



TOURISM REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMMUNIQUE Meeting 9, 8 and 9 May 2018 – Magnetic Island

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 Magnetic Island and the Townsville region and their Elders, both past, present and future.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Update

The Committee noted the update provided by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (the Authority), including: an update on the recent Australian Government funding announcement of \$500 million; an update on the status of the Review of Governance of the Authority; and updates on current projects and public consultation related to the tourism industry.

Members Update

The Committee noted the report from members, including the current status of the Great Barrier Reef marine tourism industry and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park visitation information.

Members reported a downturn in visitation (since the last meeting) due to the potential threat of Tropical Cyclone Iris, and negative media following consecutive bleaching events and Tropical Cyclone Debbie.

Best of Queensland Experience Program

The Committee noted the update on the Best of Queensland Experience program and its ongoing implementation, including the criteria used to determine how an experience becomes part of the program.

Queensland Sustainable Fishers Strategy

The Committee noted the release by the Queensland Government of the Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017-2027, including achievements already delivered.

Expanded Crown-of-thorns Starfish Control Program

The Committee noted the expansion of the crown-of-thorns starfish control program to up to eight vessels until June 2019, with at least three vessels until June 2020 through recent funding announcements.

The Committee recognised the time it takes to train divers in the program. The committee also noted the research being undertaken and data being collected in the program as important components of future management.

Policy and Planning Roadmap

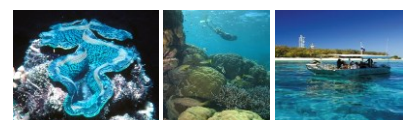
The Committee noted that with the policy and planning road map there is a greater focus in the Authority's Corporate Plan to have an efficient and effective risk-based regulatory system.

The Committee, through their discussions, provided advice on the future of the Great Barrier Reef marine tourism industry to assist with the development of a risk-based regulatory system. Advice included: Plans of Management are viewed as constraining and not flexible for change; policies are not contemporary; intervention needs to be at the forefront of future policy and planning; latency continues to be an issue; dedicated moorings and their management need reviewing; carrying capacity of high value sites needs to be determined and risks of overcrowding managed; ensuring quality product and experience over quantity should be an industry focus; the Whitsundays Plan of Management area will be an area of continued growth.

Shifting baselines

The Committee approved an additional presentation at the meeting on Shifting Baselines, and endorsed the need to implement intervention actions now to protect the future of the Great Barrier Reef.

The presentation was a prelude to the Intervention in Action presentation and field site inspection on day two of the meeting.



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Master Reef Guides Program

The Committee noted the progress on the development of the Reef Discovery Course and Master Reef Guides Program, including the benefits they will provide to tourism guides and the quality of interpretation and experience delivery within the Reef's tourism industry.

EduTourism

The Committee noted the EduTourism initiative being taken within the Townsville and North Queensland Region and the opportunities that this product offering may have in other Great Barrier Reef destinations.

Outlook Report

The Committee noted the progress with drafting the Outlook Report 2019, in particular, the section on commercial marine tourism and provided advice through discussion.

The Committee noted the draft findings from the independent management effectiveness review and provided nil advice on the draft grading's in regard to commercial tourism.

The Committee confirmed the information received and provided is not for publication, with information embargoed until the Outlook Report is released publicly in 2019.

Coral Sea Marine Park Update

The Committee noted the Coral Sea Marine Park Management Plan 2018 which comes into effect on 1 July 2018.

Members commented that it is an expensive undertaking for the tourism industry to make use of the Coral Sea due to remote locality. There may be opportunities for the charter fishing industry.

Global Eco Asia-Pacific Conference

The Committee noted the progress of the Global Eco Asia-Pacific Conference being held in Townsville on 26-28 November 2018.

International Coral Reef Initiative

The Committee noted that the Authority will be co-host of the secretariat for the International coral Reef Initiative.

The Committee noted that the Authority will work with partners on 2018 International Year of the Reef activities, with a focus on the second half of the year.

Intervention in Action

The Committee noted the update provided on reef intervention actions. The committee endorsed the need for increased levels of intervention to be enabled.

Permissions System

Changes in Public Liability Insurance Requirements:

The Committee noted the Queensland Department of Environment and Science requires \$20 million public liability insurance on Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service managed areas including State Marine Parks.

The Committee noted that the Authority will adopt a consistent approach to public liability insurance requiring holders of Marine Parks permits for tourism operations to obtain \$20 million public liability insurance.

The Committee advised the following on the roll-out of the \$20 million public liability insurance requirement to new and continuing Marine Parks permits for tourism operations from 1 July 2019.

- The Committee is not supportive of the policy change and an increase to public liability insurance requirements.
- The Committee raised concerns that the policy change was not evidence based.
- The Committee acknowledges that there are already insurance issues in North Queensland with some operators struggling to obtain cover.
- The Committee also acknowledged the financial impost to business due to additional insurance premiums.

Environmental Management Change:

The Committee noted the Internal Policy framework and associated Late Payment Penalty procedure the Authority has in place to manage compliance with the Environmental Management Charge.

The Committee endorsed the proposed risk-based approach to apply the Late Payment Penalty to when EMC payments received late total greater than \$250.

Reef Interventions Guidelines:

The Committee noted the progress of the development of the Reef Interventions Guidelines.

Hay Point Maintenance Dredging and Disposal Guidelines

The Committee noted the information provided in the paper and the presentation by North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation.

The Committee did not have any advice regarding tourism-related issues associated with the application, however noted interest in closely monitoring progress to ensure the best possible outcomes for the Whitsunday tourism industry.

Other business

There were no additional matters for the Committee to consider that were not in the agenda.

