



CATCHMENT AND COASTAL REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CCRAC) 2nd Meeting – 6 and 7 October 2010 – Townsville SUMMARY DOCUMENT

The second meeting of the CCRAC was held in Townsville on 6 and 7 October 2010.

The Chairman paid respect to the 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.

MARINE TOURISM IN THE GREAT BARRIER REEF MARINE PARK

The member representing the marine tourism industry advised that the current state of the tourism industry is worse than last year. Of particular concern is the fact that some of the larger operators have recently been forced to close down their operation for a day. The current strength of the Australian dollar is making it more attractive for many Australians to travel overseas.

Also of concern are the many negative and often inaccurate messages circulating through the media, in response to incidents such as the recent Shen Neng 1 grounding, some of which have given the impression the Great Barrier Reef is dead. This has resulted in people from all over the world contacting operators to ask if it is still worth their while travelling to the Reef.

The tourism industry must look at changing the way the product is marketed; to convince people the Great Barrier Reef is the best quality reef experience they can have anywhere in the world.

UTILISING EXISTING PLANNING FRAMEWORKS TO IMPLEMENT INTEGRATED COASTAL MANAGEMENT IN GREAT BARRIER REEF CATCHMENTS

Members heard presentations on Queensland Planning Processes (the Queensland Government's approach to growth management and regional planning); the Healthy Waterways process (towards understanding, planning for and managing the use of waterways and catchments in South-East Queensland); and the Mackay Whitsunday NRM planning processes (the development of the Statutory Regional Plan, and the role of the Reef Catchments NRM in developing a co-ordinated NRM plan with key stakeholders and management agencies).

These presentations formed the background for a workshop session, with a view to formulating some advice from this Committee to the GBRMPA in relation

to the management of critical coastal ecosystems adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef.

During the workshop, members identified the important features of the planning processes and their relevance to the Great Barrier Reef, including opportunities, impediments, the role of the GBRMPA now, and the role of the GBRMPA into the future.

DEVELOPING A COASTAL STRATEGY FOR THE GREAT BARRIER REEF CATCHMENT

Members were provided a presentation on the development of the discussion paper on critical coastal ecosystems for the Great Barrier Reef catchment.

There was a strong level of support from members for the collation of the information in order to influence planning processes at various scales. This work is seen as fundamental to the GBRMPA's legitimate and credible participation in influencing the planning processes.

The following issues were noted:

- The need to engage Commonwealth, State and NRM body stakeholders in the development of the document.
- The work should be a staged process which would inform the next Outlook Report.
- Issues around language to do with risk and vulnerability assessments needs to be worked through with stakeholders.
- Clarity is important regarding the purpose of the document; the audience; and the products.

WHAT IS MISSING FROM EXISTING PLANNING FRAMEWORKS AND HOW THESE GAPS CAN BE ADDRESSED (E.G. STRATEGIC PLANNING, PORTS, MINING)

After the discussion on developing a Coastal Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef Catchment, a suggestion was made to look at some more strategic assessment planning. For example, there are a large number of proposals being submitted to the GBRMPA in relation to the increase in mining in the Gladstone area, and the associated transportation of coal and other resources.

A discussion followed around the opportunities and impediments to the GBRMPA's involvement in planning and the possible role for the Authority. Important roles were seen to be in the provision of expert advice in a targeted and strategic manner,

forming partnerships, advocating for the Great Barrier Reef, influencing planning processes, community engagement and in transformational change.

The Committee identified the following strategic opportunities to progress integrated coastal planning and alignment:

- A window of opportunity to engage the Ministerial Council to better utilise the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) to improve the dialogue across the various levels of government planning and to secure a strategic approach across the whole of the Great Barrier Reef region.
- A strategic assessment of future port facilities in the Great Barrier Reef region would be an ideal case study.
- The renewed interest in regional development brought about by the recent Federal election and the establishment of the Commonwealth's Regional Development Australia Committees provides an opportunity to incorporate Regional NRM consideration into regional economic development thinking and planning.
- Ensuring that the interests of the Great Barrier Reef are taken into account in these processes is seen as a key role for the Authority.

REEF GUARDIAN PROGRAM

Members were provided a presentation on the expansion of the GBRMPA's Reef Guardian Stewardship Program as part of the *Improving the Outlook* funding commitment from the Australian Government.

The Reef Guardian Schools and Councils programs are all about sharing information. One of the important roles is to feed information back to the GBRMPA, and to share the messages with other schools and councils as well as the broader community about the actions and activities they undertake that have a positive impact on the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef.

The Committee supported the initiative to expand the program to include fishers, the farming community and Indigenous councils.

REEF PLAN

Members were provided an update on the implementation of Reef Plan 2009 and the GBRMPA's role in delivery of Reef Plan outcomes.

The Committee raised questions about what will follow Reef Plan's current targets, actions and investments. Members acknowledged that stakeholders are looking to have the conversation about future steps and how they might be determined sooner rather than later, to avoid political interventions.

Members also acknowledged that what farmers are doing now is quite remarkable in terms of new land management practices. However, it was suggested there is still a gap in the management of un-owned land such as riparian wetlands.

BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY FOR THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

Members were provided an update on the progress being made in developing a Biodiversity Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef Ecosystem.

Members recognised the overarching importance of biodiversity to the health and resilience of the ecosystem and, therefore, to the users that rely on that ecosystem. The fundamental importance of protecting the habitats that support individual species was also recognised, along with the need to focus management on the factors that impact on those habitats and species.

The Committee encouraged the GBRMPA to base the Strategy on the best available information, and to take the opportunity to check both the information and the Vulnerability Assessments with knowledgeable users of the Reef. Members encouraged that the Strategy be as simple as possible.

RECREATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR THE GREAT BARRIER REEF MARINE PARK

Members were provided a presentation on the potential management approaches to recreation in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

The Committee noted that additional resources from a range of sources will be important to manage recreation effectively. It was also noted that greater co-ordination between agencies and other stakeholders would be beneficial.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the CCRAC is scheduled to be held on 13 and 14 April 2011.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE 2009-2012

Mr Mike Berwick AM	Catchment management and Natural Resource Management (NRM)
Mrs Leith Bouilly	Independent Chairman
Emeritus Professor Valerie Brown AO	Coastal planning
Mr Grahame Byron	Department of the Premier and Cabinet
Mr Rob Cocco	Catchment management and NRM
Mr Dan Galligan	Queensland Farmers Federation (QFF)
Mr Matthew Kealley	Canegrowers
A/Professor Catherine Lovelock	Coastal ecology and climate change
Professor Janet McDonald	Climate change
Mr Colin McKenzie	Marine tourism industry
Ms Sheriden Morris	Reef and Rainforest Research Centre (RRRC)
Mr Mark Piorkowski	Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ)
Dr John Robertson	Fisheries Queensland, Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI)
Mr Robert Speirs	Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM)
Cr Vern Veitch	Local government, recreational fishing and wetlands
Mr Gary White	Department of Infrastructure and Planning
Supported by:	
Mr Peter McGinnity	General Manager, GBRMPA
Mr Hugh Yorkston	Director, Coastal Ecosystems and Water Quality, GBRMPA