

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 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's (GBRMPA) Secretariat, or to the appropriate Member.



## **TOURISM AND RECREATION REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TRRAC) 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting 1 and 2 September 2003 – Townsville SUMMARY DOCUMENT**

The fourteenth meeting of the TRRAC was held in Townsville on 1 and 2 September 2003. Two members were welcomed to their first meeting – commercial fishing representative; and a replacement representative from the Department of the Environment and Heritage. A summary of the outcomes of the main items discussed is set out below.

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

Members were advised that the policy "Managing Tourism Permissions to Operate in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (including Allocation, Latency and Tenure)" came into effect on 13 August 2003, the date it was submitted to and adopted by the Board of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

All permit holders will be advised of the policy and a copy will be available on the GBRMPA website.

The GBRMPA acknowledged the time and effort of TRRAC members in following this issue to a successful conclusion.

### **BEST PRACTICE AND CERTIFICATION**

Members were advised that, following finalisation of the policy on allocation, latency and tenure, assessment criteria and a process for assessing potential certification schemes had been endorsed by the GBRMPA's Senior Management Team. Both documents are available on the GBRMPA website.

During a working group discussion, members considered a revised draft of the proposed Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators (AMPTO) certification scheme, and the current

update process for the Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program (NEAP).

In discussion, members noted that no scheme is commercially viable unless demand is built. Incentives are needed to encourage operators to become certified and, thereby, improve the standards of operators. Currently, the incentive is to gain a 15-year permit. Additional benefits will need to be considered.

### **TRRAC WORK PRIORITIES**

#### **Site Guardianship**

The broad issue of site guardianship, threats to the reef, site planning and contingency planning were discussed in detail in a working group session. Working group members expressed a desire that site stewardship be promoted reef-wide, and that the focus of research be shifted to encompass long-term reef survival, sustainability, maintaining presentation values and industry resilience. The importance of operators being able to maintain flexibility and adopt new technologies in site stewardship was emphasised. Members considered that the mechanisms for identifying emerging issues are working and site management actions are taking place (sometimes including site planning). The working group considered that contingency planning is best addressed on a case-by-case basis, within an overall assurance that the GBRMPA will provide assistance as necessary.

#### **Tourism Numbers**

The Committee received detailed data on visitation to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park from 1993 to 2002. Members noted the overall upward trend in visitation to the Marine Park, the static numbers visiting the Cairns Section, steady growth in the

Central Section (particularly the Whitsundays) and a doubling of visitation to the Mackay/Capricorn Section over the last two years.

A study into travel trends is to be undertaken for the Queensland Tourism Industry Council. The study will look at what is happening to visitation numbers and why; and is expected to be completed by Christmas 2003.

It was suggested that when reporting information on visitor numbers and trends to industry members, it could be useful for researchers to also include someone with expertise in marketing and future demand, to provide forward looking information for business planning.

### Further Implementation of the TRRAC Framework

The Committee noted the proposed work program to further implement the TRRAC Framework, and decided to analyse the progress so far in implementing the Framework at the next TRRAC meeting.

### Indigenous Issues

Following the last TRRAC meeting, a working group scoped some initial ideas and issues in relation to the proposed Indigenous Engagement Strategy. The TRRAC discussed these issues and reaffirmed its commitment to the development of a Strategy.

### Recreational Use of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park

The CRC (Co-operative Research Centre) Reef research team's preliminary findings on recreational use of the GBRMP were presented to members. The survey of a random sample of residents along the adjacent Queensland coast provides data on the amount, type and location of recreational use undertaken, the level of satisfaction of these users, and their attitudes to aspects of their experience.

The next step for the research team will be to develop the draft report, with guidance from project stakeholders, into a peer-reviewed CRC Reef Technical Report. Members were asked to consider the draft report, and submit any comments or suggestions.

### REPRESENTATIVE AREAS PROGRAM (RAP)

Members noted that the submissions period was now closed. Most members are fully supportive of the RAP initiative and will continue to publicly

support it. Many members advised that they had attended numerous public RAP meetings throughout their area, as well as meetings specifically associated with their particular industry. Members also advised that they had made submissions individually, or as part of an industry or community group.

### TOURISM FUTURES CONFERENCE

Several members attended the recent conference, and offered the following comments:

- A working group will meet in September to consider a national approach to accreditation.
- There was strong recognition of a constructive relationship between the tourism industry and the GBRMPA.
- There was a very positive outcome from the pre-conference forum "Protecting the Great Barrier Reef's Tourism Future".
- It was suggested that equivalent events should be staged at a more regional or local level, to make it easier for operators to attend.

Members congratulated Mr Mike Burgess who received an award for lifetime achievement in the tourism industry.

### NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of TRRAC is proposed for February 2004.

#### 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 (AMPTO)
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
Ms Meg Switzer	Dept of the Environment and Heritage
Mr Chris Thomas	Director, GBRMPA
Mr Col McKenzie (Advisor)	Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators (AMPTO)