

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 document forms 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.

# **CONSERVATION, BIODIVERSITY AND WORLD HERITAGE REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**9<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

**27 and 28 November 2002 – Townsville**

## **SUMMARY DOCUMENT**

### **GREAT BARRIER REEF MARINE PARK AUTHORITY (GBRMPA) MAJOR ISSUES UPDATE**

The GBRMPA Chair attended the meeting and reported on the following issues:

- Reef Advisory Committee membership;
- Representative Areas Program;
- Water Quality Reef Protection Plan;
- Potential new framework for tourism in the Marine Park;
- Development of policy in areas of latency and allocation and tenure; and
- A review of Day-to-Day Management of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWHA) had been initiated and would be conducted by an independent reviewer acceptable to both Governments.

The Committee was advised that compliance is one of the priorities for the GBRMPA and that it is a complicated issue with the potential to be a huge problem in the future. Deliberate illegal fishing in green zones is a major issue and requires rigorous enforcement. The GBRMPA will continue to co-ordinate with other agencies, such as Coastwatch, for effective compliance. A member suggested a risk assessment approach to managing non-spatial compliance and recommended recent PhD research by Ms Julie Robins that examined compliance by trawl fishermen in the introduction of Turtle Extraction Devices (TEDs).

The Committee discussed the Hopevale traditional hunting project and recommended that the Conservation RAC be involved in the GBRMPA's review of the Hopevale project on traditional hunting when the final report is completed.

### **UPDATE ON FISHERIES ISSUES GROUP ACTIVITIES**

The Director of the Fisheries Issues Group (FIG) outlined the group's work program advising there were four objectives:

- Strategic framework for fisheries in the GBRMP;
- Integration of fisheries and ecosystem management;
- Effective information base; and
- Compliance with the GBRMP legislation.

The question of how the FIG is going to approach the management of Indigenous fisheries was raised, and the Committee was advised the FIG is about the impact of fisheries and the ecological sustainability of fisheries resources, and not allocation. While Indigenous fishing issues are taken into consideration, currently they do not form part of the FIG's strategic work program. During discussion, it was noted that Indigenous fisheries strategies at both a National and Queensland State level were being developed.

The Committee recommended that the FIG be encouraged to raise the profile of Indigenous fisheries as one that is distinct and overlapping with commercial and recreational fisheries and as a starting point include an acknowledgement of the existence of Indigenous fisheries in the GBRMPA's policy on fishing in the GBRWHA, and flag further development of strategies taking into account the National and Queensland State Indigenous Fisheries Strategies.

### **REPRESENTATIVE AREAS PROGRAM UPDATE**

The Committee heard a number of presentations regarding RAP, outlining:

- The timetable;
- Broad communication objectives;
- The strategy for involving Indigenous peoples in the RAP;
- Proposals for community phase 2 (CP2);
- An overview of the non spatial analysis method used to analyse submissions received; and
- The RAP Taskforce role.

After hearing the RAP presentations members made the following comments regarding the information presented:

- The summary document being issued in CP2 should be submitted to both the CRAC and the Social, Economic and Cultural (SEC) Steering Committee for comment;
- It is critical for the GBRMPA to disseminate succinct information within the community as to how the submissions were analysed;
- The information should not be solely used in the RAP process;
- Emphasise within the community that the analysis of submissions is a qualitative process not a quantitative process;
- There are misconceptions within the community regarding the meaning of ‘minimum percentages and targets’;
- Baselines for measuring the performance of the rezoning, both socially and economically need to be developed urgently;
- Emphasis of all work needs to be on the rezoning of the whole GBRMP rather than just green zones; and
- Develop clear, outcome-based objectives.

The Committee acknowledged the considerable effort involved in the development of the submissions database and the coding of the submissions on rezoning of the GBRWHA, and congratulated the staff on their efforts to date. The Committee noted the enormous potential for the database as a resource for research and for use in other management decision-making. The Committee recommended that the GBRMPA in relation to the development of the Draft Zoning Plan, Regulation Impact Statement and Basis for Zoning:

- Emphasises that the Representative Areas Program is the primary tool for rezoning of the whole GBRWHA, and avoids any misconceptions in the public participation phases that the emphasis is exclusively on Green Zones;
- Develops issue-specific papers dealing with -
  - the perception of ‘targets’ and minimum percentages of Green Zones,
  - Indigenous cultural practices in Green Zones,
  - addressing suggested management tools such as ‘catch and release’, and
  - addressing the GBRMPA’s capacity to enforce compliance of zoning plans;
- Pay particular attention to the wording of the explanations about how submissions have been taken into account, emphasising that the submissions are being analysed qualitatively rather than quantitatively; take time to prepare the community to receive the explanations and place the explanations in the context of a particular group or location and other quantitative research; and
- ‘Road test’ the Summary Submission document and explanations of how submissions have been taken into account, for clarity and accessibility, through the CRAC and the SEC Steering Committee.

The Committee acknowledged the enormous effort required of staff to deal with this issue within the current rezoning exercise. The Committee recommended strongly that the staff of the GBRMPA focus on the

completion of the analysis of submissions and the completion of the next phase of the rezoning, within the specified timeframe.

The Committee reiterated its concern that the establishment of baselines for monitoring the consequences of the rezoning – social, economic, cultural, biological, physical – is not being given a high enough priority and that time is running out for the development of such baselines before the new zoning plan comes into effect.

On the issue of monitoring the performance of the rezoning, the Committee suggested that:

- Existing advisory groups established for RAP be convened to provide advice on an appropriate framework for such monitoring and for the development of objectives and performance indicators; and
- External resources (e.g., Reef Co-operative Research Centre) be sought to facilitate the process of developing performance indicators and a monitoring framework as soon as possible.

### GBRWHA PERIODIC REPORT ENDORSEMENT

The Committee provided the following endorsement of the final version of the GBRWHA Periodic Report before it is submitted to Environment Australia for sign off by the Minister:

*“The Reef Advisory Committee for Conservation, Biodiversity and World Heritage (CRAC), having provided input into the GBRWHA Periodic Report, considers the Report is a factual and comprehensive summary of the GBRWHA status as at November 2002. The Committee therefore endorses the Periodic Report for transmission to the World Heritage Committee. In doing so the Committee expresses its particular concern that the Report does not reflect the likely serious effects of global warming on the future status of the GBRWHA.”*

### NEXT MEETING

This was the final meeting of the current term of the RAC. The next meeting is proposed for March 2003.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE	
Mr Doug Baird .....	Tourism and Recreation
Ms Kate Davey .....	NGO, Conservation
Mr Jon Day .....	GBRMPA
Dr Pat Hutchings .....	NGO, Ecologist
Mr Bruce Leaver .....	Environment Australia
Mr Ted Loveday .....	Fisheries
Prof Helene Marsh .....	Scientific Community
Ms Melissa Nursey-Bray .....	NGO, Conservation
Mr Peter Ogilvie .....	QPWS
Assoc Prof Stephan Schnierer .....	Indigenous Issues
Mr Tim Smith .....	Water Quality, Coastal Issues
Mr Peter Valentine .....	World Heritage, Protected Area Management
Mr Simon Woodley .....	Independent Chair
Ms Imogen Zethoven .....	NGO, Conservation