



TOURISM AND RECREATION REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TRRAC)

25th Meeting

24 and 25 October 2007 – Airlie Beach

SUMMARY DOCUMENT

The twenty-fifth meeting of the TRRAC was held in Airlie Beach on 24 and 25 October 2007. The Chairman paid respect to the Ngarrō Traditional Owners and acknowledged their traditional land and sea country in the Airlie Beach region.

A summary of the outcomes of the main items discussed is set out below.

COMPLIANCE PRIORITIES

Members were provided with a comprehensive briefing on compliance operations, including the GBRMPA's compliance priorities which cover a range of issues from illegal fishing (commercial and recreational), pollution, ship groundings, illegal hunting through to unpermitted tourism. The Committee was pleased to hear of the high level of compliance with the rezoning and that despite the most recent case on the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) to prosecute illegal fishing, GPS is still considered a reliable tool for prosecutions.

Committee members broke into groups to consider the relative priorities which affect tourism compliance; the overall objective being to encourage the GBRMPA to adopt priority compliance issues on which management should focus. There was significant concurrence between the groups; however, regional differences arose on some issues. At TRRAC 26, the Committee will be presented with a combined list of priorities to consider appropriate treatments.

OUTLOOK REPORT FOR THE GREAT BARRIER REEF REGION

The Committee was advised that an Outlook Reference Group has been formed to provide advice to the GBRMPA on the development of the Report.

Members were asked to individually rank the top pressures of most relevance to tourism and recreation. The results of the ranking process were presented to members and, after consideration, the following pressures were seen as the most important:

- Climate change (bleaching and sea temperatures rise, Reef survival and industry and government being prepared);
- Water quality (nutrients and sediments);
- Fishing (compliance and physical impacts);
- Governance and resourcing (resources, GBRMPA management, policy and planning);
- Industry sustainability (competitive advantage, triple bottom-line, tourism numbers, profitability); and
- Recreation (increasing numbers).

RECREATIONAL USE OF THE REEF

The Committee had previously expressed a desire for the GBRMPA to provide greater support for research into recreational use.

Members were presented with a draft brief for a specific project to research recreational use of the Reef. Issues discussed by the Committee included the coverage of the proposed research and sources for information. The importance of regional data was stressed, especially in the Whitsundays and Cairns areas.

Overall, the Committee strongly supported the project and urged that it be given priority status by the relevant GBRMPA staff.

ALLOCATION OF NEW AND SPARE SPECIAL TOURISM PERMISSIONS

The Committee noted the allocation of special tourism permissions for the Cooktown/Bloomfield area was underway, and that allocation arrangements for the Indigenous special tourism permissions were in place. The application of the GBRMPA policy on reasonable use is having the desired effect, with unused permits being returned to the GBRMPA as spares which may then be reallocated.

There was a lengthy discussion on the draft allocation principles. The Committee strongly supported the need for the principles and supported those principles relating to the release of 'base'

special tourism permissions, but could not come to agreement on the timing and number of special tourism permissions to be released at any one time. In particular, the Committee noted that the unique differences between the special tourism permissions should be factored in to any decision.

Proposed options on the timing aspect of the allocation principles will be presented at TRRAC 26.

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE OF OUTBOARD ENGINES

The Committee was provided with a very informative and revealing presentation of the lack of environmental performance standards requirements for outboard motors in Australia compared to other countries. The industry has recently introduced a voluntary labelling system for outboard motors in Australia.

The Committee supports the voluntary labelling scheme and the introduction of a best practice standard for outboards in the GBRMPA's Responsible Reef Practices. The Committee recommends that the GBRMPA also supports any initiatives for the introduction of mandatory performance standards for outboard motors.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT FROM A DEVELOPER'S PERSPECTIVE

The Committee viewed first-hand the local Whitsundays coastal development, including the two major marina developments at Airlie Beach and Shute Harbour. The developer for the Port of Airlie provided an on-site presentation to discuss their perspective on environmental management.

The Committee was surprised at the extent of proposed developments, and expressed concern about the cumulative impacts of such projects on the Reef and region. All felt the GBRMPA has some role to play in influencing these developments.

The Committee noted that this was a key agenda item on the Water Quality and Coastal Development Reef Advisory Committee (WRAC). The Committee acknowledged that the work should be led by the WRAC, but wanted an opportunity to consider the issue and remain informed.

INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION IN TOURISM

The TRRAC has had this issue as a standing item since late 2004, and established a TRRAC Indigenous Working Group to assist with fostering participation in tourism. The Committee noted that the TRRAC Indigenous Working Group had completed the tasks it had set, including the

allocation arrangements for Indigenous special tourism permissions, noting the GBRMPA's role in Indigenous tourism was limited to removing impediments. The Committee agreed that the existing Working Group should be retained as a reference group to work on an as-required basis.

WHITSUNDAY AND MACKAY ISLANDS VISITOR MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Committee was updated on the Whitsunday and Mackay Islands Visitor Management Strategy. It was noted that the Strategy does not set capacities, but provides a framework to guide future negotiated capacity setting processes (such as Tourism in Protected Areas).

CLIMATE CHANGE

The Committee noted and supported the work of the GBRMPA's Tourism and Recreation Group and the Climate Change Group, and the Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) in making submissions to the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources' (DITR) proposed National Climate Change Action Plan for Tourism. Members of the Committee felt that it was essential that industry retain the initiative on this issue, and suggested that the Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators (AMPTO) plays a major role.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting, TRRAC 26, is proposed for 2 and 3 April 2008.

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 Darren Cann	Resort Operations
Mr Bruce Chapman	Recreational Yachting
Mr Tony Charters	Eco-tourism
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 (AMPTO)
Mr Bruce Leaver	Dept of the Environment and Water Resources
Mr Col McKenzie	Diving Operations
Mr Unni Menon	Tourism Queensland
Mr Glen Miller	Indigenous
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
Mr David Windsor (Observer)	AMPTO
To be appointed	Recreational Fishing