

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)

12th Meeting

27 and 28 March 2003 – Townsville

SUMMARY DOCUMENT

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The 12th meeting was the first for the re-convened Tourism and Recreation Reef Advisory Committee. Most members who served on the first Committee have remained; there are some new members and replacements. A full list of the TRRAC members and their areas of expertise is provided at the end of this document.

ALLOCATION, LATENCY AND TENURE

Members were advised that the draft policy on allocation, latency and tenure had been released for public comment.

In discussion, the following comments were noted:

- Following discussions with the Queensland Inter Departmental Committee for the Great Barrier Reef, a short preface has been included to indicate a co-operative approach; and reference to the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) has been included throughout the document to indicate the acceptance of the document at State and Commonwealth levels.
- The issue of exceptional circumstances was raised. It was noted that during the initial discussions the idea of “use it, lose it, or pay for it” was considered. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) may need to consider the situation where an operator is unable to operate due to circumstances beyond their control.

A report will be made to the next TRRAC meeting summarising the public comments received and the outcomes of consultations with industry groups, particularly with regard to latency management and the need for “special circumstance” provisions.

BEST PRACTICE AND CERTIFICATION

Members were advised that the GBRMPA is seeking to identify external certification schemes

that are able to assess and certify high standard marine tourism operators. The GBRMPA does not intend to run its own certification scheme.

In identifying suitable schemes, the GBRMPA needs to develop a fair and transparent set of assessment criteria. These should broadly describe the key elements that are important to the GBRMPA. The core best practice areas where tourism operators can contribute to the Marine Park and its management were identified as Protection, Presentation and Partnership.

In discussion, the following comments were noted:

- It was suggested that a big issue will be the incentive for operators to become involved. A valuable incentive could be that the GBRMPA's website lists those operators who are certified. This would attach a commercial value to certification.
- It was generally agreed that the GBRMPA should not have a part in determining how these schemes are to be run, as long as the GBRMPA and industry can agree on monitoring and auditing procedures.
- While acknowledging that not all operators would necessarily seek certification, it was reiterated that certification would be linked to a 15-year permit. This would be seen as a reward for operators who have already reached that high standard, and as an incentive for those operators who are close to reaching that high standard.
- It was suggested that the GBRMPA would be looking for things that go beyond the mandatory; that is, what can you do that is over and above legal requirements.
- The GBRMPA does not want to be prescriptive about specific best practices.

The Committee endorsed a draft set of assessment criteria tabled by the Tourism and Recreation Group, with minor amendment. The Association of

Marine Park Tourism Operators (AMPTO) offered to develop a prototype certification scheme and present it to the next TRRAC meeting.

WORK PROGRAM 2003-2005

As this was the first meeting of the second Tourism and Recreation Reef Advisory Committee, it was considered timely to consider the Committee's priorities and work program for the next three years.

The following issues were identified as being priorities for the Committee:

- Threats to the Great Barrier Reef. Members identified that there were a number of external issues that can severely affect the health and presentation value of the Marine Park. Examples include water quality, over-fishing, crown of thorns starfish and coral bleaching.
- Flat tourism visitor numbers. The recent update on visitation trends from the Environmental Management Charge (EMC) logbook data has reinforced the fact there has been no growth in tourism numbers to the Marine Park since the mid 1990s.
- Further implementation of the TRRAC Framework. It is appropriate that the Committee reviews the progress that has been made in implementing the advice contained in the Framework and considers further priority components.
- Indigenous issues. Members are very interested in exploring tangible ways in which Indigenous concerns and aspirations are better addressed.
- Recreation. Members are conscious of the Committee's continuing strong focus on tourism issues and are keen to put more emphasis on recreation matters.

REPRESENTATIVE AREAS PROGRAM (RAP)

Members were briefed on the process and outcomes of the first Community Participation phase, and the preparations being made for the second Community Participation phase.

In discussion, the following points were noted:

- The GBRMPA is finalising the draft zoning plan, with a view to submitting it to the Board of the Marine Park Authority (MPA) in May 2003 for approval prior to the second Community Participation phase due to get underway at the beginning of June 2003.

- The GBRMPA is seeking strong involvement from the tourism industry in the Community Participation phase. In particular, key industry members could become "Reef Champions" in support of the RAP process.

CRUISE SHIP ANCHORAGES

Members were advised that 11 cruise ship anchorages had been designated in the Far Northern Section and that the report on these anchorages is available on the GBRMPA website. It was reported that news of these anchorages was well received internationally, especially by the "adventure cruise" sector.

Members were also advised that the Fitzalan Passage Cruise Ship Anchorage has been designated in the Whitsundays and has already been trialed by two cruise ships.

INDIGENOUS ISSUES UPDATE

Members were briefed on the structure of Indigenous representative bodies, and were briefed on some of the issues surrounding Indigenous involvement in tourism.

NEXT MEETING

Dates for the remaining meetings of TRRAC during 2003 were confirmed as follows:

- TRRAC 13 – 12 and 13 June;
- TRRAC 14 – 4 and 5 September; and
- TRRAC 15 – 4 and 5 December.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

Ms Bryony Barnett	.....	Research, Extension, Best Practice
Mr Mike Bartlett	.....	Cruise Shipping
Mr Mike Burgess	.....	Business Acumen Economic/ Marketing
Mr John Doohan	.....	Recreational Fishing
Mr Barry Ehrke	.....	Commercial Fishing
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 Ralph Henderson	.....	Tourism and National Parks Management
Mr David Hutchen	.....	Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators
Mr Kevin Keffe	.....	Environment Australia
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
Ms Kerry Rooney	.....	Dept Industry, Tourism and Resources
Mr John Rumney	.....	Conservation, Dive, Anchoring, Mooring and Ranging
Mr Chris Thomas	.....	Director, GBRMPA