



INDIGENOUS REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE (IRAC) 1st Meeting – 9 and 10 December 2009 – Townsville

SUMMARY DOCUMENT

GBRMPA's REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEES

There are four Reef Advisory Committees (RACs): Catchment and Coastal; Ecosystem; Indigenous; and Tourism and Recreation RAC.

The RACs are competency-based committees comprising a cross-section of stakeholder interests with expertise and experience in relevant areas. The role of the RACs is to provide issues-based advice to the GBRMPA on operational issues. Each RAC shall work closely with staff of the relevant branch and sections, to ensure that policy development and strategic direction are developed in consultation with stakeholders.

The RACs are appointed for a term of three years, and members are eligible for reappointment. Each of the RACs includes Indigenous representation. Some members are appointed as a representative of a particular group or sector (e.g. industry, recreational, government), or for their linkages to Traditional Owner Groups. All RAC members are expected to adopt a broad perspective on issues that are addressed, mindful of the objectives of the relevant section or branch and of the GBRMPA's corporate priorities.

The Indigenous RAC (IRAC) provides strategic-level advice to the GBRMPA on the management of matters that relate to Indigenous Partnerships.

The first formal meeting of the IRAC was held in Townsville on 9 and 10 December 2009. The Chairman paid respect to the Wulgurukaba and Bindal Traditional Owners and acknowledged their traditional land and sea country in the Townsville region.

A summary of the outcomes of the main items discussed is set out below.

GREAT BARRIER REEF SEA COUNTRY PARTNERSHIPS GRANTS PROGRAM

Members were updated on the draft Sea Country Partnerships Grants Guidelines, and were asked to provide advice on the application process, assessment criteria and eligibility sections of the Guidelines. Members were also asked to consider and provide advice on the proposed eligibility of organisations representing and applying for grants on behalf of Traditional Owners (TOs).

The Committee supported the GBRMPA progressing the Sea Country Partnerships Grants Programs, and investigating the possibility of increasing the upper limit of funding available for individual grants.

Members agreed it would be useful for the GBRMPA to outsource the development of a Leadership Action

Plan, with a draft being presented to the next IRAC meeting, and finalisation of the Action Plan by 30 June 2010.

COMMUNICATION OVERVIEW

Members were updated on three initiatives:

1. The GBRMPA's communications project which will see a strengthening of communications between local communities, managers and Reef stakeholders and build better understanding of TO issues in relation to the management of the Marine Park.
2. The Sea Country Guardians education program, which will build on the successful Reef Guardian Schools program by fostering stewardship and a community culture of custodianship for Reef protection in Indigenous communities. Members were asked to provide advice on the proposed execution of the education program.
3. The Enhancing Sea Country Management communication, training and education program, which will assist in building the capacity of TUMRA/ILUA (Indigenous Land Use Agreement) holders, other TO Groups and Indigenous community members in managing the implementation of Sea Country management initiatives while also assisting them in shaping localised education and communication programs to inform their local community about their connection to Sea Country. Members were asked to provide advice on the proposed execution of the communication, training and education program.

In discussion, the following comments were noted:

- Members agreed communication should be about promoting good Sea Country planning.
- There are good messages for the Indigenous community, but also really good information for the non-Indigenous community. It will be a good message to convey the cultural respect of Indigenous people to the broader community.
- It would be useful to have a communication strategy to get the message out to those people who are not doing the right thing, to try to put some pressure on them to do so. This would put those people on notice at the community-level, so that at some time the actions of those people might affect the rights and privileges of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people in the long-run.

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Members were updated on the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Art's (DEWHA's) Reconciliation Action Plan, and were asked for suggestions on the sorts of activities and initiatives included in the DEWHA Plan and other Reconciliation Action Plans.

This issue was discussed at the Inaugural meeting of the Interim IRAC on 28 and 29 May 2009. At that time, members felt there was a lack of understanding by the GBRMPA that such a plan was part of the core business of the Authority. While they acknowledged the decreasing resources available to the GBRMPA, members felt it would be a wise investment to have a stand-alone Action Plan.

The Committee recommended development of a GBRMPA stand-alone Reconciliation Action Plan be included in the Indigenous Partnerships Group's (IPG's) June 2010 work program, with a view to completion of the Plan and adoption by the IRAC by December 2010.

SEA COUNTRY PARTNERSHIPS SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Members were updated on the draft guidelines for the Sea Country Partnerships Sponsorship Program, which would fund opportunities for TOs to support their attendance at conferences, workshops and training opportunities to effectively engage in sea country management. Members were asked to provide advice on the program.

In discussion, it was suggested that where people are sponsored to attend conferences, workshops or training opportunities, there needs to be a process of reporting back on the expense, with some specific questions being asked about the forum. Depending on where those people are located, it would be useful to have some one-on-one training about what is expected of them in terms of reporting and note taking.

REEF GUARDIAN COUNCIL PROGRAM – ABORIGINAL AND ISLAND COUNCILS

Members were updated on the Reef Guardian Council program as it relates to Aboriginal and Island Councils. It was noted part of the program is to provide advocacy to councils in the Indigenous community who are interested in participating.

The GBRMPA is looking to use the process to engage the Indigenous councils with a view to developing the Sea Country Guardian program.

LITERATURE REVIEW OF TRADITIONAL OWNER ASPIRATIONS FOR THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

Members were updated on the draft literature review identifying the aspirations already put forward by the Indigenous community. At the inaugural meeting, members agreed there was a need to have a document containing all the views and aspirations already collected from the Indigenous community,

before we could move forward. Members were now asked for advice on how best to progress this initiative.

Members agreed it was a good start, and offered to provide to the IPG by 30 January 2010 any further information and comments for inclusion in the literature review.

INTEGRATED REEF HEALTH SURVEYS – POTENTIAL INVOLVEMENT AND USE BY TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Members were updated on the possible involvement of TOs in an integrated Reef health survey program, similar to the Reef assessment programs used in the Field Management Co-ordination Unit and the Climate Change Group. Members were asked to consider the potential interest and use of the survey form by TOs.

Members agreed the GBRMPA should investigate the integrated Reef health survey program in three specific areas: one involving the I-tracker in Cape York; a second working with Reef Guardian Schools; and a third identifying a TO group outside of Cape York and using them as a pilot.

GBRMPA REGULATORY AMENDMENTS RELATING TO TUMRAs

Members were updated on the amendments to the Marine Park Regulations including that relating specifically to the TUMRAs. Members were asked to provide advice on the IPG's strategy for informing affected parties of these amendments.

Members agreed the IRAC Chairman convey to the GBRMPA Chairman the Committee's concern regarding the negative impact in terms of the issuing of permits by the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (now the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation) as a result of several incidents relating to hunting and fishing in 2009.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the IRAC is scheduled to be held in May 2010.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE 2009-2012

Mr Wayne Butcher	Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner
Ms Jean Fenton	Indigenous engagement, environmental management and community development
Miss Melissa George	Independent Chairman; Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner
Miss Selina Hill	Indigenous engagement, environmental management and community development
Dr Rod Kennett	Indigenous land and sea management
Mr Ross MacLeod	Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management
Mr Philip Rist	Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner
A/Professor Stephan Schnierer	Indigenous policy
Dr Dermot Smyth	Sea Country planning and Indigenous Protected Areas
Supported by:	
Mr Peter McGinnity	General Manager, GBRMPA
Mr Darren Cameron	Acting Director, Indigenous Partnerships Group, GBRMPA