

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)

22nd Meeting

7 and 8 September 2006 – Townsville

SUMMARY DOCUMENT

The twenty-second meeting of the TRRAC was held in Townsville, on 7 and 8 September 2006. This was the first meeting of the third TRRAC, and attendees included a number of new members. The Committee now comprises members with a wide range of expertise and experience relevant to the sustainability of the Reef and the well-being of the tourism and recreation sector. A summary of the outcomes of the main items discussed is set out below.

TRRAC WORK PROGRAMME

As this was the first meeting of the new Committee, it was important to consider thoroughly the issues affecting tourism and recreation on the Great Barrier Reef and, hence, likely priorities for the TRRAC. Two continuing members presented the achievements and outstanding issues from the previous TRRAC. Both members highlighted the sense of co-operation and partnership that had been achieved and the strong results delivered.

The Committee adopted the same vision as the Tourism and Recreation (T&R) Group: "Ensure that tourism and recreational use in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is sustainable".

Prior to the meeting, members had identified 73 issues and 42 priorities for tourism and recreation in the Marine Park. These were discussed in detail, with members highlighting issues such as climate change, Reef health, recreational use (including large vessels such as super yachts), planning and management (particularly its impact on industry profitability) and Indigenous participation in tourism.

The T&R Group has undertaken to further synthesise the outcomes of the discussion as an aid at future meetings.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CAIRNS AREA AND WHITSUNDAYS PLANS OF MANAGEMENT

Members were briefed on the proposed amendments to both the Cairns Area and Whitsundays Plans of Management for 2006/07 and the consultation arrangements.

The Committee noted the extent and outcomes of targeted consultations undertaken to date, plus future

consultation plans. Members broadly endorsed the approach taken in the proposed amendments, noting a general concern about potential impacts from increased vessel size. Due to the lack of time to consider all the issues, the Committee did not want to express a definitive view on the specific amendments. It was agreed that staff of the T&R Group would liaise with relevant members about proposals to amend some of the Setting arrangements in the Whitsundays.

CRUISE SHIPPING

Members were updated on progress since the last TRRAC meeting, including the cruise ship workshop, formation of a reference group, new transit corridors and cruise ship anchorages. Members were advised of the update underway on the Cruise Shipping Policy, noting the Policy covers ships operating cruise ship style activities but does not cover recreational vessels like super yachts.

The Committee advised that super yachts would continue to be a growing issue in the Marine Park (although not necessarily imminent) and suggested that it is likely to require attention in 2007/08 as a separate issue to cruise ship management.

With regard to the development of the broader Cruise Shipping Policy, the Committee considered that the already formed Cruise Shipping Reference Group would ably provide the advice needed to develop the revised Cruise Shipping Policy and that a specific TRRAC Working Group was not needed.

Members also discussed the payment of the Environmental Management Charge (EMC) by cruise ships, the current arrangements and complicating factors. The Committee concluded that the most sensible approach to payment of EMC by cruise shipping passengers would be a standard fee for all passengers based on three days of access to the Marine Park (regardless of time spent or activities undertaken).

DEDICATED USE MOORINGS – PILOT PROGRAMME

The Committee received a progress report of the dedicated use moorings pilot programme in the

Whitsundays and noted the extensive work done, including information now posted on the GBRMPA website. Members continued to express strong support for providing moorings in the Whitsundays, noting that moorings and reef protection markers do much to protect coral in that area.

Members agreed that, in developing a system to provide additional mooring access in the Whitsundays, major considerations included ongoing maintenance costs and likely effects on patterns of use.

The Committee agreed that dedicated use arrangements should be as simple as possible. The Committee advised that all three of the options identified for partitioning use should be put forward in future consultations; namely, day and night use, morning, afternoon and evening use and flexible time use.

With regard to mooring maintenance, members recognised that it is unlikely that operators would wish to physically maintain these moorings themselves due to public liability concerns, and it would be more financially viable if the required maintenance were tendered out to a sole contractor, or incorporated as a specific element within the existing public moorings maintenance programme. There was consensus that operators should pay for the cost of maintenance.

INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION IN TOURISM AND ITS MANAGEMENT

The Committee was given an update on the progress of the Indigenous Tourism Working Group since the last TRRAC meeting, and discussed ways that members, the broader industry and other government agencies could foster Indigenous participation, including providing employment opportunities and mentoring. The tourism industry was encouraged to actively promote itself to Indigenous people as a career alternative.

The Committee endorsed the work of the Working Group and reconvened it with an amended membership.

GBRMPA's HIGH STANDARD TOURISM PROGRAMME

The Committee was advised of the continuing progress made in the high standard tourism programme with 29 operators now certified and thirty-six 15-year permits granted. The programme has also been used as an Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) case study.

In discussing a recently undertaken risk assessment for the programme, no further major gaps were identified. The Committee discussed in detail the issue of scheme viability, and advised against the strategy of addressing this risk through public advertising for more schemes.

RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The Committee continues to maintain a strong interest in climate change. Reports on the state of the Great Barrier Reef and activities of the Great Barrier Reef Climate Change Action Group were presented.

The Committee supported the work of the GBRMPA to assist industry in preparing for climate change, and strongly supported the proposal for an industry/government co-funded climate change officer.

ENSURING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE WHITSUNDAYS

The Committee congratulated the T&R Group and industry for the significant progress made on this issue since the last TRRAC meeting; notably, an updated Bareboat Policy, which includes the resolution of the long-standing issue of converting bareboats to crewed vessels.

While recognising this progress, some members continued to express concern about the potential for further growth in capacity of the Whitsunday crewed fleet. This growth can occur through the currently permitted latent capacity (estimated potential total of about 4 million passengers), and in the ability for all crewed vessels to increase passenger capacity (noting that any operation is subject to settings and other provisions in the Plan).

The Committee requested a more detailed overview of this issue, with members interested to explore the potential for existing management arrangements to address these concerns.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting, TRRAC 23, is proposed for 22 and 23 February 2007.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

Mr Tony Baker	Pontoons, Day Operations, Resort Operations
Mr Mike Bartlett	Cruise Shipping
Mr Wayne Calder	Dept of Industry, Tourism and Resources
Mr Bruce Chapman	Recreational Yachting
Ms Louise Crocombe	Day Operations, Best Practice
Mr John Evetts	Ranging Operations, Game Fishing
Mr Peter Frawley	Independent Chairman
Mr Daniel Gschwind	Business Acumen, Economic
Mr Bernard Heimann	Mooring, Anchoring, Day Operations
Mr Ralph Henderson	Qld Parks and Wildlife Service
Mr David Hutchen	History, Ferry, Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators
Mr Bruce Leaver	Dept of the Environment and Heritage
Mr Col McKenzie	Diving Operations
Mr Glen Miller	Indigenous
Mr David Morgans	Tourism Queensland
Ms Lisha Mulqueeny	Director, GBRMPA
Mr Adrian Pelt	Bareboat Charters
Mr John Rumney	Conservation, Diving Operations, Live Aboard
Mr Alan Sweeney	Aircraft Operations, Marketing
Mr Keith Twyford	Qld Parks and Wildlife Service
Mrs Michele Williams	Commercial Fishing
To be appointed	Recreational Fishing
To be appointed	Resort Operations