



Reef 2050 Plan

INDEPENDENT EXPERT PANEL - MINUTES

Date	Friday, 5 May 2017
Venue	QUT Council Room, Level 2 U Block, QUT Garden Point Campus, Brisbane QLD
Opened	9:00am
Closed	5:00pm

ATTENDEES

Members

Prof Ian Chubb AC, Chair	Prof Helene Marsh
Assoc Prof Eval Abal	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
Prof Terry Hughes	Adj Prof Natalie Stoeckl

Other

Mr Stephen Oxley	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
Mr Craig Moore	Director, Department of the Environment and Energy
Ms Stefanie Lowe	Secretariat, Department of the Environment and Energy
Ms Elisa Nichols	Executive Director, Office of the Great Barrier Reef, EHP
Ms Louise Smyth	Director, Office of the Great Barrier Reef, EHP
Ms Margaret Johnson	General Manager, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
Ms Josh Gibson	Director, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
Dr David Wachenfeld	A/g Director, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (<i>9am-3pm, items 1-4</i>)
Mr Dylan Horne	Manager, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
Dr Will Howard	Assistant Director, Office of the Chief Scientist
Dr Karl Braganza	Manager, Bureau of Meteorology (<i>9am-3pm, items 1-4</i>)

APOLOGIES

Members

Dr Andrew Ash	Prof Ove Hoegh-Guldberg
Dr Stefan Hajkovicz	



DISCUSSION

1 Acknowledgement of Country

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.

2 Welcome to Members

The Chair welcomed members and presenters to the meeting and noted apologies.

The Secretariat outlined relevant housekeeping issues for the day.

3 Conflicts of interest

The Chair noted the summary of conflict of interests and addressed updates.

4 Workshop: Implications of recent bleaching events and mortality for the Reef 2050 Plan

The Chair re-iterated the importance of the Panel given the current state of the Reef. The advice formed by this workshop will be presented to the Ministerial Forum in July 2017.

The Panel received four presentations to help inform discussions.

1. Prof Terry Hughes presented on mass-bleaching and mortality of corals, and the implications for the Reef 2050 Plan. Prof Hughes delved into the 2016 and 2017 bleaching event, relationships between drivers and ecosystems, and gave the Panel an overview of his to-be-released paper [Coral reefs in the Anthropocene](#).
2. Dr Will Howard presented on long term changes in ocean temperatures, level and pH. Dr Howard looked at sea surface temperature, ocean warming and ocean acidifications.
3. Dr Karl Braganza presented on predicted changes to climate: ENSO frequency, cyclones, rainfall patterns and predictions. Dr Braganza drew similarities between Black Saturday, the importance of emergency management when dealing with extreme events, the confluence of trends and extremes (including the Great Barrier Reef), and how scientists need to interpret these in order to help policy makers make the best decisions.
4. Dr David Wachenfeld presented on climate change, cumulative impacts and implications for the Reef 2050 Plan. Dr Wachenfeld reviewed the major threats to the Reef, the cumulative impacts that have been witnessed over recent history, and the pressure this is placing on the resilience of the Reef.

The Panel broke out into four groups to consider five of the themes under the Reef 2050 Plan.

The groups considered the relevant Reef 2050 Plan targets and actions and discussed which of the present actions are still relevant, which are less important in the light of the present circumstances and where any new actions are needed. Groups considered a range of action types including regulatory, policy, financial and partnership approaches.

The groups reported back and discussion was focused on synthesising across the themes. The Panel agreed that the major issues that need addressing in the advice are:

- Climate change (global warming)
- Community engagement (including traditional owners, local government, and others)

DISCUSSION

- Communication
- Ecologically functioning reef
- Crown-of-thorns starfish
- Water quality
- Speed and scale
- Changing baseline.

The Panel agreed to draft the advice out of session, with the aim of having it finalised before the Ministerial Forum in July 2017. The Panel also agreed to define ecological function.

The Chair reminded the Panel that each member will be requested to sign off on the final advice before it is given to Ministers.

5 Innovation challenges – and possible projects

The Panel discussed the key problem areas and questions that can serve as the basis for a call for innovative proposals and ideas.

The Panel agreed not to engage in gimmicks, however innovative ideas should be tested with feasibility studies, pilots and/or experiments before they are dismissed completely.

The Panel endorsed to further explore the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre (RRRC) project to protect coral refugia against warm water-induced coral bleaching and requested a full proposal to come out of session.

The Panel agreed to discuss the concept of an innovation challenge further at their next meeting in August 2017.

6 Panel business

The Panel endorsed the minutes from the fifth and sixth meetings on 18 October 2016 and 28 March 2017 respectively.

7 Other business

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

The Panel were reminded of the following meeting dates for 2017:

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