



**WATER QUALITY AND COASTAL DEVELOPMENT
REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE (WRAC)
17th Meeting
2 August 2005 – Rockhampton
SUMMARY DOCUMENT**

The seventeenth meeting of the WRAC was held on 2 August 2005 in Rockhampton. Following is a summary of the main items discussed at the meeting.

STRATEGIC WORK PLAN

Strategic Direction Document 2005-2010

The Committee was briefed on the Water Quality and Coastal Development (WQ&CD) Group's achievements against the 2000-2005 Strategic Work Plan, and the draft Strategic Direction document for 2005-2010. The draft Strategic Direction document provides a review of the Group's Strategic Direction over the next five years. Notable aims under this plan include:

- The desire to improve implementation of the Reef Plan and re-focus on key actions to improve in-Park water quality.
- The implementation of the Reef Guardian Councils program, with consideration for potential for launching similar programs with Great Barrier Reef (GBR) Catchment industries (e.g., agriculture, tourism, coastal developers).
- The addition of implementation responsibilities for the GBRMPA's responsibilities under the Shipping Management Strategy and the development of an in-park aquaculture policy.

Members noted the presentation and agreed that the WQ&CD Group had made significant progress and had demonstrated a willingness to change plans to address the major issues. Members further advised that the GBRMPA needs to look at incentives, motivations and better integration of management systems; and ensure that there are good reporting mechanisms in place so information is getting to people on the ground.

Annual Operational Work Plan 2005-2006

The Committee was briefed on the successful implementation of the 2004-2005 Annual Operational Work Plan, and was provided with an overview of the draft Annual Operational Work Plan for 2005-2006. Aims proposed under this new plan include:

- Ongoing involvement in implementation of the Reef Plan, including continued strategic engagement with the Reef Secretariat and other government agencies and a focus on key actions (e.g., nutrient sensitive zones, wetlands, marine monitoring program and coordination with state/regional programs, water quality improvement plans and defined Marine Park environmental values, etc).
- The implementation of the Reef Guardian Councils program.
- Ongoing support for local government to improve sewage treatment plans.
- Implementation of the new sewage management provisions; inclusion of shipping management requirement and in-Park aquaculture policy development.

Members were asked to provide comments on the Operational Plan. The Committee advised that:

- The performance indicators needed to be re-worded so that they do not look like activities.
- Some targets needed to be added to the document.
- Property level management planning systems (PLMPS) are the key management systems with industry. The GBRMPA could make strong links to the industry by putting effort into the PLMPS processes.

REPORTS ON PROGRESS AND ISSUES

Reef Plan Update

The Committee was advised that the GBRMPA undertook a community consultation process – telephone survey of RAC and Local Marine Advisory Committee (LMAC) members – in preparation for the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan report to the Prime Minister and Premier. Major findings from the survey were:

- While the target community (RAC and LMAC members) surveyed was aware of the Reef Plan, those surveyed did not consider that the message was getting out into the general community.
- There was some frustration with government's progress, and there was a perception of a lack of will to implement the Reef Plan.

It was reiterated that there is a general determination to implement the Reef Plan and the governments are working together to do this. It is essential that people understand the level of government commitment, and the GBRMPA needs to ensure that there is consistency and focus on implementation.

A report of the survey's findings will be available on the GBRMPA website in the near future.

GBRMPA-DEH Wetlands (Reef Plan)

Under the GBR wetland program, the GBRMPA has partnered with the Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH) to develop the following educational products:

- Creating a series of 'Reef Beat' posters.
- Developing a web quest on wetlands which is an interactive process that children can access online and search for links on wetlands.
- Creating an exhibit at ReefHQ that creates a link for people between the catchment and the Reef.
- Developing computer-based "interactive booths" about wetland sites and wetland management, with a view to placing them in various areas in the catchment.

CONSORTIUM FOR INTEGRATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (CIRM) REEF CATCHMENTS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

The CIRM Reef Catchments Working Group has produced two significant products:

- A compilation of current research and development (R&D) activities being undertaken in the Reef catchments. This document includes a description of each project, the alignment of the

project's objectives to Reef Plan strategies and actions, a clustering under Natural Resource Management (NRM) themes and the geographical context of the project to the regional NRM bodies. The information has been assembled onto a relational database for further applications and updating. Access to the full version of this CIRM document is available from the CIRM website: <http://www.cirm.org.au>.

- A document of the first stage towards identifying R&D needs and priorities for the Reef catchments. The document includes an initial listing of priorities from both stakeholders and regional body responses.

The CIRM Reef Catchments Working Group continued the process to prioritise R&D needs through a workshop on 8 July in Townsville. These discussions resulted in a framework to refine the categorising of current R&D activities. The framework is akin to an adaptive management framework and will assist to identify gaps in knowledge and highlight necessary processes for integration. Regional body participants in the CIRM workshop have been requested to test the application of these frameworks against their Regional Investment Strategies. The CIRM Reef Catchments Working Group Executive Project Officer would assist this analysis. A revised list of R&D priorities is expected to be completed by early August 2005.

Members strongly supported this project and are keen to see final outcomes.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is proposed for early November 2005.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

Mr Tony Allingham	Grazing Industry
Mr 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
Dr Tim Wrigley	Canegrowers
Mr Hugh Yorkston	GBRMPA