



INDIGENOUS REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMMUNIQUE IRAC Meeting No. 22 – In person – 5 December 2024

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 eight 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 22nd meeting of the Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee (IRAC) and provided the Acknowledgement of Country. The Chairperson acknowledged this is the first meeting of the newly appointed committee for a three-year term (2024–27) and the agenda had an emphasis on onboarding the Committee.

Reef Authority onboarding

An outline of the agency's governance framework was provided to the Committee, along with information about our key policies, forming part of the onboarding process.

MPA Board Chairperson, Dr Ian Poiner, discussed a range of topics that the MPA Board are interested in receiving strategic advice on from the Reef Advisory Committees. Additionally, the MPA Board Chairperson addressed the recommendations from the outgoing IRAC committee.

The Committee had the opportunity to discuss and provide feedback on the updated draft IRAC Charter – which includes the Terms of Reference - which will be reviewed with the view to seek approval by the MPA Board in early 2025.

Reef Authority update

Reef Authority Directors provided an overview of a range of our core programs including the:

- Crown-of-thorns Starfish Control Program
- Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRAs)
- Reef Education and Engagement programs
- Outlook Report 2024
- Policy and Permits, with a focus on the Southern Plan of Management
- projects focused on working with Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef (including a co-management roadmap).

Committee members discussed and raised questions about the flagship programs and in particular intersections with Traditional Owners or First Nations peoples, as well as opportunities for further engagement.

Reef health update

The Reef Authority's Acting Chief Scientist, Dr Jessica Stella, provided an update on summer Reef health including forecast conditions for the summer ahead, an overview of the discussions and outcomes from the Reef health summer workshop (which is held annually and brings together Traditional Owners, scientists and partners), and provided an overview of the conditions from last year.

An update on our communication approach over summer was outlined to the Committee. The Committee were asked to consider how to strengthen our communication (and via which channels) with Traditional Owners and communities.