



# Reef 2050 Plan

## INDEPENDENT EXPERT PANEL - MINUTES

<b>Date</b>	Tuesday, 18 October 2016
<b>Venue</b>	Level 2, 100 Creek St, Brisbane, QLD
<b>Opened</b>	9:00am
<b>Closed</b>	5:00pm

### ATTENDEES

#### Members

Prof Ian Chubb AC, Chair	Prof Terry Hughes
Assoc Prof Eval Abal	Prof Helene Marsh
Dr Andrew Ash	Dr Russell Reichelt
Prof Mike Bell	Dr Britta Schaffelke
Prof Damien Burrows	Adj Assoc Prof Stephan Schnierer
Prof Bill Dennison ( <i>videoconference</i> )	Dr Roger Shaw
Dr Stefan Hajkowicz	Prof Natalie Stoeckl

#### Other

Ms Kylie Jonasson	First Assistant Secretary, Department of the Environment and Energy
Ms Rachel Parry	Assistant Secretary, Department of the Environment and Energy
Ms Celeste Powell	Director, Department of the Environment and Energy
Ms Ami McGrath	Director, Department of the Environment and Energy
Mr Craig Moore	Director, Department of the Environment and Energy
Ms Stefanie Lowe	Secretariat, Department of the Environment and Energy
Mr Birrin Hooper	Secretariat, Department of the Environment and Energy
Ms Elisa Nichols	Executive Director, Office of the Great Barrier Reef, EHP
Ms Louise Smyth	A/g Director, Office of the Great Barrier Reef, EHP
Ms Josh Gibson	Director, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
Dr Mel Cowlshaw	Manager, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority ( <i>item 4-6</i> )
Dr Will Howard	Assistant Director, Office of the Chief Scientist
Mr Brendan Foran	Chief Executive Officer, Greening Australia ( <i>1-1.30pm, item 7</i> )
Dr Colin Creighton	Principal Research Scientist, Greening Australia ( <i>1-1.30pm, item 7</i> )
Mr Hugh Wareham	Government Relations, Greening Australia ( <i>1-1.30pm, item 7</i> )
Mr Andrew Dougal	Group Agronomist, MSF Sugar ( <i>1-1.30pm, item 7</i> )
Dr Narendra Kumar Tuteja	Manager, Bureau of Meteorology ( <i>3.30-4.15pm, item 10</i> )

### APOLOGIES

#### Members

Prof Ove Hoegh-Guldberg



<b>DISCUSSION</b>
<b>1 Acknowledgement of Country</b>
The Chair acknowledged the Turrbal and Yaggera Peoples as the traditional custodians of the area. He acknowledged their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the region and paid respects to Elders both past and present.
<b>2 Welcome to Members</b>
The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted the apology of Prof Ove Hoegh-Guldberg.
<b>3 Secretariat Administration</b>
<p>The Secretariat outlined relevant housekeeping issues for the day.</p> <p>The Panel endorsed the minutes from the fourth meeting on 2 August 2016 and noted that the minutes from previous meetings will be uploaded to the Department of the Environment and Energy's website following the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair noted the summary of conflict of interests.</p> <p>The Panel heard an update on action items and noted that items 1 and 2 from the fourth meeting are ongoing.</p> <p>The Secretariat requested that members send potential workshop topics for consideration prior to the next meeting.</p>
<b>4 Reef 2050 Plan – Cumulative impact and net benefit policies and Great Barrier Reef offset guideline</b>
<p>Ms Josh Gibson presented draft cumulative impact and net benefit policies and Great Barrier Reef offset guideline paper to the Panel. The cumulative impact and net benefit policies are intended to work together to reduce pressures and restore value on the Reef. The GBR Offset guideline aims to give practical guidance for existing regulatory frameworks.</p> <p>The Panel noted the intention to release the documents for public comment and agreed that the language needs to be clear and accessible for the intended audience. There are strong linkages between the policies and the Panel provided advice on technical rigour, future application and science communication options.</p> <p>The Panel noted the challenges in preparing these documents, public consultation was an important part of their development and they will be very useful in future decision making. Ms Gibson thanked the Panel for their comments and suggestions, and agreed to follow up technical advice with individual members following the meeting.</p>
<b>6 Reef 2050 Plan – Update on progress to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre</b>
<p>Ms Rachel Parry spoke to the Panel regarding the Reef 2050 Plan Update on Progress due to be presented to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2016.</p> <p>Ms Parry noted the release of the Reef 2050 Plan Annual Report and Implementation Strategy 2016 on 28 September 2016. Ms Parry confirmed the progress update will include up to date information</p>

## DISCUSSION

on the vegetation management laws.

The Reef 2050 Plan Investment Framework will be provided as an addendum to the update. The update acknowledges the 2016 bleaching event however the final report on mortality will not be available until early 2017.

The Chair outlined the foreword he has prepared for the update, including points on the importance of climate change and the need for global action, and continuation of effort to increase the resilience of the Reef.

### 5 Reef 2050 Plan – Investment Framework

Ms Celeste Powell gave a presentation to the Panel on the development of the Reef 2050 Investment Framework. The Investment Framework will outline current investment in protecting the Reef, investment priorities for the future and strategies for boosting investment and diversifying investment sources.

The Panel noted that their input from the previous meeting had been used to identify six priority areas for investment:

- Reef Water Quality Protection Plan actions
- Field Management Program actions
- Reef 2050 Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program actions
- Crown-of-thorns starfish control actions
- Traditional Owner actions
- Fisheries actions

The Panel emphasized that a key element of future investment decision making should be return on investment in terms of reef health.

The Panel broke into two groups to discuss the six priority areas in the Investment Framework and strategies to source and diversify funds. The groups provided substantial technical and strategic comments on the draft priority worksheets.

Ms Powell thanked the Panel and the joint team for their contributions.

### 7 Reef Trust Phase 5 Investment

Ms Ami McGrath presented the paper on Reef Trust Phase V investments. Reef Trust progress is encouraging and starting to attract private investment for better outcomes on the Reef. The Reef Trust Innovative Financial Mechanisms Panel has met three times and is made up of bankers and investors with the aim to create investments that may encourage private investment. Reef Trust Phase V includes two co-investment proposals.

The Panel considered and endorsed the project *Repair and Restoration of Priority Coastal Habitat and Wetlands* which proposes to more than double the extent of ecosystem and wetland rehabilitation work to re-establish ecological processes, improve connectivity, and enhance nutrient assimilation and sediment trapping.

The Panel considered *Project Uplift – Supporting MSF Sugar to move cane farmers beyond industry best practice for nutrient, irrigation, pesticide and soil management* which proposes to support the scaling up of Project Uplift with the establishment of 36 new farming groups and the transition to new farming system which would lead to Smartcane BMP accreditation to above industry standard

## DISCUSSION

level.

The Panel conditionally endorsed the proposed *project* noting that there are some issues to be addressed through the project plan.

### 8 Update on Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program

The Panel noted the update on the Reef 2050 Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program.

### 9 Northern GBR Response Plan

Ms Elisa Nichols presented paper on the draft Northern GBR Response Plan. It is intended that this response plan be an attachment to the update on progress delivered to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

At the Reef 2050 Advisory Committee meeting on 3 August 2016, the Committee supported the consolidation of a northern GBR response / action plan to outline commitments to reduce other pressures and give the northern GBR the greatest prospects of recovery.

The Panel discussed the merits of the document, based on the limited evidence of the interim report at this point in time. The Panel was concerned about finalisation of the document prior to the final report of coral bleaching being released in early 2017.

The Panel questioned whether the document was a “response plan”, as it is currently a communication tool to show what work is already being done.

The Panel questioned the value of another “plan” rather than using the Reef 2050 Plan adaptive management framework to respond to the coral bleaching.

### 10 Seasonal Forecasting

Dr Andrew Ash introduced the item. The focus of best management practice in a reef context is on maintaining ground cover and land condition to minimise sediment movement and in nitrogen management of sugarcane to minimise dissolved inorganic nitrogen entering streams and waterways. There is an opportunity to better use seasonal climate forecasting in framing practices (e.g. Sugar cane, grazing).

The Panel welcomed Dr Narendra Kumar Tuteja from the Bureau of Meteorology who gave a presentation on seasonal forecasting by the bureau.

The Panel discussed the merits of the forecasting, and the reality of trying to get farmers to uptake the technology where there has been inaccuracies and suspicion of the bureaus forecasting in the past. Forecasting technology can be beneficial to fertilising decisions, and soil and nutrient management.

### 11 Update from Reef Water Quality Protection Plan Independent Science Panel working group

The Panel noted progress of the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan Independent Science Panel working group.

One issue that has arisen with the regional report cards is the differing report card scores for water quality indicators across freshwater through estuarine to enclosed coastal and open coastal waters. The scores can show stepwise changes across the boundaries.

## DISCUSSION

This issue including guideline values and metrics is on the agenda for the next ISP meeting on 28th October and relevant people have been invited to attend.

Progress on the draft Scientific Consensus Statement and any significant issues emerging will be discussed at the next Independent Science Panel meeting. The Synthesis – science, policy and management workshop has been booked for 9-11th November in Townsville and around 110 invitations have been emailed to key participants.

### 12 Emerging Scientific matters

The Chair invited members to highlight any emerging scientific matters to the attention of the Panel.

### 13 Other Business

The Secretariat reminded members that appointments for the Panel will expire mid-2017. Members can have five consecutive terms, with the intention of a rolling membership with three new members each term. Members were requested to self-nominate to the Secretariat if they don't wish to continue on the Panel.

The Panel requested that presentations are sent to members before the meeting. The Chair also noted that presentations need to be concise and run on time.

The Panel viewed draft videos on Reef 2050 best available science, partnerships, and the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan 2015 Report Card.

The Panel drafted a communiqué and agreed to its release on the Department of the Environment and Energy's website.

### 14 Next meeting

The Panel agreed on the following meeting dates for 2017:

- Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2017
- Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> August 2017, with an joint evening event to be held with other Reef 2050 advisory bodies, and
- Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2017.