



# CONSERVATION, HERITAGE AND INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIPS REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CRAC)

23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting

16 and 17 April 2008 – Townsville

## SUMMARY DOCUMENT

The 23<sup>rd</sup> CRAC meeting was held on 16 and 17 April 2008 in Townsville. Following is a summary of the main items discussed at the meeting.

### SPECIES CONSERVATION ISSUES

#### *Dwarf Minke Whale Tourism Monitoring Programme*

Members were informed of progress since CRAC 22:

- A post-season workshop was held on 16 Nov 2007
- A Code of Practice, Entanglement and Sustainability Objectives workshop is to be held on 18 Apr 2008
- The pre-season workshop is to be held on 30 May 2008

The CRAC was asked to consider current management arrangements for the Dwarf Minke Swim-with-Whale activity and provide advice at a future CRAC on possible future management arrangements. As a group, the CRAC endorsed the current approach and acknowledged there may be a problem with non-permitted operators and conformity with the Code of Practice.

#### *Review of impact of climate change on protected species priorities*

Advice was sought from members on this issue and the Committee noted that risk assessment matrices developed by staff would be difficult to respond meaningfully to at the meeting. It was considered that experts in that particular field should carry out any realistic ranking. The CRAC was also concerned about the paucity of data that examines the effects of climate change in the context of the cumulative impacts on species of conservation concern and the risk that, consequently, traditional use of such species may be curtailed unnecessarily.

The CRAC made a number of recommendations, comments and suggestions on the process for evaluating the relative importance of different species or habitats and prioritising responses to climate change effects on particular species.

#### *East Coast Inshore Finfish Fishery (ECIFF)*

Members were provided details of progress since June 2007, key issues, the current position and timetable for outcomes. Three position statements (shark, protected species and regional management) are currently available on the GBRMPA website.

The CRAC noted that the ECIFF Review did not include Indigenous fishing as part of the ECIFF and

recommended that the GBRMPA make strong representations at Commonwealth and State level for inclusion of this component in the planning. The Committee also noted the inadequacy of the data on which catch limits are based i.e. only based on catch landings rather than stock assessment and that there were limited data on by-catch from the fishery.

### INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIPS ISSUES

#### *Indigenous Partnerships Update*

Members were informed of recent goings-on concerning:

- Sustainable Traditional Use of Marine Resources.
- Indigenous Participation in Tourism and its Management.
- Cultural Heritage Values and Cooperative Arrangements for Sea Country Management.
- Sea Country Research and Education Program.
- Interaction with Queensland government on Indigenous Program.
- Interaction with National Indigenous Programs.
- Reef Rescue Plan.

#### *Sea Country Indigenous Partnerships Program component of the Reef Rescue Plan*

Members received a briefing on the Federal Government commitment and were asked to provide advice on the priorities for this enhanced program. One primary concern of the CRAC was in relation to the possible expectation of Government that a large number of Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRAs), 10 or more, might be concluded over the five-year period. The CRAC considered that such an expectation might be a recipe for failure. The experience of TUMRAs to date suggests that:

- a) They require significant time and resources of GBRMPA staff and community leaders to develop;
- b) Indigenous communities are diverse and may require different approaches for TUMRAs;
- c) The communities need to first develop a capacity to negotiate and sustain the commitments in the agreements; and
- d) The development of the agreement is but the first step in a long and possibly difficult process of implementation.

The CRAC concluded that it would be better to regard the Land and Sea Country Indigenous Partnerships component of the Reef Rescue Program as an initial investment in a decades-long process of social and economic change enhanced by the implementation of TUMRAs.

The CRAC also considered that a workshop of all Indigenous members of RACs, the Indigenous member(s) of the GBRMPA Board (if and when appointed) and GBRMPA Indigenous staff would be of considerable benefit to the GBRMPA, its staff and the Indigenous members. The CRAC recommended that such a workshop be held as soon as possible.

## HERITAGE ISSUES

The CRAC noted the recent election of a new Council for the combined cities of Townsville and Thuringowa, the boundaries of which incorporate two World Heritage Areas. The CRAC recommended that the GBRMPA, together with the Queensland Government, seek the opportunity to brief the new Council on a range of issues:

- a) recognition of the world heritage status of Magnetic Island in planning decisions;
- b) the role of TUMRAs in marine management planning and management;
- c) the effect of Council decisions on local marine conservation issues; and
- d) the importance of integrating port planning decisions with those of the adjacent Marine Park and World Heritage Area..

The Committee also noted that the Heritage Management Plan for Lady Elliot Island Lightstation has been approved by the Marine Park Authority and is ready for submission to the Australian Heritage Council and Minister for the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

## OUTLOOK REPORT

### *Update on activities*

Members were provided with a summary report on the input of GBRMPA Advisory Committees (RACs and LMACs) regarding pressures facing the Great Barrier Reef (GBR). The GBRMPA is now developing a standard set of pressures on the GBR ecosystem and a standardised approach for risk assessment which will be used in the Outlook Report.

Following advice from the GBRMPA's Outlook Reference Group, members were advised it now seems likely that the Outlook Report as presented to Parliament will be a concise report (e.g. approximately 30-40 pages) specifically addressing the requirements of the Act. Supporting this would be more detailed information describing the current state, pressures and trends of each of the identified GBR values and the factors affecting those values.

### *Draft outline of Biodiversity Information*

Advice was sought from Committee members regarding the drafting of biodiversity information. This task has been assigned to the Species Conservation Unit

of the GBRMPA, as part of the Outlook Report. One of the exercises currently being conducted involves collating a matrix which looks at information needs and then critiques it. This process will be peer reviewed.

Members commented that:

- If experts are to peer review, it is recommended they be paid a small amount of money to have their review carried out within a specified period of time. Having a formal arrangement in place such as this can make quite a difference.
- Thought should be given to anticipating specific responses from user groups. If targeting species groups, consideration should be given to the bottom of the food chain as well as more visible species groups.
- Reference should be included about biodiversity as a resource for many users of the GBR.
- It is recommended that implications for users, as well as some way of ensuring the information is well-tested and bullet-proof are also included.

### *Draft outline of Traditional Use of Marine Resources Information*

CRAC members were addressed regarding Traditional Use information in the Outlook Report, including current management, the current state of knowledge, pressures on traditional use and the future. Members' comments included:

- There is a need to address 'tradition' and attempt to express it in a contemporary way by perhaps introducing biological resources and biodiversity as well as traditional management systems. 'Tradition' is dynamic and mobile and not generally understood by the wider community in an Indigenous sense.
- Both historical and pre-historical values should be included.
- A TUMRA process should be showcased in an effort to explain traditional use to the general public.

## NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 8 and 9 October 2008.

### CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

Mr Doug Baird .....	Tourism and Recreation
Ms Kate Davey .....	Non-Government Organisation, Conservation
Ms Belinda Jago .....	GBRMPA
Mrs Christine Doherty .....	Indigenous
Dr Pat Hutchings .....	Non-Government Organisation, Ecologist
Ms Anissa Lawrence.....	Fisheries Issues
Mr Bruce Leaver .....	Dept of the Environment and Water Resources
Dr Ghislaine Llewellyn .....	Non-Government Organisation, Conservation
Mr Justin McCaul .....	Non-Government Organisation, Conservation
Prof Helene Marsh .....	Scientific Community
Mr Peter Ogilvie .....	Qld Environmental Protection Agency
Assoc Prof Stephan Schnierer .....	Indigenous
Mr Bernie Singleton .....	Indigenous
Dr Andrew Tobin .....	Commercial Fishing
Assoc Prof Peter Valentine .....	Conservation, World Heritage, Protected Area Management
Mr Simon Woodley.....	Independent Chairman