



TOURISM REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMMUNIQUE Meeting 11 – 28 and 29 May 2019 – Townsville

The current term of 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, the Wulgurukaba and Bindal peoples, and their Elders, both past, present and emerging.

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: a new structure for the Education and Stewardship Section, outline of how tourism matters are managed across the Authority, an update on the milestones achieved in the pilot Master Reef Guide Program, and an overview of recent engagement at tourism trade events.

The Committee recommended the Authority carefully considers who it engages for the third-year of the Master Reef Guide Program implementation to ensure consistency and quality.

The Committee recommended the Authority commence planning beyond the three-year pilot Master Reef Guide Program.

The Committee recommended the Authority continues to support tourism trade events, and broadens attendance to one-two more reputable events, providing the authoritative voice for the Reef and supporting the Reef tourism industry.

The Committee recommended the Authority considers applying for the Tourism for Tomorrow award for the stewardship programs being delivered.

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: welcoming the Authority's new Chief Executive Officer, update on the federal election results, recent meetings of the Marine Park Authority Board, new office in Gladstone, and a reef health update.

The Committee encouraged the Authority to utilise the expertise and knowledge of Committee Members in meetings with Minister's if the opportunity arises.

Members Update

The Committee noted the reports from members.

Members reported a continued downturn in visitation which is due to many factors. Members recognised that the cruise ship tourism industry is growing, both across Australia and within the Great Barrier Reef. Some industry operators are making use of the Great Barrier Reef Foundation Grants, and through approved projects are implementing monitoring and restoration projects. Islands within the Whitsunday region are reopening 2-years after Cyclone Debbie, the implementation of the *Tourism and Events Queensland Great Barrier Reef Framework 2018-2025* continues.

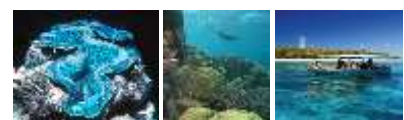
Ecotourism Australia – Improvements and Tools

The Committee noted the update on the improvements to Ecotourism Australia's ECO Certification process with the inclusion of a carbon emissions calculator.

The Committee noted the update on the introduction of the community-focussed Low Carbon Communities – pilot project in Port Douglas.

The Committee noted the update on the introduction of Ecotourism Destination Certification – first destination certification on the Reef: The Shire of Douglas.

The Committee explored opportunities created by the new initiatives and improvements and advised that: workshops should be run for operators to measure their carbon emissions; operators should be able to extract historical data of their carbon information and get benchmark reporting information based on other like businesses; Ecotourism Australia should consider engaging with Reef Guardian Councils and Local Marine Advisory Committees in relation to the low carbon communities and destination certification.



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Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program

The Committee noted the progress on the Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program.

The Committee advised that at a local scale in the Whitsundays, the industry has been excited about trial coral gardening. It is an opportunity to better engage with customers. Members suggested that strategic locations are considered when implementing initiatives.

The Committee highly recommended that the Program Managers continue to engage the Committee moving forward as a logical and expedient way to engage with the industry. The Committee can provide advice on the concerns of industry, and provide guidance on who to engage with and road-test messaging.

Environmental Management Charge

The Committee noted the information in the paper and the associated presentation that focussed: on enhancements to the Environmental Management Charge (EMC) portal, messaging that operators can use to explain EMC to visitors, the EMC increase which comes into effect on 1 April 2020, and EMC visitation data and overall statistics on EMC compliance actions.

The Committee recommended the Authority consider how the EMC messaging can be used with e-ticketing, and with stronger messaging for tourism operators to use, promoting the benefits of the EMC.

Policy and Planning Roadmap, Streamlining Permissions

The Committee noted the progress on the strategic roadmap and the work being undertaken as part of the risk-based solutions to the permissions project.

The Committee provided advice on permit conditions, specifically how they are functioning effectively and who they can be improved.

The Committee provided advice on permit-related educational materials, specifically what types of information should be easily accessible and available to assist operators in complying with legislative obligations and permit conditions.

Tourism Sector Stakeholder Identification and Prioritisation

The Committee provided advice through a workshop session on what the Authority does well, and what the Authority could strengthen in relation to tourism partnerships, consultation and engagement.

The Committee provided advice through a workshop session on who the Authority should be engaging with, from a tourism perspective, and what is the level of stakeholder interest and influence in relation to Authority business.

Future Tourism Reef Advisory Committee

The Committee noted the changes made to the Reef Advisory Committee Charter of Operation.

The Committee noted the changes made to the Tourism Reef Advisory Committee Terms of Reference.

The Committee noted the process and proposed timeframes for selection of a Tourism Reef Advisory Committee for the 2019-2022 term.

The Committee did not recommend a Marine Park Authority Board Member becoming the Chairperson of the Committee, but welcomed the Board Member becoming a Committee Member.

Information Papers

The Committee noted the update on the Authority's work with the Great Barrier Reef Foundation under the Reef Trust Partnership grant.

The Committee noted that two National Environmental Science Program projects on Great Barrier Reef aesthetics monitoring are underway in 2019-20, which will seek to engage tourism industry representatives in the monitoring program design and trial data collection, from June 2019 onwards.

Thank you and Farewell

Members noted the work delivered by the Committee during the 2014-2019 term including: across 10 formal meetings, reviewing 96 information papers and providing insight and recommendations on 65 advice papers on a range of projects and management actions of the Authority. Providing advice and recommendations at the Reef Symposium (Reef Blueprint for Resilience).

Members noted the acknowledgement from the Authority on the Committee's contribution and ongoing support of the Authority.

Five members were acknowledged for their dedication and contribution over multiple Committee terms: Mr Daniel Gschwind, Mr David Morgans, Mr Tony Baker, Mr Col McKenzie and Mr Tony Charters.

