	Encrusting Porites and Montipora	Fine branching <i>Acropora</i> and encrusting <i>Cyphastrea</i>	>20 m	
Assemblage cF	Encrusting agariciids (e.g. Leptoseris gr. yabei, Pachyseris speciosa)	Encrusting Porites and Montipora	>20 m	

* When associated with thick crusts of *Porolithon* gr. *onkodes* and vermetid gastropods ** Only relatively common in Reef 2 at location HYD-01C



Table S2

	Site	Reef	Growth segment	Sample number (n)	Median age range (ka)		Average vertical accretion rate (mm	
			8		Min	Max	yr ⁻¹)	
HYD-01C								
Inner terrace	31-33A	R2	S1	14	25.4	23.5	3.4	
	31-33A	R2	S2	8	23.5	22.9	1.9	
	31-33A	R2	S3	4	22.9	22.1	0.1	
	31-33A	R3b	S4	6	16.2	15.5	1.1	
	31-33A	R3b	S5	8	15.5	15.2	7.4	
	31-33A	R3b	S6	6	15.2	15.0	39.4	
	31-33A	R3b	S7	14	15.0	14.0	0.4	
	31-33A	R3b (meso)	S8	4	14.0	13.2	2.9	
Mid terraces	31-33A	R3b, R4 (meso)	S9	6	13.2	10.6	1	
	35-36A	R3a, R2 (meso)	S1	3	29.6	20.7	0.4	
	35-36A	R3a	S2	45	20.7	17.1	4.3	
Outer terraces	39A	R3a,b	S1	21	20.9	15.2	4	
	39A	R3b	S2	2	15.2	13.8	2.4	
	39A	R3b R4 (meso)	S3	2	13.8	12.7	0.1	
Outer Barrier	5711	(ineso)	55	2	15.0	12.7	0.1	
	34A	R4	S1	10	13.1	12.3	4.5	
	34A	R4	S2	14	12.3	11.3	11.4	
	34A	R4	S3	6	11.3	10.3	4.1	
	34A	R4	S4	5	10.3	9.6	0.1	
NOG-01B								
Inner terrace	55A	R2	S1	10	27.6	24.8	0.5	
	55A	R2	S2	8	24.8	24.0	3.5	
	55A	R2	S3	11	24.0	21.8	0.6	
	55A	R3b	S4	12	16.9	15.9	0.1	
	55A	R3b	S5	10	15.9	15.6	7.3	
	55A	R3b (meso)	\$6	10	13.6	13.9	2.3	
	56A	R3b	\$1	7	14.5	13.7	0.5	
	56A	R3b	\$2	3	13.7	13.4	3.9	
	56A	R4 (meso)	\$3	10	13.4	12.3	0.9	
Mid terraces	53A	R3a	S1	22	22.4	19.2	3.8	
	53A	R3a,b	S2	10	19.2	14.6	1.8	
Outer Barrier	53A	R3b (meso)	S3	3	14.6	13.4	0.7	
	54A,B	R3a	S1	30	23.0	16.6	1.8	
	54A,B	R3b (meso)	S2	2	16.6	16.0	0.2	
Inner Barrier	57A	R4	S1	14	13.0	12.3	7.9	
	57A	R4	S2	26	12.3	10.4	4.5	
	57A	R5 (meso)	S3	6	10.4	8.2	1.3	
	57A	R5 (meso)	S4	3	8.2	7.8	0.1	