

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) 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting 5 and 6 November 2008 – Townsville SUMMARY DOCUMENT**

The twenty-eighth meeting of the TRRAC was held in Townsville on 5 and 6 November 2008. The Chairman paid respect to the Wulgurukaba and Bindal Traditional Owners and acknowledged their traditional land and sea country in the Townsville region.

Members appreciated the update provided by the GBRMPA Chairman on the work of the GBRMPA; the initiatives to ensure that the advice from the Reef Advisory Committees is more transparent; and the initial thoughts on the value of a strategic assessment of the Great Barrier Reef coast in relation to coastal development.

The Committee had a broad ranging discussion concerning the difficulty in publicising changes to the Great Barrier Reef as a result of climate change without affecting the number of tourist visits to the Reef. While accepting that climate change is a very real threat, members were concerned that the world is only hearing about the negatives in relation to the Great Barrier Reef.

The Committee accepts there is no simple answer, but urged the GBRMPA to include positive aspects when reporting on Reef health.

Members offered some constructive suggestions, such as making reference to fish stocks returning to green zones and the successful regrowth of corals in areas previously affected by bleaching or overrun by Crown-of-thorns Starfish.

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

### **GREAT BARRIER REEF OUTLOOK REPORT**

Members were appreciative of the detailed presentation of progress made to date on preparation of the Outlook Report. The Committee concurred with the summary of outcomes made at the Outlook

Forum and endorsed the GBRMPA's timetable for delivering the Outlook Report to the Minister by June 2009.

From a tourism and recreation perspective, the major issues are climate change, biodiversity, water quality and coastal development. The Committee's judgement was that the assessments of the future of the Great Barrier Reef will rest heavily on maintaining resilience.

### **SWIMMING WITH DWARF MINKE WHALES**

Members noted the update on the Swim with Dwarf Minke Whale Code of Practice and supported the proposed timetable for reviewing management arrangements. The Committee was keen to see the review of management arrangements finalised as early as possible in the light of results of six years of research.

Some members were strongly opposed to exclusivity being given to individual operators. The Committee raised the suggestion that operators able to undertake the activity of swimming with dwarf minke whales should make a reasonable contribution to management in return for their access to this limited tourism opportunity.

### **GOOGLE MAPS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF**

The Committee noted that the partnership between the GBRMPA and Google Australia has produced a great product, namely a Google Map with a Great Barrier Reef layer superimposed on it. This will be a valuable product for both managers and users of the Marine Park.

The Committee was impressed with the potential application of this open-source technology (i.e. free to all users) and supported the GBRMPA's use of this technology as an additional benefit for high standard operations within the Marine Park.

## RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The Committee noted the progress on climate change initiatives, particularly the Tourism Emissions Calculator utilised by Marine Park operators who participated in the trial of the Climate Action Certification Program (a program developed by Ecotourism Australia in partnership with the GBRMPA and South Australian Tourism Commission).

It was noted that the successful operators from the trial will be showcased at the *Inaugural Conference on Green Travel, Climate Change and Ecotourism* in Adelaide from 17-20 November 2008.

Members provided a range of comments on the *Climate Change Reef Facts for Tour Guides* which is to be printed soon. This was another example of the work of the GBRMPA in assisting Marine Park operators to raise awareness of climate change, and to encourage operators and visitors to the Marine Park to actively reduce their climate footprint.

## NATIONAL LANDSCAPES

The Committee was briefed on the current status of the National Landscapes Program, a joint initiative of Tourism Australia and Parks Australia to identify the top 20 superlative nature-based experiences for national marketing purposes under Brand Australia. The first eight have been chosen and include the Red Centre, the Kakadu Region, the Great Ocean Road and the Blue Mountains. Many members saw it as an oversight that the Great Barrier Reef was not included in the Program at present.

Members were advised that the process requires strong stakeholder support from all parties that govern, conserve and promote these landscapes. An initial meeting of the relevant Queensland government agencies, the GBRMPA and industry stakeholders is scheduled for December 2009. Tourism Australia is able to assist and fund the process of determining if an area meets the criteria to be selected as a National Landscape.

The Committee strongly supported investigating the selection of the Great Barrier Reef for the National Landscapes Program, and a number of members nominated as a reference group to assist the GBRMPA with any background information or inquiries.

## PERMITS, COMPLIANCE AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (PCaMS)

The Committee was updated on the implementation of PCaMS, which is the management system that will manage permit

applications, transfers, permit access requirements, EMC logbook data collection, Marine Park use information, financial aspects of permits and EMC, and information to assist in compliance. It is anticipated that the system will be implemented mid-year 2009.

Members agreed that the process will be an improvement on what is currently available, through the use of logbooks. Some training will be available, and people are welcome to contact the GBRMPA if they have any queries.

## EYE ON THE REEF MONITORING PROGRAM

Members were impressed with the progress and continued success of the program, which has been running for approximately ten years.

The Committee recommended that additional funding be allocated to this project, if possible, to extend this impressive program.

## NEXT MEETING

The following dates were set for TRRAC meetings during 2009:

- TRRAC 29 – 2 and 3 April;
- TRRAC 30 – 30 and 31 July; and
- TRRAC 31 – 3 and 4 December 2009.

### CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

Mr Tony Baker	.....	Pontoons, Day Operations, Resort Operations
Mr Mike Bartlett	.....	Cruise Shipping
Mr Chris Briggs	.....	Acting/Director, GBRMPA
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
Ms Anne Greentree	.....	Qld Environmental Protection Agency
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
Mr Alan Sweeney	.....	Aircraft Operations, Marketing
Mr David Windsor (Observer)	.....	AMPTO
To be appointed	.....	Commercial Fishing
To be appointed	.....	Dept of Resources, Energy and Tourism
To be appointed	.....	Recreational Fishing