

A summary document is prepared after each meeting of the Reef Advisory Committee to inform other advisory committees serving the Authority, and persons generally (including the public), of business of the RAC. The document forms part of the records of the meeting and so its content is limited to matters raised in the meeting, and, where necessary, background details given to the meeting. Any inquiries should be referred to the Authority's Secretariat, or to the appropriate Member.



## **TOURISM AND RECREATION REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TRRAC) 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting 17 and 18 September 2002 – Townsville SUMMARY DOCUMENT**

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### **REPORT FROM THE TOURISM AND RECREATION (T&R) GROUP**

The following issues were discussed:

#### ***New Moorings***

Confirmation that 40 new public moorings are to be installed within the Marine Park.

#### ***T&R Group Newsletter***

Members are encouraged to submit any comments about or news items for inclusion in the newsletter.

#### ***Cruise Ship Anchorages in Far Northern Section***

- Thursday and Flinders Islands already have established anchorages. There are a further 23 sites under consideration, and liaison is needed with the various stakeholders.
- The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) will present a set of possible anchorages for public comment. After consideration of any submissions, the proposal will be submitted for approval to the Board of the Marine Park Authority.
- Rather than wait until all 23 anchorages are evaluated, it was suggested that a small number of Far Northern anchorages should be designated as soon as possible; preferably before the cruise shipping International Conference in Miami in March 2003, as this is when operators will begin developing itineraries.
- Although there are currently several anchorages in the Cairns Area, it was advised that there needs to be more gazetted anchorages in that area, deemed safe for operators to use.

#### ***Marine Tourism Contingency Plan***

Such a Plan would be employed when a severe environmental incident prevented operators from accessing their normal areas. Under the Plan, operators would be able to relocate to an alternative area following an incident. It is important to note

that most operators would not be looking to move a great distance away from their usual area, but relocation would need to be within days. It was agreed that this matter would be progressed, prior to TRRAC 11. A small Reference Group was established.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT CHARGE CONCESSIONS REVIEW**

Members were advised that the Minister for Finance and Administration had directed that the GBRMPA conduct a review of Environmental Management Charge (EMC) concessions. In considering the draft terms of reference and an appropriate communications strategy for undertaking the review, Members made the following comments:

- It was suggested that the GBRMPA should conduct the review itself, with input from a small Reference Group.
- It was suggested that the Review should consider the administrative efficiency and feasibility of collecting the fees currently subject to concessions.
- It was suggested that, if possible, the GBRMPA, in their consideration of any change to the EMC concessions, take into account the impact on numbers of visitors to the reef as a result of increasing prices.

### **LATENCY, ALLOCATION AND TENURE**

Members were advised that the T&R Group had progressed the document into a draft policy statement. Members' comments included:

- The latency provisions may not be firm enough to deliver up the permits that are being under-utilised at present. Members favoured an annual

- review of use, based on the 50-day requirement, with provision for bona fide special cases.
- Members urged that tourism operators be given reasonable notice of any changes to mandatory requirements or fees (depending on the gravity of the changes), to allow for necessary operational adjustments.

A supporting document will be prepared, taking into consideration the Members' comments and feedback, and presented to TRRAC 11.

## CORAL BLEACHING

Members were briefed on the 2002 coral bleaching episode within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMP). There may be some links between coral bleaching and Crown of Thorns Starfish (COTS), and scientists are keen to look into this further. Public education into the "real" reasons for this phenomenon has been invaluable, as there have been instances where some media have blamed the tourism industry for the coral bleaching episodes.

## OPPORTUNITY PLANNING

Members were briefed on the progress of the prototype paper, which describes co-operative management strategies to protect and preserve the Marine Park, including mandatory and voluntary initiatives, and on-site management. Members' comments included:

- There is merit in articulating the broad 'shared' vision for tourism and recreation, to form the basis for individual management strategies.
- The plan should be developed in consultation with all parties.

The T&R Group is to further develop the prototype Opportunity Planning document, taking into consideration Members' comments and feedback, for presentation to TRRAC 11.

## BEST PRACTICE AND ACCREDITATION

Members were provided with a draft assessment of best practice initiatives, with recommendations. Industry groups along the coast had been consulted in developing the draft paper. Members' comments included:

- Any accreditation schemes must be affordable, and be based on best practices that are achievable for tourism operators.
- There is merit in separating out the auditing role of accreditation, to provide a level of independence to the process.

- There would be merit in inviting potential accreditation schemes (e.g., Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program [NEAP] and Green Globe) to demonstrate to the GBRMPA and TRRAC how their schemes could meet the GBRMPA's objectives for accreditation.

Progress on best practice and accreditation would be presented to TRRAC 11. Representatives of NEAP and Green Globe would be invited to give a presentation to TRRAC 11.

## SWIMMING WITH WHALES CODE OF CONDUCT

Members were briefed on the results of recent research into tourists' assessment of their experience of swimming with dwarf Minke whales. Researchers from James Cook University and the Museum of Tropical Queensland advised they have been working extensively with industry to develop a code of conduct for this activity, and stressed the importance of involving all stakeholder groups. The process for formulating a code of conduct should be clearly defined; the code should be completely transparent; based on the best available research; and performance monitored.

## NEXT MEETING

Proposed for 17 and 18 September 2002.

### CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

Mr Mike Bartlett .....	Cruise Shipping
Mr Mike Burgess .....	Business Acumen Economic/ Marketing
Mr Robert Butterworth .....	Environment Australia
Mr John Doohan .....	Recreational Fishing
Dr Sally Driml .....	Scientific/Economic/EPA
Mr John Evetts .....	Ranging Operations/Game Fishing
Mr Peter Frawley (Chairperson) .....	Management
Mr Daniel Gschwind .....	Business Acumen Economic/ Marketing
Mr Bernard Heimann .....	Mooring, Anchoring
Mr David Hutchen .....	Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators
Mr Terry Kemp .....	Bareboat Charter
Mr Wayne Kirkpatrick .....	Resort Operations
Mr Glen Miller .....	Indigenous Community
Mr John Millward .....	Dive, Pontoon, Aircraft
Mr David Morgans .....	Tourism Queensland
Mr Denis O'Connell .....	Commercial Fishing
Ms Kerry Rooney .....	Dept Industry, Tourism and Resources
Mr John Rummey .....	Conservation, Dive, Anchoring, Mooring and Ranging
Mr Chris Thomas .....	Director, GBRMPA