



INDIGENOUS REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE (IRAC) 4th Meeting – 6 and 7 April 2011 – Townsville SUMMARY DOCUMENT

GBRMPA's REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEES

There are four Reef Advisory Committees (RACs): Catchment and Coastal; Ecosystem; Indigenous; and Tourism and Recreation RAC.

The RACs are competency-based committees comprising a cross-section of stakeholder interests with expertise and experience in relevant areas. The role of the RACs is to provide issues-based advice to the GBRMPA on operational issues. Each RAC shall work closely with staff of the relevant branch and sections, to ensure that policy development and strategic direction are developed in consultation with stakeholders.

The RACs are appointed for a term of three years, and members are eligible for reappointment. Each of the RACs includes Indigenous representation. Some members are appointed as a representative of a particular group or sector (e.g. industry, recreational, government), or for their linkages to Traditional Owner Groups. All RAC members are expected to adopt a broad perspective on issues that are addressed, mindful of the objectives of the relevant section or branch and of the GBRMPA's corporate priorities.

The Indigenous RAC (IRAC) provides strategic-level advice to the GBRMPA on the management of matters that relate to Indigenous Partnerships.

The 4th meeting of the IRAC was held in Townsville on 6 and 7 April 2011.

The Chairman paid respect to the Traditional Owners and acknowledged their traditional land and sea country in the Townsville region.

A summary of the outcomes of the main items discussed is set out below.

INDIGENOUS REPRESENTATION ON OTHER GBRMPA ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Members were keen to meet with Indigenous members of other RACs, and agreed to invite each to a future meeting of the IRAC.

Members noted the absence of an Indigenous representative on the Catchment and Coastal RAC, and urged the GBRMPA to pursue this. It was noted an appointment had been made, but had not been accepted. The GBRMPA may seek the IRAC's assistance in identifying a suitable person.

Members also noticed the general lack of Indigenous representation on the Local Marine Advisory Committees (LMACs). At the time of this meeting, the Cape York LMAC was the only one with Indigenous representation.

Members discussed the possible Indigenous representation on the National Environmental Research Program (NERP) committee, as a way to ensure engagement with the Indigenous community. While the GBRMPA has a process in place through the Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement

(TUMRA) process, it was unclear what processes are used by other groups.

Members agreed consideration should be given to traditional engagement in the NERP. It is crucial that Indigenous engagement, at the grass-roots level, be a core activity in any policy and research development. So that the IRAC could provide some advice in this regard, the IRAC Chairman will seek clarification from the GBRMPA on whether or not, and in what capacity, the NERP incorporates Indigenous issues.

REEF RESCUE LAND AND SEA COUNTRY INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

Members were very pleased with the success of the grants programs (sponsorship and small grants), and congratulated the GBRMPA on upwardly supporting the increase in available funding for Traditional Owners' sea country management. Members felt this will be a catalyst to increased Indigenous engagement in the future; and for those communities who have entered into a TUMRA, this could be seen as reassurance that their TUMRA agenda will be met. Given the success of this grants program, the Committee strongly recommended to the GBRMPA that an additional round of small grants be offered.

While the number of applications received was felt to be low, members acknowledged the amount of time and effort required to put together any sort of application for grants. The IRAC strongly supported the GBRMPA in developing any support documentation that could be provided to people to assist them with filling in grants applications. In addition to guides and facts sheets, the GBRMPA might look at ways of providing support to Traditional Owners when project officers are conducting field visits or perhaps over the telephone.

The IRAC recognised that the continued level of visitation by IPG staff to communities is quite critical in terms of engagement.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

At IRAC 3, the Committee considered a variety of ways in which the GBRMPA and the IRAC could more effectively liaise with Indigenous communities. Members agreed community radio could be a powerful tool in liaising with regional communities; and that a regular segment may be an option for reporting on the work that the IRAC is undertaking with the GBRMPA.

At IRAC 4, members were advised that an IPG staff member has developed some production notes for a segment on the radio station 4K1G – not just talking, but music and other things, including key messages

about issues such as submissions for grants, species management, sea country, and Indigenous employment. Another suggestion was that an IRAC member could deliver a five or 10 minute segment talking about country, or their connection to the Marine Park; or how a young or an old person feels about being a sea country person.

Members noted that a communications officer is working with the IPG to develop some good news stories, using as a basis some of the many positive things that Traditional Owner groups are implementing.

Members commented that IRAC Summary Documents are not in an appropriate format to best communicate with Indigenous people. The Committee requested that a newsletter style document be developed, so that the IRAC and the GBRMPA could communicate relevant issues to Traditional Owners within the Great Barrier Reef. This would complement the regional engagement model to be revitalised by the Queensland Traditional Owner Network (QTON).

BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY FOR THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

Members were provided a presentation on the progress of the draft Biodiversity Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef. Further amendments have been made to the document in line with comments received from the four RACs, Local Marine Advisory Committees (LMACs) and others.

The IRAC was able to provide advice that the Strategy include a description of Indigenous values, and that a section be added in the main text about Traditional Owners, clarifying their role with sea country, and the broader view about traditional landscapes. Members agreed that having clear strategies and targets could be an argument for people to become better engaged; and that the targets and the priorities need to recognise the desired outcomes of the Strategy.

Members strongly encouraged the involvement of the IPG in progressing the Biodiversity Strategy.

RECREATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR THE GREAT BARRIER REEF MARINE PARK

Members were provided a presentation on the progress in developing the Recreation Management Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef. Further amendments have been made to the document in line with comments received from the four RACs, LMACs and others.

Members again expressed concern at the absence of any reference to Indigenous values; and requested the inclusion of descriptions of the cultural landscape that exists within the Marine Park.

Members strongly encouraged the involvement of the IPG in progressing the Recreation Management Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

REEF RESCUE LAND AND SEA COUNTRY INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIPS: COMPLIANCE TRAINING PROGRAM

Members were provided a presentation on the Indigenous community training program, which has

been developed in response to calls from Indigenous communities for stronger compliance in their sea country.

Members were pleased to hear that three training packages have been developed, all of which address key compliance needs identified by participants at the *Reef Rescue Land and Sea Country Indigenous Partnerships Forum* held in Cairns during 2010. The packages – 1) Eyes and Ears – Being a Better Witness; 2) Engaging Traditional Owners in Compliance; and 3) Working with Traditional Owners to Achieve Compliance – are being rolled out in communities along the Great Barrier Reef coast. A number of very successful workshops using the first module, 'Eyes and Ears – Being a Better Witness', have already been held in 2011.

Members supported this very important initiative, and looked forward to receiving updates of the program at future IRAC meetings.

COMMUNICATION WITH TRADITIONAL OWNERS

At IRAC 2, members discussed the outcomes of the Sea Country Partnerships Forum. One of the issues raised was how Traditional Owners could establish regional consultation mechanisms. A working group was formed to identify a process for regional consultation regarding sea country matters. Unfortunately, due to other commitments and, most recently, disruptions caused by Cyclone Yasi, the workshop has not progressed.

Members strongly supported this important initiative, and hoped the Traditional Owners would take full advantage of being involved in this process.

Once the regional processes are established, this would be a mechanism for a line of communication between Traditional Owners and the GBRMPA. This may then provide an easier path for engagement on such issues as the Biodiversity Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef and the Recreation Management Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

The workshop will be facilitated by an external body, and will be held later in 2011.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the IRAC is scheduled to be held on 16 and 17 November 2011.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE 2009-2012

Mr Wayne Butcher	Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner
Mrs Anne Clarke	Fisheries Queensland (DEEDI)
Miss Melissa George	Independent Chairman; Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner
Miss Selina Hill	Indigenous engagement, environmental management and community development
Dr Rod Kennett	Indigenous land and sea management
Dr Geoffrey Lipsett-Moore	The Nature Conservancy
Mr Ross MacLeod	Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management
Mr Philip Rist	Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner
A/Professor Stephan Schnierer	Indigenous policy
Dr Dermot Smyth	Sea Country planning and Indigenous Protected Areas

Supported by:

Mr Peter McGinnity	General Manager, GBRMPA
Ms Liz Wren	Director, Indigenous Partnerships Group, GBRMPA