



INDIGENOUS REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE (IRAC) 6th Meeting – 24 and 25 July 2012 – Townsville SUMMARY DOCUMENT

GBRMPA's REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEES

There are four Reef Advisory Committees (RACs): Catchment and Coastal; Ecosystem; Indigenous; and Tourism and Recreation RAC.

The RACs are competency-based committees comprising a cross-section of stakeholder interests with expertise and experience in relevant areas. The role of the RACs is to provide issues-based advice to the GBRMPA on operational issues. Each RAC shall work closely with staff of the relevant branch and sections, to ensure that policy development and strategic direction are developed in consultation with stakeholders.

The RACs are appointed for a term of three years, and members are eligible for reappointment. Each of the RACs includes Indigenous representation. Some members are appointed as a representative of a particular group or sector (e.g. industry, recreational, government), or for their linkages to Traditional Owner Groups. All RAC members are expected to adopt a broad perspective on issues that are addressed, mindful of the objectives of the relevant section or branch and of the GBRMPA's corporate priorities.

The Indigenous RAC (IRAC) provides strategic-level advice to the GBRMPA on the management of matters that relate to Indigenous Partnerships.

The 6th meeting of the IRAC was held in Townsville on 24 and 25 July 2012.

The Chairman paid respect to the Traditional Owners and acknowledged their traditional land and sea country in the Townsville region.

A summary of the outcomes of the main items discussed is set out below.

REEF RESCUE LAND AND SEA COUNTRY INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

Members were provided an overview of the Reef Rescue Land and Sea Country Indigenous Partnerships Program (RRLSCIPP), and of the various projects and activities implemented during the five years of the Program.

The Committee noted that the RRLSCIPP is in its final year of funding. Based on the success of this Program, the Committee recommended that the GBRMPA advocates strongly to Caring for Our Country and Federal Ministers for future funding post 2013.

The Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement (TUMRA) component of the RRLSCIPP, which seeks to expand the number of TUMRAs in the Great Barrier Reef, should be emphasised as a priority, as the TUMRA program become a preferred management tool for some GBR Traditional Owners to engage Commonwealth and State Government agencies in Marine Park management.

INDIGENOUS MATTERS RELATING TO HERITAGE OBLIGATIONS

Members were briefed on the requirement for the GBRMPA to undertake a review of the 2005 *Heritage Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef*, in order to meet heritage obligations and to feed into the current Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area Strategic Assessment process. Advice was sought from members on Indigenous matters that should be addressed in the revised Heritage Strategy.

The Committee sees this review as an important opportunity to further recognise the Indigenous values of the Great Barrier Reef and, as such, recommended that the review of the Strategy be given high priority in the GBRMPA's work program for 2012-2013.

Members agreed a comprehensive review of the Indigenous component of the Heritage Strategy would provide overarching direction for other work that is currently being done at the GBRMPA (namely the Strategic Assessment and Biodiversity Strategy), and would provide a reference point for the description of Indigenous values that these other documents could use.

Members noted the short timeframe for an initial review to occur in order for the Heritage Strategy to contribute in a meaningful way to the Strategic Assessment work. The Committee recommended, therefore, that the GBRMPA considers dedicating staff resources in this year's Annual Operating Plan in order for the review of the Heritage Strategy to be done in a way that ensures the Indigenous component is comprehensively covered, and the Indigenous information collected is available for use by the Strategic Assessment team.

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK FOR THE REEF RESCUE LAND AND SEA COUNTRY INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

Members were briefed on the proposal to conduct a large five-year evaluation process during 2012-2013 of the RRLSCIPP implementation.

The Committee provided advice on the evaluation framework and the key messages and analysis that they considered would be useful for the evaluation to include. The evaluation will identify Traditional Owners as a key audience for reporting purposes, and Traditional Owners and stakeholders involved

in the Program will be involved in the data collection and reporting mechanisms.

Members suggested this review could be seen as a chance to identify the work that was successful, as well as areas that could be improved on if future funding was to be secured.

TRADITIONAL OWNER ENGAGEMENT

The Committee is keen to meet with and hear from Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef on a number of issues. Opportunities for members to speak with Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owners may arise from the work that is being undertaken by the GBRMPA's Indigenous Partnerships Group, through the RRLSCIPP. One particular workshop that is being arranged for TUMRA holders may present an engagement opportunity and, with the permission of the Traditional Owners, available IRAC members would like to be invited to the meeting as observers.

Another meeting opportunity was identified for the next IRAC meeting, which is scheduled for November 2012. The Committee would like to invite interested TUMRA holders to participate in this IRAC meeting, to discuss a variety of issues including general sea country issues, and possible membership for the next round of the RAC.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Committee has been discussing, for some time, the need for a strategic planning meeting with Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owners. This meeting would be an opportunity for a few members of the IRAC to work with Traditional Owners on establishing Indigenous engagement mechanisms for sea country matters. In order for this to proceed, the IRAC will seek support from the GBRMPA to invite several Traditional Owners to a facilitated meeting to progress this important issue.

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY AND WORLD WILDLIFE FUND FOR NATURE (WWF)

Members received a presentation from The Nature Conservancy on its work in Northern Australia. The Committee agreed that having The Nature Conservancy represented on the IRAC was a positive way of exchanging ideas and presenting opportunities for both organisations to have influence in the Sea Country space.

Another presentation was delivered by a guest from WWF, who presented a comprehensive overview on the work WWF is doing with Indigenous communities, particularly Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef. A lively discussion on the WWF organisation's approach and philosophy on Indigenous rights and Indigenous hunting issues followed the presentation.

The Committee noted the importance of relationships with both organisations, and encouraged the GBRMPA to provide information to

Traditional Owners that the WWF could be a potential funding source to be utilised for sea country work. It was also pointed out that The Nature Conservancy is currently developing an Oceans (Sea Country) component to its business plan that may be of interest to the GBRMPA in future.

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN 2007-2012

Members were briefed on the implementation of the *Great Barrier Reef Climate Change Action Plan 2007-2012* and the development of a second action plan.

The Committee was asked to consider potential Indigenous project ideas that could be developed for the second plan, 2013-18. Members were encouraged to submit any suggestions they may have for case studies or projects to the GBRMPA after the meeting.

GREAT BARRIER REEF WORLD HERITAGE AREA STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

The Committee was briefed on the progress towards finalising the Terms of Reference for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area Strategic Assessment; and of the proposed reports that will result. This task will be the GBRMPA's main focus over the next 12 months.

Members were asked to consider and provide advice on possible arrangements the GBRMPA may use to engage with Traditional Owners for the purposes of the Strategic Assessment.

Members agreed it may be useful for staff from the GBRMPA's Indigenous Partnerships Group to approach Traditional Owners, during their usual liaison work, to get some ideas and suggestions directly from the communities on possible case study sites that would focus on Indigenous values and issues.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the IRAC is scheduled to be held in November 2012.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE 2009-2012

Mr Wayne Butcher	Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner
Miss Melissa George	Independent Chairman; Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner
Miss Selina Hill	Indigenous engagement, environmental management and community development
Dr Rod Kennett	Indigenous land and sea management
Dr Geoffrey Lipsett-Moore	The Nature Conservancy
Mr Ross MacLeod	Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management
Mr Philip Rist	Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner
A/Professor Stephan Schnierer	Indigenous policy
Dr Dermot Smyth	Sea Country planning and Indigenous Protected Areas
Mrs Larissa Hale	Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner (Observer)
Mr Malcolm Pearce	Fisheries Queensland (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (Observer)
Supported by:	
Mr Peter McGinnity	General Manager, GBRMPA
Ms Liz Wren	Director, Indigenous Partnerships Group, GBRMPA