



INDIGENOUS REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE (IRAC) 3rd Meeting – 23 and 24 November 2010 – 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 3rd meeting of the IRAC was held in Townsville on 23 and 24 November 2010.

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.

REEF RESCUE INDIGENOUS LAND AND SEA COUNTRY PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

Members were advised that a Report on the Sea Country Partnerships Forum (held at the end of May 2010) will shortly be sent to participants. The timeframe for completion of the final Report has been extended into 2011.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN IRAC AND TRADITIONAL OWNERS

The Committee considered a variety of ways in which the GBRMPA and the IRAC could more effectively liaise with Indigenous communities.

Members agreed it would be beneficial to meet in other regional areas along the Great Barrier Reef

coast (e.g. Cooktown, Cairns, Rockhampton, Mackay and Bundaberg). To coincide with these meetings, a "meet and greet" between the IRAC and local Traditional Owners may help facilitate engagement with the local communities at a regional level. However, consideration would need to be given to the additional costs involved, particularly with transport, and the commitment of time by members in travelling to regional centres.

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.

On occasions when a major strategy is to be developed, such as the GBRMPA's Biodiversity Strategy or the Queensland Indigenous Fishing Strategy, members felt a forum or workshop could be held to ensure that the voices of local Indigenous communities were heard, and given the opportunity for input into the development of these types of documents. The IRAC requested the GBRMPA write to Fisheries Queensland requesting that consultation on the draft Indigenous Fishing Strategy be as extensive as possible.

SEA COUNTRY LEADERSHIP ACTION PLAN

Members were provided an outline of a youth leadership program developed within the GBRMPA. The program identifies young leaders within the Fitzroy Basin region (Rockhampton) and assists them to re-connect with country through participation in Land and Sea Country management activities. The program will be conducted on-country, and will have a mentoring component to provide support for participants.

At IRAC 2, a working group was established to provide advice on the best approaches to support the development of leadership skills. The IRAC received an update on progress from that working group, and it was agreed that there will be a report compiled which will review existing Indigenous leadership programs and identify successes, lessons learnt and opportunities for collaboration. The review will guide the development of a Leadership Strategy for the GBRMPA's Indigenous Partnerships Program, and will focus on three key components: identification of young leaders; mentoring opportunities; and how to sustain the input of young leaders in future programs.

Members all endorsed a mentoring program whereby IRAC members who are Traditional Owners identify a

young person to accompany them to IRAC meetings and other activities.

During August 2010, the GBRMPA ran a project that involved chartering a vessel, the SV Pelican, to provide an opportunity for Traditional Owners in the Cape York region to access their sea country.

People were able to board the vessel at different ports for a period of time to share knowledge and experiences.

Despite the inclement weather, there was positive feedback from participants. Some suggestions for improvement on the project included having more than one Traditional Owner group on board the vessel to provide the opportunity to share and interact on sea country management ideas and initiatives.

The IRAC strongly supported any future work that would provide people with opportunities occurring on country to get involved with activities such as water quality, climate change discussions and communicating experiences on the web.

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.

Members agreed there should be a greater recognition of the connection of Traditional Owners to their land and sea country. The IRAC was keen to have continued involvement in the development of the Strategy given the predicted higher levels of projected growth and recreational use of the Marine Park and the potential interruption to Traditional Owners' access and use.

The GBRMPA's strategy is to work with Traditional Owners to identify areas that are important to them. While Traditional Owners are trying to connect more with country; at the same time, however, the use of those areas by other people is increasing.

ROLE OF THE IRAC

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

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.

The Indigenous RAC has the following **Terms of Reference**:

1. Advise the Authority on matters relating to the implementation of various programs and strategies that impact Indigenous¹ communities in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area including, but not limited to, the *Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2009* and the *Caring for Our Country Reef Rescue Program* and other initiatives.
2. Advise the Authority on ways to facilitate partnerships, build capacity and engage with Traditional Owners² to manage biological and

cultural marine resources in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

3. Advise the Authority on innovative and best practice communications approaches that facilitate information exchange between Indigenous people, managers and Reef stakeholders, and build a better understanding of the rights and interests of Traditional Owners in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.
4. Advise the Authority on application of world's best practice principles to sea country planning and implementation.
5. Advise the Authority on appropriate mechanisms to manage traditional use of marine resources, including Traditional Use of Marine Resource Agreements (TUMRAs), across the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.
6. Interact with other Reef Advisory Committees on matters of joint interest towards achieving the GBRMPA's Corporate objectives.
7. As necessary for the purposes of carrying out the function of providing advice, undertake specific tasks and projects that support the aspirations of Traditional Owners and the obligations and requirements of the GBRMPA.
8. To make available, for broad distribution, information about and a record of the IRAC's activities and outcomes.

¹ The term 'Indigenous' refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia, and is used in acknowledgement of the definition and reflective meaning of the two inclusive cultural identities.

² In the GBRMPA's Zoning Plan, the term 'Traditional Owner' refers to a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who (a) is recognised in the Indigenous community or by a relevant representative Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander body (i) as having spiritual or cultural affiliations with a site or area in the Marine Park, or (ii) as holding native title in relation to that site or area; and (b) is entitled to undertake activities under Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander custom or tradition in that site or area. Further, 'Traditional Owner group', in relation to a site or area of the Marine Park, refers to the group of Traditional Owners who, in accordance with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander custom, speak for the site or area.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE 2009-2012

Mr Wayne Butcher	Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner
Mrs Anne Clarke	Fisheries Queensland (DEEDI)
Ms Jean Fenton	Indigenous engagement, environmental management and community development
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
Mr Darren Cameron	Acting Director, Indigenous Partnerships Group, GBRMPA

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the IRAC is scheduled to be held on 6 and 7 April 2011.