



## INDIGENOUS REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMMUNIQUE

Meeting 2, 30 September and 1 October 2015

*The Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee (IRAC) was established in 2015 to provide advice to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) on Indigenous matters relating to the implementation of the key findings of the Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2014, the Great Barrier Reef Strategic Assessment and Program Report and the Reef 2050 Long Term Sustainability Plan. The IRAC is a competency-based committee with members providing a cross-section of expertise and interests in areas relevant to the Traditional Owners and Indigenous communities connected to the Great Barrier Reef. The Committee is appointed for a three year term from 18 March 2015 to 30 June 2018.*

### Machinery of Government workshop

Prior to the second meeting of the Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee, a Machinery of Government workshop was held to provide information to the members on various Government policies, reporting arrangements and the Reef 2050 Plan. Representatives from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Commonwealth Department of Environment and the Queensland Government attended and presented. The members found the workshop to be highly beneficial in understanding the statutory and policy landscape and how their advisory role applies. Opportunities for advisory partnerships more broadly were also discussed.

### Attendance

The second meeting was held in Cairns and attended by eight Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee members as follows: Phil Rist – Chair, Gavin Bassani, Gavin Singleton, Duane Fraser, Damien Head, Bob Muir, Malcolm Mann and Kerry Blackman. Formal apologies were received from Larissa Hale and Ross MacLeod.

### Introduction

The Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee Chair, Mr Phil Rist, opened the meeting and paid respect to the Yirrganydji and Yidinji Traditional Owners of the Cairns area, both past and present, and acknowledged all Traditional Owners and Indigenous communities connected to the Great Barrier Reef. He welcomed Mr Gavin Bassani who attended the meeting for the first time. Gavin introduced himself to the other members and provided a description of his current position and the experiences that he brings to the Committee working on land and sea management in a remote location in Cape York (Princess Charlotte Bay) in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

### Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference provides the Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee with the guidelines within which to operate efficiently and effectively. The committee considered and accepted the Terms of Reference for the current term. The approved version will be uploaded to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority website.

### Executive update

Chairman Dr Russell Reichelt updated members on the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's current priorities and future strategic directions in regards to achieving the targets and actions in the Reef 2050 Plan. With new initiatives under the Reef 2050 Plan, there are a number of new committees and working groups that have been established and he is a member of a number of them. Therefore advice from the Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee to the Agency will also be shared with the other Committees as relevant. Dr Reichelt reiterated his support for the Indigenous Reef Advisory committee and the development of positive and productive relationships over the next term to enable advice on Agency policy and Traditional Owner views.

### Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Operations branch update

Acting general manager of Great Barrier Reef Operations Richard Quincey informed members of the agency structure and explained the specific work undertaken in the Great Barrier Reef Operations branch, which includes Indigenous Partnerships, Field Management, Legal Services and Reef HQ Aquarium.

### **Indigenous Partnerships program update**

Indigenous Partnerships director Jessica Hoey provided an update on the Land and Sea Country Indigenous Partnerships Program (LSCIPP) and Indigenous Partnerships core business for 2014/15. Key matters discussed included:

- The Indigenous Compliance team will deliver a training program to Indigenous rangers to enhance Statutory Compliance skills. Of note, four dedicated Indigenous Compliance Officers will be employed for two years to work with the Indigenous Compliance Team and other ranger and enforcement programs along the Great Barrier Reef. This program is funded under the Reef Trust.
- The consideration of Indigenous values and cultural heritage are being strengthened through review of internal policies and the Strengthening of the Permissions System program. The Indigenous Partnerships team provides this advice internally and where necessary forms the conduit between the Agency and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to enable consultation and input.
- Presentations on the LSCIPP were provided to International Traditional Owner delegations in 2015 (New Caledonia, Rapa Nui – Easter Island).
- In 2015–16 the sponsorship component of the LSCIPP will be scaled back to enable more strategic sponsorship opportunities to be offered where there are increased opportunities for Traditional Owners. For example, in late 2016 several relevant conferences and forums will be convened that Traditional Owners may wish to apply for.
- Indigenous Partnerships will continue to work on cross-Agency matters, in particular, the Reef 2050 Plan and have input into the various internal working groups.

### **Indigenous Compliance Programme update**

Acting manager of Indigenous Compliance team Peta Ross presented on the work program and introduced three of the new Indigenous Compliance Officers. Key matters discussed included:

- Compliance plans associated with each active Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement
- Delivery of Eyes and Ears – Better Witness training to Indigenous Ranger groups
- Facilitating joint patrols with the Field Management Compliance Unit and Indigenous Rangers.
- The new Indigenous Ranger Compliance Enhancement Program, which includes the employment of four Indigenous compliance officers (2015–17) and the ability to facilitate training of up to twenty Indigenous (community-based) Rangers in Certificate IV (Statutory Compliance).

### **Special Matters:**

Ms Celeste Powell from the Commonwealth Department of Environment attended and presented on the Department's involvement in LSCIPP and the desire to maintain ongoing dialogue with the Committee on the Reef 2050 Plan. The members agreed to receive formal updates and maintain this as a standing agenda item for future meetings.

Ms Rachel Reese, Manager – Strategy Development (Environmental Assessment and Protection – the Agency) provided a presentation on the Assessment and Decision Enhancement Project. This process will update the permits and associated assessment system to address recommendations from an audit by the Australian National Audit Office. It is the intention of the Agency to improve the identification, consideration and protection of Indigenous cultural heritage values in the Marine Park when assessing permit applications and developing policy. This task will involve engaging with the Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owners to identify the impacts that may affect indigenous cultural heritage values. The Committee agreed to provide ongoing advice to this process and with the support of the Indigenous Partnerships team.

Mr Jason Vains, Project Manager – Reef 2050 section, presented on the status of the Cumulative Impact Assessment, Net Benefits and Offsets policy framework. This will involve engaging with all Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owners whose cultural heritage values may be at risk or potentially impacted by activities conducted in the Marine Parks. The members informed of three working groups that are currently informing development of these policies and the Integrated Monitoring and Reporting program. The Committee was

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provided with the opportunity to nominate a representative to be part of these working groups. Information on the working groups and how to nominate was circulated to the Committee out of session.

Ms Frances Knight, Assistant Director, Migratory Species Section, Wildlife Heritage and Marine Division, Commonwealth Department of the Environment presented on the Draft Marine Turtle Recovery Plan via teleconference. Various members expressed their interest in being involved in the development of case studies on how Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owners protect and manage turtle species in a sustainable manner.

### **Next Meeting:**

The next IRAC Meeting will be in February 2016.