



Reef 2050 Advisory Committee - Communiqué 31 October, 2023

The Reef 2050 Advisory Committee (RAC) held its twenty-sixth meeting on 31 October in Brisbane/Meanjin. The RAC, chaired by the Honourable Penelope Wensley AC, is one of two advisory bodies for the Reef 2050 Plan. Established in 2015, it facilitates engagement with industry and the broader community on the implementation and review of the Reef 2050 Plan and provides strategic advice to the Australian and Queensland governments on reef policy, management and investment prioritisation.

The meeting followed a joint dinner the evening prior with members of the Independent Expert Panel, at which members were addressed by Senator Nita Green, Special Envoy for the Great Barrier Reef, and the Honourable Leanne Linard MP, Queensland Minister for the Environment and Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

The RAC received a presentation on the current state of the Reef, forecasts for the El Niño summer and Crown-of-Thorns Starfish control from the Chief Scientist of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

The RAC received updates from Australian and Queensland Government officials on:

- The UNESCO World Heritage Committee decision and preparation for the progress report to be submitted to UNESCO by 1 February, 2024.
- Progress with implementing the commitments made to UNESCO on water quality and fisheries.
- The statutory review of the Reef Regulations.

Some RAC members sought further clarity about water quality investment planning and wanted to ensure against top-down approaches, noting that the RAC had recently provided advice on the importance of improved local and regional engagement. Several RAC members requested greater transparency about government decision making and more certainty for water quality investment and fisheries reforms.

The RAC received informative presentations on Australian and Queensland Government environment reforms and development of environmental market approaches including:

- The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act reforms through the Nature Positive Plan from the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
- The Queensland Natural Capital Program from the Department of Environment and Science
- Reef Credits from Eco-Markets Australia.

The Committee received with appreciation thoughtful presentations on current activities and achievements from RAC member organisations, the Queensland Resources Council and the Queensland Farmers Federation.

The RAC also received a follow-up presentation on the revision of the Blueprint for Resilience by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.



With the RAC Chairman's term due to conclude at the end of 2023, this meeting was the final under the Chairmanship of the Honourable Penelope Wensley AC. Ms Wensley made concluding remarks, reflecting on her time as Chairman and the ways in which the RAC had evolved and developed over the years. Members expressed their appreciation, admiration and respect for Ms Wensley's significant contribution in over eight years of service as the Chairman. The Committee wished Ms Wensley well for her future endeavours.

RAC Members are: The Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators (AMPTO), the Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA), Traditional Owner groups in the GBR, Queensland Resources Council (QRC), Queensland Farmers Federation (QFF), AgForce, CANEGROWERS, Natural Resource Management Regions Queensland, Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ), the Australian Committee of the International Union of the Conservation of Nature (ACIUCN), the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS), CAREFISH, CSIRO, the Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF), Local Marine Advisory Committees, Queensland Conservation Council (QCC), Queensland Ports Association and the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF).

CSIRO was not represented at the meeting.