



Australian Government

**Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority**

INDIGENOUS REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMMUNIQUE MEETING 3 – 17 and 18 February 2016

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 Reports 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 the term from 18 March 2015 to 30 June 2018.

Attendance:

The third meeting was held in Townsville and was attended by nine Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee (IRAC) Members as follows: Phil Rist – Chair, Gavin Bassani, Gavin Singleton, Bob Muir, Malcolm Mann, Larissa Hale, Angie Akee, Kerry Blackman and Ross MacLeod.

Introduction:

The IRAC Chair, Mr Phil Rist, on behalf of the Members and Agency staff, paid respects to the Bindal and Wulgurukaba Traditional Owners of the Townsville area, both past and present, and acknowledged all Traditional Owners and Indigenous communities connected to the Great Barrier Reef. He welcomed Mrs Angie Akee and Ms Larissa Hale as IRAC Members who were attending for the first time.

Standing Matters:

Indigenous Partnerships Program

Ms Jessica Hoey, Director – Indigenous Partnerships, provided an update on core business, the Land and Sea Country Partnerships Program (LSCPP) and the Indigenous Ranger Compliance Enhancement Project for 2015/16. Key matters discussed included:

- There are six (6) Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement (TUMRA) projects that are operational in 2015/16, and their respective multi-year contracts have been approved and accepted through to 2018.
- All six (6) TUMRA projects have had their Compliance Plans and Risk Assessments completed and a TUMRA Permit Compliance Workshop was delivered in February 2016 by the Indigenous Compliance Team at GBRMPA.
- The Sponsorship funding allocation has been reduced this financial year due to the limited number of sea country events and exchange opportunities available prior to the end of the financial year.

Special Matters:

Ms Rachel Pears, A/Manager – Ecosystem Resilience, gave a presentation on the summer outlook and the current state of coral bleaching on the Great Barrier Reef. Members were advised that

communities could assist the coral bleaching response by reporting any occurrences to GBRMPA through the Eye on the Reef Program.

Ms Liz Wren, Director – Heritage, International and Governance, provided background information on the IUCN World Conservation Congress being held in Hawaii on 1 – 10 September 2016. There was general agreement amongst the Members supporting the need for Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owners to be actively involved at the international level of Indigenous land and sea management.

Ms Rachel Reese, Manager – Strategy Development, provided information on the Assessment and Decision Enhancement Project. There will be a particular emphasis on the Indigenous heritage values that may be impacted by future activities and GBRMPA will investigate how to improve the considerations of the Indigenous cultural values in the new permit decision-making procedures.

Ms Kerrie Jocusen, Manager – Indigenous Heritage Strategy, gave a presentation on the development of the Indigenous Heritage Strategy as part of the overarching GBRMPA Heritage Strategy. The IRAC endorsed the draft project plan and two Members volunteered to be involved in discussions around data sharing protocols and streamlining TUMRA reporting.

Mr Fred Nucifora, Director – Reef HQ, provided background information on the Reef HQ facility and introduced the need to have greater Traditional Owner input into improving how the facility showcases connections to country and co-management activities. IRAC members toured the facility and provided their ideas and aspirations to progress this action.

Ms Donna Audas, Manager Coastal Ecosystems, gave a presentation on the Coastal Ecosystems Programme and the impacts that are affecting the health of the catchments which feed into the Great Barrier Reef. Traditional Owners responded with awareness of these impacts which has been an ongoing concern. Traditional Owner connections to country make them best placed to understand how upstream habitats will affect the coastal ecosystems and, ultimately, the Great Barrier Reef.

Mr Peter Brockhurst, Project Coordinator with the Gidarjil Aboriginal Corporation in Bundaberg, provided information on the Reef 2050 Long Term Sustainability Plan – Indigenous Implementation Plan Consultation Project. This Project will involve consulting with Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owners to identify which of the twenty-three (23) Traditional Owner-led actions in the Long Term Sustainability Plan are the priorities over the short, medium and long terms and which groups have the capacity to undertake all or some of these actions.

Ms Celeste Powell, Director, Reef 2050 Plan Section, Reef Branch, Commonwealth Department of the Environment in Canberra, presented information on the Reef Trust and advised that funding is provided for (a) improve water quality and coastal habitats, (b) address threats to the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and (c) protect, repair or mitigate damage.

Mr Jason Vains, Project Manager – Reef 2050 section, provided information on the Policies being developed under the Reef 2050 Plan – in particular Cumulative Impacts, Offsets and Net Benefits. As part of the implementation of the policies, case studies will be developed to showcase existing programs/strategies which deliver on the policies. Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRA) is one of these tools. The IRAC participated in a SWOT analysis of TUMRA as a tool. The feedback was highly beneficial to showcase how TUMRA's can deliver cumulative impact management and deliver Net benefits and offsets.