



## FISHERIES REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FRAC)

### 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting

6 and 7 March 2008 – Townsville

## SUMMARY DOCUMENT

The 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the FRAC was held in Townsville on 6 and 7 March 2008. A summary of the outcomes of the main items discussed is set out below.

### INSHORE FINFISH REVIEW

#### *Process for the Review and public meetings*

Members were briefed on the process for the Inshore Finfish Fishery Review and recent public meetings conducted by the QDPI&F along the east coast.

- Stage 1 of QDPI&F's Inshore Finfish Fishery Review (currently underway) is to review management arrangements for the fishery and develop a new set of draft management arrangements
- A future Stage 2 of the Review will establish a regional consultation process to consider local management issues, including resource allocation.
- The Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) responses close 17 March 2008. A summary of responses will go to the next Management Advisory Committee (MAC) in April.
- The GBRMPA did not support all of the proposals in the RIS, and there is a need for further discussions between the Queensland and Commonwealth governments.
- The QDPI&F intends to complete MAC and working group discussions by the end of May. The Minister has requested draft arrangements to be developed by September.

#### *Implications of proposals for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park*

Members were asked to consider implications for the GBRMP of the proposed fishery management arrangements. Much of the fishery operates within the GBR Marine Park and World Heritage Area. Members were asked to consider the following topics: Future vision for the fishery; Long-term sustainability issues for sharks and rays (including values to Marine Aquarium Fish Fishery); Adequacy of management arrangements for protected species, including dugong; Regional management issues; and Information needs and mechanisms to improve collection of fishery data.

Members' comments included:

- A fishery management plan is welcomed, however, there are concerns about how well the proposals position the fishery for the future.
- One of industry's common criticisms is that no attempt is made to try to factor in the potential benefits of marine protected areas.
- A high level of latent effort is an issue in this fishery, and it was recommended that the QDPI&F Inshore MAC establish an Effort Working Group to address this issue.
- Latent effort could be addressed by using an effort-based unitisation model.

- There would be sustainability issues if the latent capacity were to be taken up. Allocation of fishing units based on past history could help in managing this problem.
- It is important that Stage 2 of the Review is undertaken in an extremely timely way to address resource allocation and regional management issues, and FRAC members offered their input to QDPI&F.
- Shark fisheries generally are a growing concern to governments. The Commonwealth Government has a number of concerns with the proposals.
- Discussions between the Commonwealth and Queensland regarding sharks would be around the adequacy of data and management arrangements.
- There is a need to be precautionary in developing arrangements for sharks, and a need for governments to talk more to resolve outstanding issues.
- The capture of shark for the marine aquarium trade has not been addressed to date in the Review, and the FRAC recommended that QDPI&F's Shark Working Group include consideration of this sector.
- The QDPI&F Dugong Protection Area Working Group was established primarily to resolve two outstanding Ministerial Council issues (definition of headlands and requirements for net attendance).
- The test for the Inshore proposals under Part 13 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* will be, do they take all reasonable steps to protect all protected species. Additional measures to those proposed may be needed for recovery of dugong populations.
- The GBRMPA recognises there is a range of impacts on dugongs, and is taking action where possible to reduce overall impacts. To achieve recovery, there should be fewer than 10 dugong deaths from all human-related causes along the urban coast (from Cooktown south), so it is very important to reduce impacts where possible, including from netting.

Regarding protected species interactions: 1) there is an urgent requirement for confidence that the dugong population is in a recovery phase as opposed to a declining phase and 2) the test for the Inshore FinFish proposals is that not only is there no greater risk to dugong populations from the proposals in the RIS, but, where possible, there are reduced impacts/risks.

### SUSTAINABLE FISHING IN THE GBRMP

The discussion focused on the proposed position statement regarding sustainable fishing in the GBRMP, requested by FRAC members at the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

Members' comments included:

- We need to think about what the vision is for fishing in a World Heritage Area, such as the GBR. The EPBC Act

implements Australia's obligations under a range of international conventions such as the World Heritage Convention. The Act is not about fisheries management, it is about environmental outcomes expected from all fisheries. Regarding fishing in the GBRMP/World Heritage Areas, the Australian Government expects best practice fisheries management and is focused on outcomes.

- The DEWHA is very committed to not only a whole-of-government approach but a shared vision, incorporating views for all sectors and stakeholders.
- The NGO sector expects progress on what is best practice. Collaborative teams are a way forward.
- The EPBC process has been valuable in upgrading fisheries management and deliverables. It is a separate process from area-based management and the role of the GBRMPA in relation to fishing issues.
- There is a need for operators to know where they are at and what is expected of them. Where will benchmark to be set?
- The difficulty will be in maintaining simplicity. The EPBC process has been an invaluable one for industry and relies on having confidence within different management agencies. Agencies need to trust each other.
- A quota system should be introduced on all commercial species. This would cap the take of each species and make management of the fishery simpler.
- There is a need to understand the different drivers for each of the people using the Marine Park ('sustainability' means different things to different people.)
- The GBRMPA is aiming for an integrated ecosystem approach so there are good links, inclusivity and involvement across everyone in the community.

There was discussion about the objectives of each agency and the need to identify common ground which, in turn, will improve certainty for fishers. Challenges include keeping the statement simple, developing collaborative approaches and improving the timeliness of management processes. The need for a shared vision was identified as vital in the development of the position statement.

It was concluded the GBRMPA should progress what the management of "use" of the World Heritage Area means and requires, and produce a position statement, focusing first on the statement of intent.

### **SOCIO-ECONOMICS: USE OF ECONOMIC INFORMATION IN MARINE PARK MANAGEMENT**

A project was commenced in February in which economic consultants were engaged to identify potential economic tools to support better fisheries resource management in the GBRMP, identify the information gaps, and prioritise future social and economic research which would be required to use these tools. A draft report will be prepared by early June and the final report will be produced by the end of June.

- The consultants need to be made aware of who key stakeholders are so dialog can commence. There is also a need to source primary data.
- Economic tools and useful techniques will be scoped. Economic impacts will be kept separate and a social study is also needed.
- There is a need to refine the GBRMPA's monitoring of economic and financial values.

Members commented that:

- It may be worthwhile to split recreational from commercial fishing because management arrangements differ.
- Fleet economics exhibit significant regional variation. We need to be extremely cautious when representing the view of stakeholders because their drivers may be quite different.

- Further clarity is required about scope and outputs.

It was agreed that mechanisms should be established by the GBRMPA regarding engagement with the QDPI&F, the DEWHA and the QEPA about what this project can contribute to each of their work programs. There are obvious commonalities of interest and potential duplication. A follow-up session will be done at the next FRAC.

### **GBR OUTLOOK REPORT UPDATE – FISHERIES**

Members were provided an update on progress with the development of the core values section on fishing. The final report needs to be with the Minister in 2009. The proposed Outlook Forum (in mid-2008) will be composed of a collection of experts from a variety of disciplines. The forum will consider the various assessments of the report (biodiversity, ecosystem health, commercial and non-commercial use et cetera) as well as supporting information as a basis for developing the outlook.

- The document must capture the status quo, how that point was reached and its likely shape in the future. One of the dilemmas is ensuring current fisheries data is captured.
- The aim is to obtain an integrated snapshot across all fisheries operating in the area. There will be a spatial focus.
- It is important to focus on ecosystem function when considering interactions across fisheries and with any other synergistic factors.

Members commented:

- Hopefully this initiative will encourage an ongoing investment in fundamental information systems across governments, which are shared and publicly available.
- Data resolution and the question of appropriate scale are challenges.
- How does information provided for the Outlook Report interact with research priorities?
- It was requested that recent progress, such as coastal zoning, be recognised in the report.
- Why consider socio-economic factors if the intent is to assess ecosystem health?
- There is concern about a lack of information systems to inform evidence-based management systems. Concern was also shared about the currency and adequacy of data sets. The advice from the FRAC was to keep it simple and focus on trends.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is proposed for 19 and 20 August 2008.

#### **CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE**

Mr David Bateman .....	Recreational Fishing
Mr Craig Bohm .....	Conservation
Mr Wayne Butcher .....	Indigenous
Mr Bruce Wallner .....	GBRMPA
Mr Kevin Chard .....	Spear fishing
Mr James Gillespie .	Qld Dept Primary Industries and Fisheries
Mr Bob Grimley .....	Qld Boating and Fisheries Patrol
Mr Stephen Jeston.....	Fishing Guide
Mr Ray Joyce .....	Charter Fishing
Mr Richard Leck .....	Conservation
Mr Andrew McNee .....	Dept of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts
To Be Appointed .....	Qld Environmental Protection Agency
Mr Lyle Squire Jnr .....	Commercial Dive-based Fishing
Ms Diane Tarte .....	Independent Chairman
Dr Andrew Tobin .....	Commercial Fishing
Mr Gary Wicks .....	Commercial Fishing
Dr David Williams .....	Scientific Community