



TOURISM AND RECREATION REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TRRAC)

17th Meeting

26 and 27 October 2004 – Brisbane

SUMMARY DOCUMENT

The seventeenth meeting of the TRRAC was held in Brisbane on 26 and 27 October 2004. A summary of the outcomes of the main items discussed is set out below.

REPRESENTATIVE AREAS PROGRAMME

In connection with the rezoning of the Marine Park, members were concerned at recent media reports indicating that the outcomes may be under threat. The depth of feeling on the matter led members to adopt the following formal resolution:

'In light of some recent negative comments in the media on the Representative Areas Programme (RAP) and its consultative process, the Tourism and Recreation Reef Advisory Committee (TRRAC) would like to make the following points:

- 1. Leading scientists have concluded that the protection provided by RAP for the Great Barrier Reef is the minimum needed to provide a good chance of reef resilience and sustainability.*
- 2. Marine tourism operators and the wider tourism industry are totally committed and supportive of the new zoning.*
- 3. The consultative process used by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) set a benchmark for public consultation by governments in Australia and the GBRMPA should be congratulated on its efforts.*
- 4. The TRRAC strongly feels the RAP should not be revisited at this time.'*

CERTIFICATION AND BEST PRACTICE

Members were very pleased to hear of the continuing progress towards rewarding high standard tourism operations in the Marine Park and the public recognition that this initiative is receiving. The matter of further benefits that could be offered to operators was discussed. Ideas proposed included establishment and promotion of an identifiable brand for operators to use, the GBRMPA recommending appropriately certified operators to the travel trade, links to the websites of certified operators from the GBRMPA website, and special access to sensitive areas in the Marine Park.

ALLOCATION OF SPECIAL TOURISM PERMISSIONS

The Committee considered further the question of individual operators having the opportunity of being granted more than one permit in an allocation process. It was felt that the most important element was that the best operator/s should be granted the available permits, and that this would produce the best outcome for the Marine Park. Members considered that it should be possible for an individual operator to be granted one or more of the available new permissions, but that this is unlikely to happen in practice because diversity of experience will be a significant consideration in the selection process. Specifically, the matter could be considered in the criterion that addresses the extent to which the operation will enhance presentation of Marine Park values.

MOORINGS MANAGEMENT

The Tourism and Recreation Group Work Programme on moorings management was discussed. Some of the key outcomes were:

- Support for mandatory registered mooring identification numbers;
- Support for the creation of a moorings register by the GBRMPA, but the GBRMPA should not act as a facilitator for the sharing of moorings;
- A suggestion that the GBRMPA should further pursue private funding of public moorings, possibly involving a trial conducted in close consultation with key industry representatives from the Cairns Area and the Whitsundays; and
- A recommendation that the Whitsundays be included in any future moorings review, including consideration of more private or dedicated use moorings in the area.

CRUISE SHIPS

The matter of Environmental Management Charge (EMC) collection in regard to cruise ship passengers was discussed. The Committee suggested that the GBRMPA could prepare a standard receipt to be completed by cruise ship operators and shipping agents documenting the EMC status of their passengers. Such a receipt could be used by local tourism operators, enabling them to

easily justify an EMC exemption for eligible cruise passengers. Members were given clarification on the requirement that local operators collect and pay EMC for cruise ship passengers who undertake a local activity after the third day of their cruise journey.

The possibility of designating transit corridors for cruise ships to enable them to discharge their grey water outside the Marine Park was also discussed.

INDIGENOUS TOURISM

Fostering and facilitating Indigenous involvement in tourism continues to be a key area of interest for the Committee. Members supported providing better information to operators about contact points for Indigenous groups and look forward to seeing a developed “Indigenous contact map” product early in 2005. In addition, a small Working Group was established to advance Indigenous tourism issues, including the allocation process for the new Indigenous special tourism permissions.

CORAL TRANSPLANTATION

The Committee noted the recently produced explanation of coral transplantation use, a Permits Information Sheet on coral transplantation at tourism sites and a summary of the outcomes of a recent coral transplantation project. Members were very supportive of the GBRMPA’s work to make this documentation publicly available.

HEALTHY REEFS

Members received information on the proposed Climate Change Response Programme being undertaken in co-operation with the Australian Greenhouse Office. Some of the comments made in discussion included:

- The GBRMPA was seen as a world leader in reef conservation and management, and would continue to be active in reef climate change work.
- One of the GBRMPA’s priorities was to address water quality and other impacts that affect resilience.
- One of the most important ways that TRRAC members who were directly involved in the industry could respond was to participate in monitoring programmes (e.g., Bleachwatch).
- Members agreed to participate in a “think tank” on the resilience of both the reef and the industry.

ARTIFICIAL REEFS

The Committee considered the matter of artificial wrecks and reefs in the Marine Park. Members expressed a strong desire for a more detailed policy to be made available and supported the GBRMPA’s plans to do this. To assist in this project, a small Working Group was established.

SITE MANAGEMENT

Members were most impressed with the newly developed web-based information about Low Isles and

its management. The Committee considered it to be a very positive step and suggested that it could be a suitable template for other sites where there are individual booking arrangements and specific management arrangements.

EXCEPTIONS TO THE WHITSUNDAYS PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

After clarifying the current arrangements with respect to exceptions for tourist programmes under the Whitsundays Plan of Management, some members expressed concern about the ability for new operators to commence operating outside the generic requirements of the Plan. The Committee established a Working Group to more closely examine the issue and report back to the Committee.

COMPLIANCE STRATEGIES AND PROTOCOLS

Members were very pleased to receive information about compliance strategies and protocols in the Marine Park. There was strong support for the risk-based approach to establishing compliance priorities and for the involvement of operators through the Eyes and Ears Programme. Members expressed a preference for more emphasis on education and training, rather than specific enforcement activities.

Concerns were raised about the boarding protocols employed by enforcement agencies in the Marine Park. The Committee encouraged the GBRMPA to work cooperatively with other agencies to achieve a better consistency of approach between agencies.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting, TRRAC 18, is proposed for 28 February and 1 March 2005.

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 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 Lisha Mulqueeny	Director, GBRMPA
Ms Kerry Rooney	Dept of Industry, Tourism and Resources
Mr John Rumney	Conservation, Dive, Anchoring, Mooring and Ranging
Ms Meg Switzer	Dept of the Environment and Heritage