



WATER QUALITY AND COASTAL DEVELOPMENT REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE (WRAC)

16th Meeting

26 and 27 April 2005 – Townsville

SUMMARY DOCUMENT

The sixteenth meeting of the WRAC was held on 26 and 27 April 2005 in Townsville. Following is a summary of the main items discussed at the meeting.

QUEENSLAND DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND FISHERIES (QDPI&F) REEF EXTENSION PROJECT

Members were given an outline of the QDPI&F Statewide NHT2 Project entitled 'Implementation of a pilot comprehensive extension service delivery program in high priority Great Barrier Reef catchment' (the Project), advising:

- The Project has a total budget of \$1.3 million over three years, however, only the first year of the Project has been approved.
- In order for the Project to continue over its full implementation phase, an alternative funding source is required.
- An alternative funding source is the 'strategic reserve'.
- This Project along with a range of others has been submitted.

An endorsement of the Project from the WRAC and the Water Quality Coordination Group (WQCG) was sought to reinforce the merits of the Project in achieving NHT2, regional natural resource management and Reef related outcomes.

The WRAC supports the proposed Reef Extension Project. The Project needs to be updated, however, to reflect new institutional issues that have emerged since it was originally developed. This can be done through the QDPI&F and regional bodies working in partnership during the Project's implementation.

Regional bodies recommend this Project as a high priority for funding from RCF/Statewide in 2005/06.

ECONOMIC INCENTIVES – C2 AND C3

Representatives from the Department of the Environment and Heritage briefed the Committee on the progress of action being undertaken in relation to

economic incentives – Strategies C2 and C3 of the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan (Reef Plan), advising:

- There was a decision to do these two actions simultaneously.
- C2 involves a desktop review and analysis of government policies that have unintended negative impacts on water quality. Discussions will be held with key stakeholders to evaluate current farm practices that can have a negative impact on water quality. Discussions will be held with key stakeholders to evaluate current farm practices that can have a negative impact on water quality.
- C3 involves the use of the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE) farm surveys to measure the adoption of best management practices relevant to the agricultural industries across three case study catchments (Johnston, lower Burdekin and Plain Creek). It is planned that the surveys will be run through May with a report due at the end of June 2005. There are at least 120 respondents with a good cross-section of different industries.
- The outputs of this Project and the wetlands project hopefully will be used to try and measure biophysical data for the ones selected. There will be another project on top of this one to pull all of that information together.

Members suggested that it would be useful to survey people who are not land holders to get their perception as well. People outside the industry have a different perspective on what the issues are.

FUTURE EYE REVIEW

The GBRMPA is keen to build upon and enhance the relationships built during this process and, as a result, the GBRMPA commissioned the consultants 'FutureEye' to review their consultation process and community engagement. The report has been completed and the Minister has released it.

The web address is
http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/Futureeye_Final_Report.pdf

The Federal Minister has recently announced that the GBRMPA will open new regional offices in coastal centres to enhance local involvement in decision-making and to ensure everyone gets the chance to have their views heard.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND (LGAQ) NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (NRM) CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

The Committee was briefed on the LGAQ Capacity Building Project. It was noted that the program is trying to:

- Encourage partnership between the regional bodies and the councils.
- Capacity build councils so they see NRM as a priority.
- Look at joint ways of being involved and developing alternative mechanisms to address issues within the regions, as issues do not necessarily have to be involved with individual councils.

Members noted that local governments are key players and their understanding of their role regarding NAP and NHT needs to be developed and enhanced.

FARM MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (FMS)

Members were provided with a presentation on the framework for Farm Management Systems for Queensland's Intensive Rural Industries. The framework provides the basis for partnerships. The four key objectives are: 1) Guide a consistent approach across member FMS programs; 2) Collaboration amongst Queensland Farmers Federation (QFF) members to implement the framework and member programs; 3) Recognition and support for FMS programs from government, regional bodies, local government, and other industries; and 4) Gaining efficiencies and resourcing for the implementation of FMS programs.

Members commended the QFF on the work being done with farm management systems.

COORDINATED REGIONAL WATER QUALITY MONITORING

Members were provided with a presentation on the Reef Monitoring Framework. The project objective is to deliver a framework and implementation strategy for the provision of water quality data and

information to Reef regional bodies to enable management of water quality impacting on the Reef.

CONSORTIUM FOR INTEGRATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (CIRM)

Members were updated on the current activities of the CIRM Reef Catchment Working Group, including:

- A further project officer will be starting early May to progress the work already being done and, subject to funding, document the gap analysis work and put it in a form which enables the data to be updated.
- The aim is to make a statement of broad areas of research. It is not going to be an investment plan.
- The project officer will act as a liaison officer and will be based in Townsville.
- The document will be available on the CIRM website in the next two weeks.

The WRAC commended this project and acknowledged that it was a big step forward. It was also suggested that a report on this document be provided to the IOC and seek their advice on how the information might be maintained as an annual update.

OTHER BUSINESS

Members agreed a communication strategy should be developed, outlining how all the different information can be coordinated from the different sectors and how that information can be communicated effectively. It was emphasised that 'good stories' should be embedded in this communication strategy.

NEXT MEETING

The Committee agreed that the next meeting be held on Tuesday 2 August 2004 in Rockhampton.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

Mr Tony Allingham	Grazing Industry
Cr Mike Berwick	Wet Tropics NRM
Ms Veronica Blazely	Dept Environment and Heritage
Mr Harry Bonanno	Burnett/Mary NRM
Mr Noel Dawson	Independent Chairman
Mr Tony Fontes	Tourism Industry
Dr Miles Furnas	AIMS/CRC Water Quality
Mr Richard Leck	Conservation
Ms Sheriden Morris	CSIRO
Dr Tony Pressland	Qld Dept Natural Resources and Mines
Mr Clive Rogers	Mackay/Whitsunday NRM
Dr Nick Schofield	Catchment Management
Mr Kirk Smith	Catchment/Management Landcare
Mr Ian Sutton	Conservation
Mr Vern Veitch	Recreational Fishing
Ms Barbara Wildin	Fitzroy Basin Association
Dr Tim Wrigley	Canegrowers
Mr Hugh Yorkston	GBRMPA