

A summary document is prepared after each meeting of the Reef Advisory Committee to inform other advisory committees serving the Authority, and persons generally (including the public), of business of the RAC. The document forms part of the records of the meeting and so its content is limited to matters raised in the meeting, and, where necessary, background details given to the meeting. Any inquiries should be referred to the Authority's Secretariat, or to the appropriate Member.

CONSERVATION, BIODIVERSITY AND WORLD HERITAGE REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE

8th Meeting

7 and 8 August 2002 – Townsville

SUMMARY DOCUMENT

REPRESENTATIVE AREAS PROGRAM (RAP) UPDATE

Members were given an overview of the first formal community participation phase of RAP advising that the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) had made considerable effort to consult with a range of stakeholders and communities to inform them of the program, and to request submissions.

Members sought points of clarification on various aspects of the first formal community participation phase and raised the following points:

- The first community participation phase did not engage the broader Australian community;
- It is important there is opportunity to get conflicting stakeholders around the table discussing contentious areas; and
- Distributing a RAP timetable would assist stakeholders in preparing quality submissions in the second phase.

Members provided the following feedback on areas that can be improved in the community participation phase:

- A statement outlining what other closures are in the Marine Park in the draft zoning plan, is required;
- The GBRMPA should improve the media coverage outside the Marine Park and adjacent area;
- Engage the broader Australian public;

- A summary document outlining the process undertaken to develop the draft zoning plan will be useful;
- Emphasise the benefits for biodiversity from RAP/rezoning; and
- All material regarding the RAP process should provide information on Indigenous issues.

The Committee sought early advice from the GBRMPA on the next stage, the preparation of the draft zoning plan (DZP). In particular, the following aspects:

- 1 The timetable for the DZP preparation;
- 2 The methodology for analysis of the public submissions in the initial communication phase;
- 3 The basis for zoning;
- 4 The timing and process for informal consultations with community groups;
- 5 How the wider Australian community might be engaged in the next phase;
- 6 The process for consultation with Indigenous communities; and
- 7 How the Conservation RAC might assist these processes.

The Committee recognised the enormous effort by the Authority and its staff from all areas in addressing issues of concern for community groups arising from the RAP process, for example the one-on-one contact with fisheries groups. In particular, the personal involvement of the Chair and senior staff was a very positive outcome.

DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIES COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Members were advised that the Species Conservation Group have developed a Species Conservation Communications Strategy in an attempt to identify the focal species dealt with by the Species Conservation Program of the GBRMPA and the best ways to create a greater awareness about particular issues associated with species.

Members were asked to provide comments on the Communication Strategy and provided the following suggestions:

- Determine clear objectives and then implement a method of determining if objectives are being achieved;
- Need to clearly identify target audience;
- Do not limit the strategy to threatened species, include information about full ecosystems;
- Highlight the benefits of management action; and
- Determine how this strategy is going to be taken to Indigenous communities.

Members also suggested the use of video footage, web-based products and utilising available display space in the Queensland and Australia Museums to display information were useful mechanisms for taking the message to the public.

FOLLOW-UP ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES RELEVANT TO CONSERVATION, BIODIVERSITY AND WORLD HERITAGE

The GBRMPA are looking to implement better mechanisms to communicate with Indigenous communities on issues affecting them and the Marine Park. One proposal being considered by the GBRMPA is the establishment of 'traditional hunting forums'. Members noted the proposal and stressed that traditional hunting forums needed to address wider issues of concern to Indigenous communities, such as capacity building and infrastructure development, and clear objectives for such forums need to be developed jointly and agreed with Indigenous communities.

The Committee also discussed and raised a variety of issues concerning the current strategic framework for addressing Indigenous issues in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWHA). Points of discussion were as follows:

- The Great Barrier Reef Consultative Committee could be an appropriate forum to consider a

strategic framework for addressing Indigenous issues as an early priority;

- Financial resources for capacity building and infrastructure needed to be addressed in the context of traditional hunting;
- Additional mechanisms for engagement of Indigenous communities needed to be considered, including, an Indigenous critical issues group and related advisory committee and 'pilot projects';
- Promote the special relationship between Indigenous communities and the Great Barrier Reef in the GBRMPA's general communication strategy; and
- Taking time to get the framework for negotiations right would assist the GBRMPA and traditional owners in negotiating detailed issues.

The Committee acknowledged that the GBRMPA is one of many agencies, peak bodies and community groups addressing Indigenous issues relevant to conservation, biodiversity and world heritage. The Committee recognises that this issue connects to all other critical issues in the GBRWHA.

DRAFT PERIODIC REPORT FOR THE GBRWHA

Members were advised that the aim of the GBRWHA Periodic Report is to produce a document to go in an Australia-wide report which is a part of the Asia Pacific report. The Asia Pacific Periodic Report includes 96 world heritage sites.

The Committee was asked to give final endorsement of the report before it is submitted.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is proposed for November 2002.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

Mr Doug Baird	Tourism and Recreation
Ms Kate Davey	NGO, Conservation
Mr Jon Day	GBRMPA
Dr Pat Hutchings	NGO, Ecologist
Mr Bruce Leaver	Environment Australia
Mr Ted Loveday	QSLA
Prof Helene Marsh	Scientific Community
Ms Melissa Nursey-Bray	Conservation
Mr Peter Ogilvie	QPWS
Assoc Prof Stephan Schnierer	Indigenous
Mr Tim Smith	Water Quality Coastal Issues
Mr Peter Valentine	Conservation, Protected Area Management
Mr Simon Woodley (Chairperson)	Research
Ms Imogen Zethoven	NGO, Conservation