



Reef 2050 Plan

INDEPENDENT EXPERT PANEL – COMMUNIQUÉ 25 AUGUST 2021

The twentieth meeting of the Reef 2050 Plan Independent Expert Panel was held on 25 August 2021 by videoconference.

The Panel welcomed the Honourable Sussan Ley MP, Australian Government Minister for the Environment and the Honourable Meghan Scanlon MP, Queensland Minister for the Environment and Great Barrier Reef, and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs to the meeting. Minister Ley provided an update on developments in relation to the World Heritage Committee meeting and the decision not to place the GBR on the List of World Heritage in Danger and outlined the next steps in the process. Minister Scanlon provided an update on financial commitments made by the Queensland Government to protect the environment and the GBR Reef and climate programs.

Both Ministers expressed their appreciation for the role that Panel members play in keeping the Government informed about the threats to the health and resilience of the Reef and their valuable contributions to the development of the updated Reef 2050 Plan. The Panel thanks Ministers Ley and Scanlon for attending the Panel meeting and providing their insights.

The Panel discussed the implications of the 44th World Heritage Committee decision on the Great Barrier Reef and noted plans for Australia to request a reactive monitoring mission over the next 12 months, and deliver a state party report on the state of conservation to the World Heritage Centre by 1 February 2022.

The Panel received an update on the Reef 2050 Plan and expressed concern that it was yet to be publicly released. Members unanimously agreed that the updated Plan should be released immediately in its current form, noting that it can be updated at any time as knowledge and understanding about the Reef changes.

The Panel discussed the recently released IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, and the consequences of climate change for the Reef. The Panel also discussed how changes in weather, sea temperature and level, cloud cover and ocean currents will affect Reef water quality as the planet warms.

The Panel received updates on and discussed:

- the Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan
- the Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program
- recent meetings of the Reef Water Quality Independent Science Panel (ISP)
- the 2020-21 Australian Institute of Marine Science Long-Term Monitoring Program report.

The next meeting of the Panel is proposed for November 2021.

Panel members

* Apologies

Professor Ian Chubb AC FAA FTSE FACE FRSN (Chair)

Former Australian Chief Scientist

Dr Andrew Ash

Research Consultant and Advisor

AJ Ash and Associates

Dr Richard Brinkman

Research Program Director

Sustainable Coastal Ecosystems and Industries
in Tropical Australia, Australian Institute of
Marine Science

Professor Damien Burrows

Director of TropWATER

James Cook University

Dr Romy Greiner

Environmental Economist

Director, River Consulting

Professor Ove Hoegh-Guldberg

Professor of Marine Studies

Deputy Director of the Australian Research
Council Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef
Studies

University of Queensland

Professor Terry Hughes

Director of the Australian Research Council
Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies

James Cook University

Professor Catherine Lovelock

School of Biological Sciences

The University of Queensland

Professor Helene Marsh AO FAA FTSE

Emeritus Professor

James Cook University

*** Dr Russell Reichelt AO FTSE**

Environmental science and sustainable use

Dr Britta Schaffelke

Research Program Director

Australian Institute of Marine Science

**Adjunct Associate Professor Stephan
Schnierer**

Southern Cross University

Ms Jane Waterhouse

Senior Partner, C2O Consulting

Senior Research Officer, TropWATER, James
Cook University

Dr Stuart Whitten

Institutional and Environmental Economist

CSIRO Land and Water

Professor Kerrie Wilson

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