

A summary document is prepared after each meeting of the Reef Advisory Committee (RAC) 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.



Australian Government

Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority

TOURISM AND RECREATION REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TRRAC)

20th Meeting

2 and 3 November 2005 – Cairns

SUMMARY DOCUMENT

The twentieth meeting of the TRRAC was held in Cairns on 2 and 3 November 2005. The last half of the meeting was devoted to a Marine Tourism Industry Leaders Forum on Climate Change, with some additional industry members, GBRMPA staff and climate change experts attending. Both the formal meeting and the forum were very successful, and the major outcomes are summarised below.

BAREBOAT OPERATIONS POLICY UPDATE

The Committee was provided with a summary of the management of bareboats over the last 15 years and informed of plans to update the GBRMPA bareboat operations policy. Members supported the proposed approach to reviewing the policy, with the suggestion that representatives of the Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators (AMPTO) and any other relevant industry associations be included in the industry/community working group as appropriate. In addition, members suggested that anchor damage and basic statistics about bareboats be included in the list of issues for consideration.

As with TRRAC 19, there was strong discussion about the one-way conversion of bareboats to crewed vessels, with the need for a moratorium again being raised. The Committee considers that a moratorium is not practical at this stage but that the GBRMPA in the interim should consider limiting conversions to the current permitted passenger capacity. In addition, it was the strong attitude of the meeting that the policy review should be completed as quickly as possible so that the issues can be resolved.

CRUISE SHIPPING DEVELOPMENT

Progress on a range of cruise shipping initiatives was noted and a reference group was established to contribute to the policy review.

The Committee considered the management of 'boutique cruise vessels' in detail. It was acknowledged that this was an emerging sector of the tourism industry that requires detailed consideration and strategic planning. In general, members considered that such operations could be provided additional access in the Marine Park, within the current access rules. With regard to the definition of this sector, the Committee considered that activities and potential impacts were the important consideration, with size being only a minor factor. It was

suggested that a more appropriate and internationally recognised term for this style of operation was 'adventure cruise' or 'expedition cruise'.

With regard to Environmental Management Charge Procedures for cruise passengers, a working group was established to consider the application and administration of the charge to the cruise sector.

The Committee noted the work that had been undertaken on anchorages and cruise ship corridors and suggested that the GBRMPA should progress individual areas if they are ready, rather than waiting for all to be finalised.

LOCAL MARINE ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Recognising the increasingly important role that Local Marine Advisory Committees (LMACs) are playing in the work of the GBRMPA, a range of suggestions were made about the conduct and membership of LMACs, including:

- There should be as wide community representation as possible.
- Each Committee should be strongly supported by the local Regional Liaison Managers as well as a GBRMPA Director.
- The Queensland Government should be represented where possible.
- The selection of an effective Chairman is fundamental to a successful LMAC.
- More information about the LMACs and their work with the GBRMPA should be made available to local media.
- Information flow between LMACs and Reef Advisory Committees should be improved.

Members unanimously undertook to encourage nominations for the LMACs in their local regions.

WHITSUNDAY DISTRICT VISITOR MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service's (QPWS) Regional Director in Rockhampton outlined the scope, process, consultative mechanisms and likely outputs of the Whitsunday District Visitor Management Strategy.

The Committee was very interested in the project and is keen to be kept up-to-date with progress at the next meeting. Members held a strong view that greater industry involvement was required at the decision-

making level. The Committee urged the QPWS to enter into closer consultation with the tourism industry and allow the industry more direct involvement. Members also suggested that there was good potential for commercial solutions to some of the issues faced and that QPWS should explore commercial opportunities in overall management. Members considered that the bulk of the growth in usage will be in the recreational sector, especially given the extensive marina developments being undertaken in the region.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS IN RESEARCH

Members received a brief summary of the GBRMPA’s role in research and the framework for its research priorities, as well as an outline of the process and progress for establishing the new Marine and Tropical Science Research Facility (MTSRF). Members were satisfied that, based on the discussions to date, there is scope for tourism research needs to be adequately addressed by the new MTSRF. However, future developments will have to be closely monitored. The Committee asked that members be advised when the Minister for the Environment and Heritage has determined the structural arrangements for the Facility.

ALLOCATION AND LATENCY

The Committee was updated on progress towards developing an allocation system for capped permissions and on the current arrangements for managing latency. Members were very interested to learn that in the two years since the policy was introduced, 105 capped tourism permissions have been transferred, giving opportunities for 51 new entrants and 22 existing operators. In addition, it was reported that there is likely to be about 16 permits granted after the policy commenced that have not been used in the first two years.

INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION IN TOURISM AND ITS MANAGEMENT

The Indigenous Tourism Working Group held its third meeting immediately prior to the TRRAC meeting and reported to the full Committee. Members were pleased to hear of the continuing progress of this Group, especially the development of a GBRMPA Position Statement on Indigenous Participation in Tourism and its Management and the near finalisation of a joint information leaflet with QPWS and Tourism Queensland. The need for the involvement of additional tourism operators was identified and will be further pursued.

ONBOARD THE TOURISM OPERATOR’S HANDBOOK FOR THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

Members were provided with a short presentation on this new website and applauded the work undertaken. The Committee considers it to be a very valuable initiative that will be of great value to operators and their staff.

INCLUSIONS FOR SETTING NUMBERS

The Committee was advised that AMPTO and the Whitsunday Charter Boat Industry Association (WCBIA)

have asked the GBRMPA to consider the possibility of excluding children under four years of age from being counted as part of a group for the purposes of setting limits. The AMPTO member at the meeting advised that further advice will be provided to the GBRMPA after the matter is considered at their next Board meeting.

PROTECTED FISH SPECIES

In relation to the inclusion of Red Bass, Paddletail and Chinaman fish species on the Queensland Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries’ (QDPI&F) no-take list, the Committee considered that the matter needs to be pursued further and asked that the GBRMPA raise the matter with the QDPI&F on its behalf.

MARINE TOURISM LEADERS FORUM ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The industry forum was a very successful event with industry leaders gaining a much stronger understanding about climate change and its likely implications for the Reef and their industry. In a workshop format, participants were able to identify how climate change may affect marine tourism operations and identify some potential strategies to adapt. There was a clear outcome that governments and institutions will need to become significantly more flexible in their management arrangements and work in a range of partnerships to address issues that may arise. The forum provided a useful platform for the participants to then share knowledge about climate change with the broader industry, and participants are looking forward to future opportunities for managers and the tourism industry to work together on climate change issues.

A detailed summary of the outcomes of the forum will be developed.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting, TRRAC 21, was proposed for 2 and 3 February 2006.

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 John Evetts	Ranging Operations, Game Fishing
Mr Peter Frawley	Independent Chairperson
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 Glen Miller	Indigenous Community
Mr John Millward	Dive, Pontoon, Aircraft
Mr David Morgans	Tourism Queensland
Ms Lisha Mulqueeny	Director, GBRMPA
Mr John Rumney	Conservation, Dive, Anchoring, Mooring and Ranging
To be appointed	Commercial Fishing
To be appointed	Dept of the Environment and Heritage
To be appointed	Dept of Industry, Tourism and Resources
To be appointed	Resort Operations