



INDIGENOUS REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMMUNIQUE IRAC Meeting No. 24 – In person – 5-6 November 2025

The Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee (the Committee) provides advice to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (the Reef Authority) on Indigenous matters. The Committee has seven members and an independent Chairperson, Mr Shayne Blackman. The Committee is a sub-committee to the Marine Park Authority Board.

Welcome and Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The Chairperson welcomed the Committee to the 24th meeting of the Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee (IRAC). Ms Madeline Jones was an apology for the meeting.

Reef Authority and Reconciliation Action Plan update

General Manager — Strategic Policy and Partnerships provided an update on Reef Authority business including a summary from the Marine Park Authority Board meeting held in October, acknowledgment of the appointment of Ms Patricia O’Callaghan as the Queensland Government Representative on the Marine Park Authority Board, an overview following the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Congress meeting, and the 2025 Reef forum.

An update on the progress of the implementation of the agency’s Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan was also provided to members.

2025 Reef forum

Director – Reef Education and Engagement provided an overview of the 2025 Reef Forum held in Townsville on 28-29 October 2025. The Forum focused on bringing together stakeholders to strengthen a shared understanding of the climate challenges ahead and to shape the evolution of resilience-based management across the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

An overview of the group activities and outcomes from the Forum was provided to members. It was noted that an outcomes report will be finalised and shared with participants and the Committee.

Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRA) program update

Assistant Director – TUMRA program provided an update on the Program, which included acknowledgement of the significant 20-year milestone of the Program.

Members were asked to provide advice on the opportunities and challenges of the Program to support the agency’s review and help shape the strategic direction of the Program.

Members had broad-ranging discussions on the challenges and opportunities, and evolution of the Program, including its wider delivery scope, and provided pivotal advice for consideration in the review process.

Southern Plan of Management update

An update on the Southern Plan of Management project was provided to the Committee. The project provides an opportunity for best-practice regulatory approaches, co-management future, and a modernised approach to spatial planning in Marine Protected Areas.

Through the Southern Plan of Management project, the Reef Authority is working with four Traditional Owner groups. An overview of the program’s achievements to date along with an update on the timeline for the project was provided to the Committee.

Committee members had a broad-ranging discussion about the program and engagement as part of project delivery.

Reef Guardian Councils program

The Reef Authority provided an update on the Reef Guardians Council program outlining the program’s success to date. A summary of the program’s achievements was shown (video) to the Committee.

The Committee noted there were 21 councils involved in the program, with two Aboriginal Shire Councils involved including Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council and Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council.

Reef health update and Reef Joint Field Management Program

The Reef Authority provided an overview of the current and predicted conditions on the Reef for the summer ahead.

This included an outline of the approach to monitoring the Reef over summer — including via aerial and in-water surveys — to determine any potential impacts.

The Committee noted that the annual pre-summer workshop is scheduled to be held in November, bringing together Traditional Owners, scientists, management partners and stakeholders.

The Reef Authority also provided an update on the strategic direction of the Reef Joint Field Management Program, including the release of the Program's five-year business strategy, and Annual Business Plan.

Members discussed the Program's evolution and delivery, including some of the challenges and opportunities, and noted the overview provided to the Committee.