



Board Report

1. The agenda for this meeting included the World Heritage Area Strategic Assessment, the Authority's Strategic Plan for 2012-2013, and public consultation on the proposal for an environmental management charge on dredge spoil disposal and progress with both the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and a report on the Outlook for the Great Barrier Reef Coastal Ecosystems.

Strategic Assessment of the World Heritage Area

2. The Authority endorsed the draft Terms of Reference to the strategic assessment of the World Heritage Area being conducted through an agreement with Minister Tony Burke. The Queensland Government is conducting a similar assessment for matters under Queensland jurisdiction relating to the GBR coastal region. The Terms of Reference for the GBRMPA assessment are still in draft form and have been available for public comment until 13 April 2012. This assessment provides an opportunity to review the effectiveness of management across broader scales and longer timeframes than has been done previously.

Decision MPA 2012-219D-8B (3) (17/02/2012) The Authority noted and accepted the decision of MPA 219D meeting on 17 February 2012, which approved the draft Terms of Reference for the World Heritage Assessment to be conducted by the GBRMPA. The Authority agreed that the Authority continue with consultations and preparation of the Terms of Reference for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Strategic Assessment.

Biodiversity Conservation Strategy

3. GBRMPA has been developing a broader framework for conservation of biodiversity since the Outlook Report 2009 highlighted this is a gap in management strategy. The strategy uses vulnerability assessments for species and habitats thought to be of conservation concern, which will provide a basis for more specific implementation plans. It also acknowledges that reduction of pressure on biodiversity in many parts of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park can be achieved only through consensus building with government agencies and the public. The Authority endorsed the draft strategy for public consultation.

Decision MPA 2012-220-9 (19/03/2012) The Authority endorsed the public consultation draft of the Great Barrier Reef Biodiversity Strategy 2012

Outlook for the Great Barrier Reef Coastal Ecosystems

4. Increasing numbers of scientific publications are reporting substantial declines in the health of the central and inshore waters of the Great Barrier Reef. While there may be a number of accumulative causes to this decline, the maintenance of water quality and coastal habitats has been long recognised as critically important. The Authority was briefed on the methodology and results of a major review of coastal ecosystems adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef. The review was assisted by critique from the four Advisory Committees and external reviewers. The

Authority has agreed that the report should be made available to the public as soon as it is completed and approved.

Decision MPA 2012-220-10 (19/03/12) The Authority agreed that the report on the Outlook for Great Barrier Reef Coastal Ecosystems will be published on the web once completed; and noted that the report on Outlook for Great Barrier Reef Coastal Ecosystems will be used to inform GBRMPA's input into the proposed Strategic Assessments, planning and development assessments, identification of priority offsets and the next Outlook Report due in 2014.

GBRMPA position on the development of Ports in the GBR Region

5. The Authority discussed the recent upsurge in port development activity along the Great Barrier Reef coast and agreed that it would develop a position paper outlining the potential risks to the environment and canvassing options to mitigate those risks, but without pre-empting policy decisions of other agencies with jurisdiction in the Region. Where decisions fall outside the GBRMPA jurisdiction, the Authority would encourage a consensus view among all relevant stakeholders on the conservation and protection outcomes needed to sustain a healthy Reef.

Decision MPA 2012-220-11 (19/03/2012) The Authority noted there is unprecedented growth in major Ports along the coast of the Great Barrier Reef; and agreed to the development of a Position Paper entitled "Ecologically sustainable development of Ports in the Great Barrier Reef Region" for targeted consultation with stakeholders.

Environmental Management Charge

6. The Authority noted that the Australian Government has announced a reduction in tourism visitor charge (Environmental Management Charge) that will be in place for 3 years, and has also requested the GBRMPA to consult with stakeholders on the introduction of an environmental management charge on the disposal of dredge spoil in the Marine Park.

Decision MPA 2012-220-12 (19/03/12) The Authority noted the Australian Government's announcement to reduce the Environmental Management Charge (EMC) by \$2.50 for the Standard Tourism Program Charge for a three-year period commencing 1 April 2012 and finishing on 31 March 2015; noted the Australian Government has made a proposal to introduce an EMC for the disposal of dredge material in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, but has not taken a decision to proceed with such a charge.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled to be held on Wednesday 20 June 2012.

Commencing after meeting 219 November 2011, a board report is prepared after each meeting of the Marine Park Authority as a public record. Any inquiries should be referred to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority [<http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/about-us/contact-us>]