

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)

### 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting

9 and 10 April 2008 – Townsville

### SUMMARY DOCUMENT

The twenty-sixth meeting of the TRRAC was held in Townsville, on 9 and 10 April 2008. The Chairman paid respect to the Wulgurukaba and Bindal Traditional Owners and acknowledged their traditional land and sea country in the Townsville region.

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

#### TOURISM COMPLIANCE PRIORITIES

The Committee was updated on the work previously undertaken on tourism compliance issues at TRRAC 25, which was further worked on by members and staff of the GBRMPA out-of-session. Work on the risk ratings and rationales for the impact probability assessments has now been finalised, as far as the Committee is concerned, and was provided to the GBRMPA in the hope that it will be of assistance in considering tourism issues within compliance priorities.

Members reiterated to the GBRMPA that moorings compliance remains a high priority for the TRRAC.

#### OUTLOOK REPORT FOR THE GREAT BARRIER REEF REGION

The Committee had a lengthy discussion on the progress made in preparing the 2009 Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report and more specifically the synopses of information on tourism and recreation that is to be included. Members heard a summary of advice previously given by them on perceived pressures, and noted that it was consistent with perceptions/advice provided to the GBRMPA by other Reef Advisory Committees and Local Marine Advisory Committees.

The Committee endorsed the assessment that major pressures facing the Great Barrier Reef in the foreseeable future are rural/agricultural development and catchment runoff, urban/industrial development and runoff, governance and resourcing, and climate change, followed by fishing, and boating and recreation.

Members made a number of suggestions on points to be included in the synopses of information on tourism and recreation, including:

- A description of why people wanted to visit the Reef;

- The collation of statistics and relevant facts to provide a base point from which future changes can be measured;
- The collection of a suitable and comprehensive photographic presentation to illustrate the condition of individual sites for the first and subsequent Reports; and
- The highlighting of points such as -
  - The Great Barrier Reef tourism industry as a global icon for sustainable tourism use,
  - The need for rigour in acquiring and analysing information,
  - Forecasts of future tourist numbers,
  - The emerging competition between tourism and recreational use,
  - The lack of formal management of recreational use,
  - The need to address more effectively the competing forces of protecting the Reef, a rapidly expanding population and coastal development projects.

#### COASTAL DEVELOPMENT

The Committee was briefed on the issue of coastal development along the GBR coast. A *Position Statement on Management of Development in the Coastal Zone of the Great Barrier Reef Island and Mainland Catchment* is currently being developed. Some members were of the view that the legislative capacity of the GBRMPA was limited to affect the issues associated with coastal development because of the complexity of so many different pieces of legislation and necessitating all three levels of government.

The Committee supported the principles in the Position Statement; however, it was suggested that it would be desirable if some of the wording could be tightened to ensure that outcomes are measurable. For example, phrases such as 'where possible' and 'minimised' should be replaced with statements of specific obligations, as appropriate.

#### ALLOCATION PRINCIPLES FOR SPECIAL TOURISM PERMISSIONS

The Committee reviewed the revised draft set of principles, which had been prepared by staff in the Tourism and Recreation Group following the previous

meeting's discussion of these principles. After a long discussion, members supported the allocation principles. After consideration by management, the Committee understands that the principles will be forwarded to the Board of the Marine Park Authority for formal approval.

The Committee also discussed what action would be taken following the voluntary relinquishment of special tourism permissions, an issue previously raised by some members at TRRAC 25. After some discussion about the National Competition Policy, members noted that there was no scope to withhold a relinquished special tourism permission wholly on competitive grounds, and recommended to the GBRMPA that the allocation principles should also apply to relinquished special tourism permissions.

## ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT CHARGE

The Committee was briefed on the GBRMPA's proposed compliance actions in relation to the Environmental Management Charge (EMC). Members were surprised at the relatively high level of non-compliance, and supported the actions of the GBRMPA for managing tourism operators who were not meeting their EMC obligations. The Committee recommended that the GBRMPA actively pursue those who do not meet their obligations, and take a stronger stance by shortening the timeframes in which operators must respond.

Members supported the introduction of a minimum Late Payment Penalty and a separate reinstatement fee for suspended permissions, and recommended to the GBRMPA that both these fees should be the same cost to the operator as the permit application fee.

## DEDICATED USE MOORINGS

The Committee was pleased to hear of the progress of this project, and supported the next steps for the project, specifically the GBRMPA's Steering Committee decision on the final model for dedicated use moorings and the creation of internal working groups for site selection and implementation. Members requested a presentation of the final model.

## INSHORE FINFISH FISHERY

The Committee was very interested in the update on the proposed Inshore Finfish Fishery future management arrangements and implications. Members were surprised and concerned at the paucity of the information available upon which the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) is basing its proposed management plan. While the Committee appreciates the primary responsibility for the management of the fishery rests with the Queensland Government, members would like to think the close relationship between the GBRMPA management and DPI&F could establish more effective mechanisms for collecting and collating broader-based information which would then be used to progressively build on and improve both the finfish management arrangements and their environmental outcomes.

## RECREATIONAL USE OF THE REEF AND OTHER RESEARCH

The GBRMPA's 'Recreation Review Stage 1' draft report was extremely well received by members. For management purposes, the Committee endorsed the definition of recreational user as 'a self-guided visitor to the Marine Park who is non-commercial, non-research and non-tourist' noting that this would include a sub-group recognised sometimes as a 'domestic tourist'. Members supported using the Whitsundays as a regional case study.

The Committee noted the progress on the GBRMPA's 'Economic assessment of the GBR Dive industry' and was interested in the compatibility and consistency of the dive figures with the National Account figures for tourism generally. Members requested an update as the project progressed.

## RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The Committee was updated on the current initiatives to mitigate climate change including finalising and implementing the draft *Great Barrier Reef Marine Tourism Climate Change Action Strategy 2007-2010*, assisting with the development of Ecotourism Australia's Climate Change module and developing climate change case studies.

A TRRAC Climate Change Advisory Group was formed, to advise the Tourism and Recreation Group on climate change initiatives.

## NEXT MEETING

The next meeting, TRRAC 27, is proposed for 24 and 25 July 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 Greg Howe	Tourism Queensland
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 Glen Miller	Indigenous
Mr Adrian Pelt	Bareboat Charters
Mr John Rumney	Conservation, Diving Operations, Live Aboard
Ms Lorelle Schluter	Acting/Director, GBRMPA
Mr Alan Sweeney	Aircraft Operations, Marketing
Mr Keith Twyford	Qld Parks and Wildlife
Mrs Michele Williams	Commercial Fishing
Mr David Windsor (Observer)	AMPTO
To be appointed	Recreational Fishing