



TOURISM REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMMUNIQUE

Meeting No. 24 – 22 July 2025

The current term of the Tourism Reef Advisory Committee (the Committee) was established in 2023 to provide advice to the Marine Park Authority Board, through the Reef Authority, on tourism matters. The Committee is appointed for a three-year term. The independent Chairperson of the Committee is Mr Daniel Gschwind.

Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country

The Chairperson welcomed the Committee to the 24th meeting of the Tourism Reef Advisory Committee (TRAC) and Ms Chrissy Grant delivered an Acknowledgement of Country.

Reef Authority update

The Reef Authority provided updates on a range of topics including:

- the recent appointments following the Federal election
- a high-level overview of the agency's focus areas for 2025–26 as part of the Annual Operating Plan
- highlighted a forum on resilience-based management of the Great Barrier Reef (2025 Reef Forum) will be held in October 2025
- a summary on the agency's representation at the United Nations Ocean Conference and International Union for Conservation, and
- updates from the latest World Heritage Committee meeting.

Member updates

Members discussed a range of industry updates including business trends and operations, challenges, and some site-specific Reef health information. Members identified some emerging opportunities for Reef Authority support at national and international trade events. Members shared proactive steps being taken to enhance business operations and protection of the Reef.

Members noted their support for the updated TRAC Charter, subject to minor amendments, and noted the resignation of Ms Gayle O'Brien, Queensland State Government representative.

Southern Plan of Management

The Committee received an update on the development of the Southern Plan of Management including the Sea Country values mapping workshops undertaken with Traditional Owners and early engagement with southern Great Barrier Reef tourism operators. The Committee noted that project engagement has also occurred with Local Marine Advisory Committees.

The Committee expressed support for further involvement in the stakeholder engagement process as part of this project. The Reef Authority highlighted that this program was in the preliminary stage of stakeholder engagement and that further opportunities on engagement will be developed to support this approach.

Reef Restoration and Adaptation Intervention Options

Reef Authority staff from across agency sections delivered a presentation to the Committee providing an overview on Reef interventions, permissions including managing activities and research, challenges and opportunities.

A representative from the Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water, also provided an update on the Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program including a governance review.

The Committee discussed and provided advice on current approaches to Reef interventions at tourism sites and expressed support for the collaborative approach and the use of necessary interventions where appropriate to support the Reef's resilience and rehabilitation.

Working With Traditional Owners

Mr Fiona Merida, Director – Strategic Engagement and Education gave a presentation on working with Traditional Owners through the Master Reef Guide program. The Committee noted the tangible benefits of the program such as supporting on-country visits and capacity building, for both Tourism Operators and Traditional Owners. The Committee acknowledged their strong support for the program and the value it provides.

Crown-Of-Thorns Starfish (COTS) Control Program Update

Dr David Williamson, Assistant Director – Crown-of-thorns Starfish (COTS) Control Program, delivered a presentation on the ongoing development and status of the Crown-of-thorns Starfish Control Program including a status update on the program's achievements and the work program/schedule for the planning and prioritisation of target reefs for the year-ahead. It was noted that the program now includes a First Nations business as a supplier for delivering the COTS program, and how the program is also facilitating involvement, supporting capacity building, and enabling on-country visits.

The Committee noted the ongoing development of the program.

Reef Guardian Councils Update

Ms Rebecca Allen, Assistant Director – Strategic Engagement, provided an update on the Reef Guardian Councils program which included an overview of the program's achievements to date. The program involves an extensive network of influence including members from 20 Local Government Areas and covers at least 90% of the coastline. The program received \$17.8M from the Federal government over a 3 year-period from 2023–24 to 2025–26, enabling 47 projects, which support delivery of Reef 2050 Plan, to be delivered.

The Committee discussed the projects and their connections to their Local Government as an industry.