



Reef 2050 Plan

INDEPENDENT EXPERT PANEL - MINUTES

Date Thursday, 28 February 2019, 9:30am – 5:00pm
Venue Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, Southbank

ATTENDEES

Members

Prof Ian Chubb AC, Chair	Dr Russell Reichelt
Dr Andrew Ash	Adj Assoc Prof Stephan Schnierer (<i>by phone, items 1-5</i>)
Prof Damien Burrows	Adj Prof Natalie Stoeckl
Prof Terry Hughes	Dr Stuart Whitten
Prof Ove Hoegh-Guldberg	Prof Kerrie Wilson
Prof Helene Marsh	

Other

Mr Dean Knudson	Deputy Secretary, Department of the Environment and Energy
Ms Deb Callister	A/g First Assistant Secretary, Department of the Environment and Energy
Mr Craig Moore	A/g Assistant Secretary, Department of the Environment and Energy
Ms Angela Cameron	Director, Department of the Environment and Energy
Dr Will Howard	Assistant Director, Department of the Environment and Energy
Ms Milica Milanja	Secretariat, Department of the Environment and Energy
Ms Elisa Nichols	Executive Director, Office of the Great Barrier Reef, DES
Ms Louise Smyth	Director, Office of the Great Barrier Reef, DES
Ms Margaret Johnson	General Manager, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
Dr David Wachenfeld	Chief Scientist, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
Dr Mel Cowlshaw	Assistant Director, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
Dr Paul Hardisty	CEO, Australian Institute of Marine Science (<i>item 5</i>)
Dr Peter Mayfield	Executive Director, CSIRO (<i>item 5</i>)
Mr David Mead	Australian Institute of Marine Science (<i>item 5</i>)
Mr Matthew Fullerton	Manager, Office of the Great Barrier Reef, DES (<i>item 6</i>)
Ms Jessica Hoey	Director, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (<i>item 6a</i>)
Mr Duane Fraser	Reef and Rainforest Research Centre (<i>item 6b</i>)
Prof Pete Mumby	University of Queensland (<i>item 6b</i>)
Ms Simone Voysey	Office of the Great Barrier Reef, DES (<i>item 6</i>)
Ms Veena Nair	Office of the Great Barrier Reef, DES (<i>item 6</i>)



Joint session (Item 6) attendees from Reef 2050 Advisory Committee

The Hon Penelope Wensley AC	Chairman, Reef 2050 Advisory Committee
Ms Frances Hayter	Queensland Resources Council
Mr Travis Tobin	Queensland Farmers Federation
Mr Matt Kealley	CANEGROWERS
Mr Richard Leck	World Wildlife Fund
Ms Diane Tarte	Australian Committee of IUCN
Ms Sue Sargent	Burnett Local Marine Advisory Committee
Dr Christian Roth	CSIRO
Mr Paul Aubin	CareFish
Ms Imogen Zethoven AO	Queensland Conservation Council
Dr Paul Hardisty	Australian Institute of Marine Science
Ms Dorean Erhart	Local Government Association of Queensland
Mr Duane Fraser	Independent Traditional Owner
Mrs Margaret Stevenson	Queensland Seafood Industry Association
Ms Theresa Fyffe	Great Barrier Reef Foundation

APOLOGIES

Members

Dr Eva Abal
Prof Bill Dennison
Dr Britta Schaffelke
Ms Jane Waterhouse

1 Acknowledgement of Country

The Chair acknowledged the traditional custodians of the area. He acknowledged their continuing culture and contribution they make to the region and paid respects to their Elders past and present.

2 Welcome to Members

The Chair welcomed members and presenters to the meeting, noting apologies from Dr Eva Abal, Prof Bill Dennison, Dr Britta Schaffelke and Ms Jane Waterhouse. The Chair noted that agenda item 6 would be held jointly with the Reef Plan 2050 Advisory Committee. The Chair noted the attendance of various presenters throughout the day.

3 Conflicts of interest

Panel members declared actual and perceived conflicts and provided written documentation to the Chair and Secretariat. The Chair addressed written updates provided by Panel members and discussed them with the Panel. The Chair outlined actions to manage potential conflicts in accordance with the Panel's protocol.

4 Panel business

The Chair noted that the first part of this session would be a closed session for members to discuss the Panel's Terms of Reference and operation of meetings. As such the Joint Secretariat left the room.

During the second part of the session Members noted that under the Panel's Terms of Reference, working groups may be established for particular matters. The only working group established to date is the Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan Independent Science Panel, but it may be beneficial to establish more working groups in future. The Panel discussed tasking individual members, or a small group of members, to review complex technical papers in future and present a summary of the issues at Panel meetings.

The Chair noted that the Joint Secretariat would commence a process to allocate existing members into two groups with 1.5 and 5-year contract lengths so that all contracts do not require renewal at the same time. An update on the appointment process will be provided at the May 2019 meeting.

The Panel endorsed the minutes of Meeting 12, which was held on 5-6 November 2018, with one minor spelling correction.

5 Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program

Dr Paul Hardisty provided the Panel with an update on progress with the Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program (RRAP) concept feasibility study. The Panel noted the progress of the RRAP and anticipated next steps. The Panel noted that reports were being finalised and that the transition to the research and development phase would occur after July 2019.

The IEP sought further information about:

- how the different management options would be prioritised and the decision-making process involved in prioritisation
- the process to terminate any management options that are assessed to be unworkable after an initial period of implementation
- timing for peer review, the Panel's review, and delivery of the suite of final documents.

The Panel advised on the importance of:

- including clear information on prioritisation, governance structures and processes in the business case
- providing a convincing argument for investment in research and development
- clarifying the details and assumptions used in models, including the assumptions behind the modelling of economic benefits
- the importance of considering the relationships between corals and broader ecosystems such as mangroves and seagrasses
- the need to talk about regional differences across the Reef.

The Chair noted that the business case and supporting documents would be provided for the Panel's review two weeks prior to the next meeting, being held on 9 May meeting. Members requested that of the peer reviewer comments also be provided.

6a State of the Reef

Agenda items 6a, 6b and 6c were undertaken in a joint session with members of the Reef 2050 Plan Reef Advisory Committee (RAC).

State of the Reef

Dr David Wachenfeld provided the advisory bodies with an update on the current State of the Reef, including:

- recent, unprecedented levels of rain and flooding in north Queensland has led to flood plumes, which are being monitored and assessed
- the threat of mass bleaching from thermal stress has been reduced for the Reef due to cooler weather in January and early February
- there are some small patches of increased sea surface temperatures in the north.

Outlook Report

Ms Jessica Hoey provided advisory body members with an update on the draft 2019 Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report. The Outlook Report has assessed the current condition and trend of the ecological, economic, social and heritage values of the Region.

The advisory bodies noted that the draft Outlook Report was due to go to peer review in March 2019 and is expected to be published in the third quarter of 2019.

State Party Report

Mr Craig Moore provided the advisory bodies with an update on drafting of the State Party Report, which is due for completion at the end of 2019. The Joint Secretariat provided the advisory bodies with information on the approach to reporting progress against the 2020 targets.

6b 2020 Review of the Reef 2050 Plan

Timeline for the Review

Ms Angela Cameron provided an overview on the timelines for the 2020 Review of the Reef 2050 Plan (the Plan). The advisory bodies noted that in line with the adaptive management approach to the review, this was an updated version of the timeline that had been provided at previous meetings. The advisory bodies noted that they would receive a briefing on two components of the review – the Climate Change Trajectories and the Program Logic – at today's joint session.

Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Aspirations Project

Mr Duane Fraser provided an update on the Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Aspirations Project and noted that the consortium had delivered their Final Report to the Department of the Environment and Energy. The Report was awaiting approval for publication. The Advisory Bodies noted the recommendations and discussed the approach and potential challenges to implementation. The Advisory Bodies noted that the Final Report would inform the review of the Plan.

Modelling to prioritise management actions under different climate futures to inform 2020 Review

Prof Peter Mumby provided the Advisory Bodies with a presentation on modelling to prioritise management actions under different climate futures, the aim of which is to look at the relative responses of the Reef to various interventions.

The Advisory Bodies:

- sought clarification on the types of models being used by the project and how they align with models being used by other programs
- discussed the importance of clarity about the underlying assumptions and what is/is not included in the models
- noted the need to take regional differences into account in the models
- noted that unpredictable events such as floods, cyclones and bleaching would affect the model outlooks.

Reef 2050 Plan outcomes framework workshop

Mr Matthew Fullerton provided the Advisory Bodies with an overview of the outcomes framework workshop, which was held with representatives of RAC and IEP in February 2019.

6c Joint IEP and RAC discussion on the 2020 Review

The Chairs invited discussion between the Advisory Bodies on the review of the Plan, particularly in relation to the revision of the Plan's outcomes framework.

The Advisory Bodies used the information presented in agenda items 6a and 6b to inform their discussions and develop advice on the review of the Plan. The Advisory Bodies agreed that it is time for bold action. Key points covered in the discussion are summarised below.

- Climate change is the biggest issue affecting the Reef and needs to be emphasised prominently in the Plan. Climate change is not a future threat, but a present reality. If action is not taken to limit global warming to 1.5C, any interventions to protect the Reef would likely be ineffective.
- It is important to get the Plan's narrative and context right. The vision and outcome statements need to be aimed at a broad audience.
- Along with a vision, the Advisory Bodies agreed that the Plan could also include a mission statement, to assist with setting context.
- The Plan needs to adequately capture the reciprocity of the role that communities have in protecting and managing the Reef, and the economic and social benefits that the Reef provides to communities.
- The Advisory Bodies reiterated the need to communicate that there is still hope if we act now. In the meantime, there is a need to ensure management actions maintain the ongoing resilience of the Reef to keep it alive while global actions on climate change catch up are undertaken.
- The Plan needs to recognise the Reef's regional differences.

The Advisory Bodies noted that there will be further work to fine-tune the Plan's outcomes framework and language, which would be discussed at future meetings.

7 Panel discussion on Reef 2050 Plan review

The Chair invited further discussion on the review of the Plan, in the context of the information provided under Agenda Item 6 and following the discussion with members of the RAC.

The Panel suggested that the revised Plan should reflect the context within which we are currently operating, which is different to 2015 when the Plan was first conceived due to back-to-back bleaching events in 2016 and 2017 and other extreme weather events. Members reiterated the importance of acknowledging that climate change is no longer a future threat, but a current reality affecting reefs worldwide.

The Panel's suggested vision for the Plan was proposed as '*a GBR that is a sustainable living natural wonder of the world in the face of climate change*'. Members discussed their goals for the Plan, which include:

- To influence the reduction in emissions both within Australian and globally to achieve a stable climate.
- A sustainable Reef ecosystem with the capacity to recover
- A Reef that is managed in a way that recognises regional differences
- Traditional Owners have an economic, social and cultural wellbeing that results in sustainable healthy people and the management of the Reef for the benefit of the nation
- Reef communities and industries have economic, social and cultural wellbeing and are empowered to act as stewards of the Reef.

The Panel noted that the Joint Secretariat would work to refine and finalise the Plan's vision, mission and outcomes in consultation with stakeholders.

8 Development of advice for Ministers

The Panel discussed key items to raise with Ministers, in particular their advice on the 2020 Review of the Reef 2050 Plan. The Panel noted that they would develop their advice to Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Forum out-of-session.

The Panel reviewed their previous advice to government, from May 2017. They noted that the advice was still relevant and could be included in their advice to Ministers.

9 Other business

The Panel noted the report from the Independent Science Panel's 9 November 2018 meeting.

The Panel agreed to hold meetings on 9 May, 13 August and 13 November 2019, noting that a joint networking event with RAC would be held on 12 November.

The Panel agreed that a communiqué would be finalised out-of-session and published on the Department of the Environment and Energy's website.

The Panel did not raise any other business.

Meeting closed at 5.20pm.