



INDIGENOUS REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE (IRAC) **7th Meeting – 28 and 29 November 2012 – Townsville** **DRAFT SUMMARY DOCUMENT**

GBRMPA's REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEES

There are four Reef Advisory Committees (RACs): Catchment and Coastal; Ecosystem; Indigenous; and Tourism and Recreation RAC.

The RACs are competency-based committees comprising a cross-section of stakeholder interests with expertise and experience in relevant areas. The role of the RACs is to provide issues-based advice to the GBRMPA on operational issues. Each RAC shall work closely with staff of the relevant branch and sections, to ensure that policy development and strategic direction are developed in consultation with stakeholders.

The RACs are appointed for a term of three years, and members are eligible for reappointment. Each of the RACs includes Indigenous representation. Some members are appointed as a representative of a particular group or sector (e.g. industry, recreational, government), or for their linkages to Traditional Owner Groups. All RAC members are expected to adopt a broad perspective on issues that are addressed, mindful of the objectives of the relevant section or branch and of the GBRMPA's corporate priorities.

The Indigenous RAC (IRAC) provides strategic-level advice to the GBRMPA on the management of matters that relate to Indigenous Partnerships.

The 7th meeting of the IRAC was held in Townsville on 28 and 29 November 2012.

The Chairman paid respect to the 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.

PROPOSAL FOR AN INDIGENOUS RANGER PROGRAM

Members were provided a briefing on the proposal for an Indigenous Ranger Program, using funding under the new national environmental offsets policy announced by the Minister on 2 October 2012.

The nature of this funding provides the GBRMPA an opportunity to establish a long-term plan for an Indigenous Ranger Program, that could provide a model for others into the future.

The Committee recommended an options paper be prepared on the possible model for an Indigenous Ranger Program. The GBRMPA should then engage with Traditional Owners, ensuring sufficient time for them to consider the proposal and respond to the options.

In addition, the Committee provided the following advice for the development of the proposal:

- 1 On the process of the decision –
 - There must be a clear process documented to show how the value of the offset is estimated.
 - The Value must be related to the Impact. It must take account of cultural values, and should include Traditional Owner involvement in the allocation of funds.
 - It should stipulate Indigenous offsets for all developments.
 - It should consider if there is a way to directly auspice funds to Traditional Owner groups.
- 2 On the processes that should occur so protocols can be developed that address the actual delivery of the offset –
 - Every time there is a decision to be made, it must have an assessment of Indigenous cultural values.
 - None of these decisions should be tied into Native Title decisions.
 - Consideration of local versus regional impact – does the offset apply to a discrete area, or is the offset to be applied at a more regional (reef wide) level?
 - Carry over funding – if the offset is set at an annual amount – there should be an underlying principle that funds can be carried over for use in subsequent years.

REEF RESCUE LAND AND SEA COUNTRY INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

Members were provided an update of the Reef Rescue Land and Sea Country Indigenous Partnerships Program (RRLSCIPP).

The Program has been running for only a few years; however, it has now become more formalised and more planned at a partnership-level. One of the benefits of having in place a Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement (TUMRA) is the ability to be in a management partnership situation, working hand-in-hand with compliance officers who can respond to any breaches of the rights and interests a community has specifically identified through the TUMRA process.

There has also been an effort to increase engagement between the GBRMPA and Traditional Owners, through various forums, to improve communication.

GREAT BARRIER REEF REGION STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

The Committee was provided a briefing on the two components of the comprehensive Strategic Assessment of the Great Barrier Reef Region – the first being the Strategic Assessment Report; the second, the Program Report. In developing the Strategic Assessment, the GBRMPA will build on the work done for the Outlook Report 2009.

Members urged the GBRMPA to ensure a plain English version of the documents was developed as well, which would assist greatly in the consultation process with Traditional Owners. These highly complex documents are a mixture of government and scientific speak and, in their current form, would likely not be easily understood by the general population.

The Committee also provided suggestions for amendment to a draft document regarding the current condition and trend of Indigenous heritage. The suggestions, in the most part, were to ensure the inclusion of elements such as cultural or sustainable use, language, lore and cultural practices and values.

However, concern was expressed about the Intellectual Property ownership, particularly as a result of the sharing of cultural knowledge and stories.

Members recommended the term 'bio-cultural diversity' be used in the Strategic Assessment and the next Outlook Report, to capture the full relationship and importance of the environmental, cultural and heritage values.

DRAFT PORTS POSITION STATEMENT

Members were briefed on the draft *Ports Position Statement*, which has been approved by the Board of the Marine Park Authority.

The Committee urged the GBRMPA to ensure TUMRA groups were engaged, given they are a major partner with the GBRMPA in the management of the Marine Park.

The Committee also recommended amendments to the position statement, including:

- 1 The preamble should include a description that Indigenous heritage values are an important part of all of the values.
- 2 Mention should be made that the species listed are also culturally significant to Traditional Owners.

INDIGENOUS MATTERS RELATING TO HERITAGE OBLIGATIONS

Members were provided a presentation on the proposed process to revise the *Heritage Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef*.

The Committee reiterated it is imperative advice be sought from TUMRA groups on the appropriateness of addressing issues in relation to Indigenous heritage. The document should also include reference to Sea Country planning, TUMRAs and other sea country management plans.

The Committee agreed a culturally-appropriate information management protocol needs to be in place before a register could be considered.

IRAC MEMBERSHIP

Members agreed there needed to be greater Traditional Owner representation on the next IRAC and, to that end, suggested the Traditional Owner groups engaged in TUMRA business could provide a good source of expertise for the Committee. Current Traditional Owner members encouraged the GBRMPA to maintain the wide range of expertise from non-Traditional Owner members.

Members were also keen to see an increase in Traditional Owner representation on the 12 Local Marine Advisory Committees (LMACs), situated along the Great Barrier Reef coast.

These committees are voluntary community-based groups which enable local communities to have effective input into managing the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, and provide a community forum for interest groups, government and the community to discuss issues around marine resources. The LMACs provide both an advisory and a communication role between the community and the GBRMPA.

NEXT MEETING

The term of all four RACs has been extended by six months, and will now expire on 30 June 2013. A final meeting will be convened prior to that time.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE 2009-2013

Mr Wayne Butcher	Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner
Miss Melissa George	Independent Chairman; Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner
Miss Selina Hill	Indigenous engagement, environmental management and community development
Dr Rod Kennett	Indigenous land and sea management
Dr Geoffrey Lipsett-Moore	The Nature Conservancy
Mr Ross MacLeod	Queensland Indigenous Policy
Mr Philip Rist	Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner
Mr Bruce Rose	Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
A/Professor Stephan Schnierer	Indigenous policy
Dr Dermot Smyth	Sea Country planning and Indigenous Protected Areas
Mrs Larissa Hale	Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner (Observer)
Mr Malcolm Pearce	Fisheries Queensland (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (Observer)
Mr Gavin Singleton	Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner (Observer)
Supported by:	
Mr Bruce Elliot	General Manager, GBRMPA
Ms Liz Wren	Director, Indigenous Partnerships Group, GBRMPA