# CONSERVATION, BIODIVERSITY AND WORLD HERITAGE REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## 2nd Meeting

## 27 and 28 April 2000 – Townsville

# SUMMARY DOCUMENT

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 documents form 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.

## REPRESENTATIVE AREAS PROGRAM (RAP) UPDATE

### Objectives

The Committee considered a paper seeking to clarify the position of the RAP objectives in the Hierarchy of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) objectives and other national objectives.  The following issues were discussed:

- The connection between RAP and species recovery plans;
- The relevance of the RAP for other national programs;
- The relationship between the RAP and obligations under international conventions;
- A flowchart showing clear relationships between the RAP process and other processes;
- Clear, achievable and measurable objectives, with a hierarchy of objectives;
- The relationship between performance indicators and the hierarchy of objectives;

- Community information gathering and monitoring systems should be considered, including for the involvement, identification and selection of indicator species in candidate areas; and
- The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park could be promoted as a Biosphere Reserve, for an additional international context.

The Committee requested a report be prepared, advising mechanisms that exist for the GBRMPA to be aware of implications, obligations and opportunities arising from international conventions, especially in relation to Indigenous issues.

### Targets

Also discussed were the pros and cons of setting targets in establishing protected areas, using examples from other national reserve selection programs.

The Committee requested a paper be prepared for discussion at the next

meeting, concerning the value of ecosystem services. It was suggested this is an important issue for cultural reasons.

## Draft Communication Strategy

The Committee considered a paper that set out the objectives of a Communication Plan for the Representative Areas Program, including the role of communication in the Program. The following issues were discussed:

- It is important to distinguish between consultation and participation;
- Traditional owners should be seen as a separate group, rather than stakeholders or customers;
- Ensure there are meaningful, transparent, face-to-face consultation with key groups;
- Ensure there are consistent, transparent, clear messages, especially in relation to explaining the analytical model to be used;
- Ensure there are effective strategies for improving ownership of outcomes; and
- Ensure there is targeted consultation with key groups, including conservation groups, traditional owners and local government, rather than broad-brush communication.

## Operational Principles for Identification of Candidate Areas

The Committee was advised of the logic behind the RAP program, noting that the primary emphasis is to get representative examples of each bioregion in highly protected areas, whilst simultaneously rezoning, picking up Categories III to VI and other planning changes.

The Committee considered a paper relating to the identification of candidate areas, and final selection of a subset of

these areas for protection. This selection will be guided by a set of Operational Principles that have been developed by experts, with advice from Advisory Committee members, and managers. The following issue was identified:

- The need for the criteria to be worded in language consistent with established wording in other documents.

## SPECIES CONSERVATION

The Committee considered a report, prepared at the request of the Committee, outlining the strategic direction and work priorities of the Species Conservation team. The following suggestions were made:

- Threatening processes should be added to the criteria for selection of species for protection;
- The scientific basis for species protection selection should be clearly communicated to communities, especially Indigenous communities;
- Reference to other relevant legislation (e.g., Queensland Fisheries Act) should be included; and
- Reference to migratory species protection arising from the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act should be included.

There are currently three publications available (another three in draft form), which contain valuable information regarding the species found within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.