

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.



TOURISM AND RECREATION REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TRRAC)

13th Meeting

12 and 13 June 2003 – Brisbane

SUMMARY DOCUMENT

The thirteenth meeting of the TRRAC was held in Brisbane on 12 and 13 June 2003. A summary of the outcomes of the main items discussed is set out below.

ALLOCATION, LATENCY AND TENURE

Committee members were brought up-to-date with the outcomes of the consultation process for the draft policy. Members were advised that the submissions and industry consultations highlighted strong support for the allocation and tenure components of the policy, but concerns had been raised in relation to the proposed latency provisions. Annual 'use it or lose it' across all the industry, with special circumstances only in the first year, was generally viewed as too harsh, especially given the current world-wide tourism downturn and the unique nature of the bareboat industry.

In discussions on possible alternative management arrangements to address latency, there was consensus that:

- A firm policy to the under-use of tourism permits should be pursued, avoiding the need for special circumstances.
- Use should be reviewed at the end of the permit term, rather than annually, based on average annual use. This should even out fluctuations in operations caused by circumstances beyond operators' control.
- If use was reviewed at the end of a permit, there would be no need to include provision for special circumstances. However, members recommended that it be made clear that in implementing latency management arrangements, it was not intended that bone fide operators be displaced.
- There may need to be some special arrangements for the bareboat sector because of its unique operating arrangements.

With regard to the bareboat sector, members considered an alternative proposal that is understood to have general support within the sector, subject to some refinement. The refinements principally relate to the extent of 'use' required and the 'lose-it' penalty

applied when an operator has not met the minimum use requirement. The finer details of the proposal will be finalised with members of the bareboat sector as soon as possible.

The Committee considered the implications of this policy in relation to Indigenous issues. At this stage, however, the Committee has no specific advice to provide.

BEST PRACTICE AND CERTIFICATION

Members received a final report on the project to develop a framework to assess potential certification schemes, including proposed *Assessment Criteria for Potential Certification Schemes* as amended after internal and external consultation. The Committee endorsed the final report and the criteria.

Members listened with interest to a presentation from the Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators (AMPTO) outlining a proposed certification scheme to meet the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's (GBRMPA) criteria. This type of scheme was considered appropriate for the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) marine tourism industry. Issues raised in discussion included:

- The extent to which the proposal addressed the proposed GBRMPA requirements;
- The importance of independent auditing;
- The need to develop an 'incentives package' outlining all the benefits that may accrue to an operator as a result of certification;
- The possibility of examining processes used to ensure best practice, rather than examining the practices employed within each tourism product;
- The merits of a tiered system of sanctions;
- The applicability of the AMPTO proposal to all industry sectors, including bareboats; and
- The number of certification schemes that may be approved.

A small working group was established to examine these issues and report to the next meeting.

FUTURE WORK PROGRAM

The Committee considered the draft Strategic Work Program for the Tourism and Recreation Group and endorsed its directions and priorities. The Committee also discussed in detail the five priority areas as agreed at TRRAC 12.

Threats to the Reef

Members expressed some concern that the GBRMPA's current approach to Reef protection is based solely on fostering ecosystem resilience, and were of the view that there also needs to be emphasis on direct initiatives to help the Reef survive and grow. A working group was established to examine potential ways to help the Reef survive and grow; current impediments to operators wishing to maintain an area; and possibilities for providing permittees with greater flexibility. It was agreed that the first priority should be to examine the implications of any relevant provisions of the draft Zoning Plan.

Flat Tourism Numbers

The Committee recognised the value of the data collected by a James Cook University research team over the last eight years as part of the Co-operative Research Centre (CRC) Reef tourism research, and urged continued support for the project to enable analysis and writing up. The Committee also identified a need for more immediate and forward-looking data, and suggested that the GBRMPA should investigate the scope for improving data collection associated with the Environmental Management Charge (EMC) returns, including receiving information on tourism numbers on-line from operators.

Further Implementation of the TRRAC Framework

With respect to the TRRAC Framework advice, the Committee endorsed the work to be undertaken as part of the Tourism and Recreation Group Strategic Work Program.

The TRRAC will continue to take a strong interest in these projects and provide advice as required.

Indigenous Issues

The Committee is pleased to have an opportunity to provide input on Indigenous issues as they relate to tourism and recreation. The joint Tourism and Recreation Group/Indigenous Policy Liaison Unit project to develop an Indigenous engagement strategy was commended, and a small working group established to provide detailed advice during the project.

Recreation

Members noted the research currently being undertaken by CRC Reef on recreational use of the

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, and agreed to examine this issue more fully once the project is complete.

CROWN OF THORNS STARFISH (COTS)

The June 2003 report of the COTS Control Program was tabled at the meeting, and members were advised that continued funding of the program was discussed at a recent meeting of the Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Council. The Committee expressed strong support for an extension of the funding for this program.

REPRESENTATIVE AREAS PROGRAM

The Committee endorsed the philosophy, process and general dimensions of the draft Zoning Plan, including the expansion of protected areas.

REEF WATER QUALITY PROTECTION PLAN

Prior to the meeting, members had been advised of the release of the draft Plan for public comment. The Plan was broadly discussed at the meeting, and there appears to be no negative impacts for tourism and recreation in the Great Barrier Reef.

NEXT MEETING

Dates for the remaining meetings of TRRAC during 2003 are as follows:

- TRRAC 14 – 1 and 2 September; and
- TRRAC 15 – 4 and 5 December.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

Ms Bryony Barnett	Research, Extension, Best Practice
Mr Mike Bartlett	Cruise Shipping
Mr Mike Burgess	Business Acumen Economic/Marketing
Mr John Doohan	Recreational Fishing
Mr Barry Ehrke	Commercial Fishing
Mr John Evetts	Ranging Operations/Game Fishing
Mr Peter Frawley (Chairperson)	Management
Mr Daniel Gschwind	Business Acumen Economic/Marketing
Mr Bernard Heimann	Mooring, Anchoring
Mr Ralph Henderson	Tourism and National Parks Management
Mr David Hutchen	Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators (AMPTO)
Mr Kevin Keeffe	Environment Australia
Mr Terry Kemp	Bareboat Charter
Mr Wayne Kirkpatrick	Resort Operations
Mr Glen Miller	Indigenous Community
Mr John Millward	Dive, Pontoon, Aircraft
Mr David Morgans	Tourism Queensland
Ms Kerry Rooney	Dept Industry, Tourism and Resources
Mr John Rumney	Conservation, Dive, Anchoring, Mooring and Ranging
Mr Chris Thomas	Director, GBRMPA
Mr Col McKenzie (Advisor)	AMPTO