



## FISHERIES REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting

28 and 29 June 2001 – Townsville

## SUMMARY DOCUMENT

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.

### COLLECTION FISHERIES UPDATE

#### *Coral*

As discussed at the 3<sup>rd</sup> FRAC meeting, the Minister had directed the GBRMPA to initiate mechanisms to sensitively close the fishery. In discussion of a "sunset" strategy, the Authority's preferred option, the following points were noted:

- Compensation is likely to be less of an issue if the fishery is phased out rather than cut off.
- "Sensitively" closing the fishery could involve permit holders remaining in the fishery until they cease to be active in the fishery.
- Concern expressed at the lack of communication with broad stakeholder groups regarding the closure.
- A simple letter to advise the current situation would keep affected stakeholders informed.
- Concern at the possibility of a black market resulting from the closure.

#### *Tropical Rock Lobster*

The Queensland Fisheries Service (QFS) recently issued an investment warning for the East Coast Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery, as there had been an increase in effort of some 175% in the past three years. A suite of management measures was recommended with a view to reducing latent effort in the fishery. In discussion, the following points were noted:

- Expense associated with enforcement may be excessive for this small industry.
- Possibility of introducing bag or size limits.
- Industry supportive of a ban on spear fishing.
- Consultation needed with Indigenous communities.

#### *Sea Cucumber*

A quota-managed fishery with some specific compliance concerns raising the more general issue of quota audit management and appropriate compliance skills and methodologies. It was noted that effective monitoring of quota compliance and development of compliance techniques and complementary management regulations presented a challenge.

### QUEENSLAND DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES FORESIGHT 2010 PROJECT

A further meeting had been held to consider the 10-year vision to promote cultural change through an holistic development framework for ecologically sustainable development and co-operative planning within the fishing industry. In discussion, the following points were noted:

- Need for ongoing consultation between Commonwealth and State.
- Acknowledged there would be difficulty in satisfying all stakeholders and resolving conflict.
- Need for more effort in consulting with the Indigenous community.

### COMMERCIAL SHARK AND SMALL MACKEREL FISHERIES

Catch and effort statistics for commercial fisheries were presented. In discussion, the following points were noted:

- Concern at the number of sharks caught by net, and the number of vessels equipped with shark reels.

- A management plan is needed for the shark fishery.
- As a result of a decrease in mackerel numbers, urgent action is needed to address the problem of the sustainability of mackerel stocks.
- Suggested that QFS need to address lapsed initiatives.
- Mackerel stock assessments required to clarify status of stocks.

### **UPDATE ON MANAGEMENT OF FISH SPAWNING AGGREGATION SITES**

The GBRMPA is addressing the need to protect fish spawning aggregation sites in the Marine Park from fishing, tourism and research. A presentation was given in which strategies to assist in boosting fish stock levels through the protection of fish spawning areas was discussed. It was pointed out that there was some form of spawning site on most reefs, and that a suite of management strategies was needed to protect these spawning aggregation sites, and the fish that used them.

### **REPRESENTATIVE AREAS PROGRAM (RAP)**

Work currently being done on progressing the issue of how to use log-book data in the RAP. In discussion, the following points were noted:

- Attempts made to contact recreational fishing groups along the Queensland coastline.
- User groups were encouraged to indicate on a map the most important areas of use.
- The intention was for the RAP to proceed with minimal impact on users of the Marine Park.
- Suggestion made that zoning be implemented in sections, rather than in total.
- Concern at the possible implications for the trawl industry.

A researcher from the CRC for the Sustainable Development of the GBR gave a presentation on the social assessment of the Queensland commercial fishing industry. The research indicated that changes in the management or condition of the fisheries would have an affect on the groups of communities dependent on the fisheries.

### **REEF LINE FISHERY**

An independent panel was commissioned to review the draft management plan for the Reef Finfish Fishery, and to provide advice for future

management. A presentation explained the rationale behind the GBRMPA's position on the various proposed arrangements, and brought members up to date with recent developments. In discussion, the following points were noted:

- By the end of 2001, the GBRMPA (using the management strategy evaluation model developed by the CRC for the Sustainable Development of the GBR) would be in a position to evaluate management options against chosen objectives, and to predict consequences.
- Need commitment from governments and stakeholders to progress this issue.
- Suggestion made to protect fish spawning areas by considering "outstanding" sites to be special sites in the RAP program.
- Sunfish endorsed the GBRMPA's position on proposed management arrangements in the Reef Line Fishery.

### **TRAWL FISHERY**

Although the East Coast Trawl Fishery Management Plan was discussed at a recent GBR Ministerial Council meeting, it has yet to be finalised, with discussion continuing between the Commonwealth and State Governments.

In response to correspondence from the Mission Beach Local Marine Advisory Committee, the Minister asked the GBRMPA to investigate options to eliminate the problem of dead fish washing up onto local beaches as a result of inshore trawling. It was noted that this was a common problem and needed to be addressed.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is proposed for November 2001.

#### **CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE**

Mr David Bateman .....	Recreational Fishing
Dr Carol Booth .....	Conservation
Dr Phil Cadwallader .....	GBRMPA
Mr Colin Creighton .....	Water Quality and Coastal Issues
Mr James Gillespie .....	Aquaculture
Mr Cliff Greenhalgh .....	Commercial Fishing
Ms Rosemary Lea .....	Fisheries Management
Mr John Olsen .....	Commercial Fishing
Mr Chris Roberts .....	Indigenous Community
Mr Lyle Squire .....	Commercial Harvest Fishing
Mr Rod Supple .....	Fisheries Enforcement and Compliance
Ms Diane Tarte (Chairperson) .....	Environment
Dr David Williams .....	Scientific Community