



TOURISM REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMMUNIQUE Meeting 10, 30 and 31 October 2018 – Townsville

The Tourism Reef Advisory Committee (the Committee) was established in 2014 to provide advice to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (the Authority) on tourism matters relating to implementation of the Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2014, the Great Barrier Reef Region Strategic Assessment and Program Report and the Reef 2050 Long-term Sustainability Plan. The Committee is competency-based with members providing a cross-section of stakeholder expertise and interests in areas relevant to tourism and recreational use of the Great Barrier Reef. The Committee is appointed for a three-year period and Ms Glenys Schuntner is the independent Chair. Membership details and earlier communiques are available on the Authority's [website](#).

Ms Glenys Schuntner acknowledged the Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owners of the Townsville region and their Elders, both past, present and emerging.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority General Update

The Committee noted the update provided by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (the Authority), including: reef health, moving to a new premises; the appointment of Dr Ian Poiner as Chairperson of the Marine Park Authority Board; progress of the 2019 Outlook Report; and progress of Reef 2050 Plan actions.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Tourism Update

The Committee noted the tourism update provided by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (the Authority) including: environmental management charge figures to 30 June 2018; progress on the development of the Reef Discovery Course; progress of the Master Reef Guide Program; Eye on the Reef statistics and findings; status of the High Standard Tourism Operator Program; updates on EduTourism and Reef HQ education; and an update on recent marine incidents in the Whitsundays Region.

Members Update

The Committee noted the reports from members.

Members reported a downturn in visitation (since the last meeting) due to: discounted outbound international flights reduced domestic tourism to the northern and central regions; TigerAir no longer flying to Townsville; continuing rebuild works on islands in the Whitsunday Region.

Members were positive about the completion of rebuild works on islands in the Whitsundays and the expansion of the Prosperpine airport.

Expansion of the Field Management Program

The Committee noted the update on compliance activities undertaken, and the expansion of the Reef Joint Field Management Program.

Through discussions, members enquired on the costs of the vessel tracking system for small commercial operators to understand cost to operators after the implementation of the rebate package.

Reef Tourism Changes and Industry Adaptation Research Needs

The Committee noted the findings of the Social and Economic Long Term Monitoring Program 2017 surveys, which identified changes in the state of Reef tourism from 2013 to 2017.

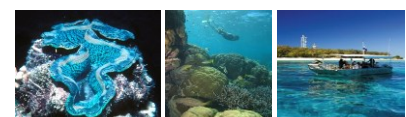
The Committee provided the following advice on research needs and opportunities: use communications and marketing expertise to communicate this research to industry ensuring a balanced view; study on perceptions of visitors in relation to underwater structures; research on risk management and business resilience in Great Barrier Reef tourism.

Position Statements

The Committee noted the ongoing work to develop position statements, commenting they are a great initiative, and the Committee is keen to continue to provide advice.

The Committee provided advice on the marine debris position statement to ensure it is relevant for readers, tells a story and guides readers to access more information.

The Committee also provided advice on key messages and implementation of the marine debris, climate change and coastal ecosystems positions statements. They highlighted the need to include positive actions that currently occur, and to identify new actions. Members also encouraged the used of current programs and initiatives to drive action.



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End of Term Report

The Committee noted the requirements under the Charter of Operation to complete an end of term summary report of the Committee's operations, an assessment of effectiveness against the Terms of Reference and an evaluation of membership and attendance.

The Committee noted the information supplied in the *Survey Results* and the *draft Tourism Reef Advisory Committee, End of Term Summary Report*.

Based on the draft End of Term Summary Report, the Members advised that the operations of the Committee were effective when taking into consideration the *Tourism Reef Advisory Committee Terms of Reference*.

The Committee provided recommendations on improvements to the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Reef Advisory Committees, Charter of Operation, 2nd Revision November 2009, including the Terms of Reference*.

The Committee recommends the continuation of the Reef Advisory Committees for another term to provide advice to the Authority on the management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Other recommendations related to the operational improvements of the Committee.

Tourism Response Plan

This item was added into the agenda by Members following recent marine incidents in the Whitsunday Region.

The Committee discussed the Marine Tourism Coordination Framework for Environmental Incidents, which covers the entire Great Barrier Reef Region for major incidents such as coral bleaching and cyclones.

The Committee noted that tourism operators should work with their Regional Tourism Organisations to develop communications strategies to address localised incidents that pose a reputational risk to the regional tourism industry.

Strategic Roadmap for policy and planning

The Committee noted the progress on the risk based approach to planning.

The Committee provided the advice (through workshop outcomes) on key planning tools (plans of management, permissions and policy), specifically where tools are functioning effectively, could be improved or where there may now be opportunities.

The Committee also provided advice (through workshop outcomes) on the relative risks of key uses of the Marine Park (tourism, recreation and facilities to help prioritise the work on the roadmap.

Strengthening the High Standard Tourism Operator Program

The Committee noted the presentation provided on the High Standard Tourism Operator Program.

The Committee provided advice on strengthening the High Standard Tourism Operator Program into the future which included: continue to ensure operators obtain eco-certification, then additional criteria (such as compliance) to confirm an operator as high standard.

The Committee requested the Authority consider a vision and objectives for strengthening the program and bring to the Committee for advice.

Other business

Members discussed permissions and responsibilities of underwater art, which is being proposed in the Whitsunday and Townsville.

