



Reef 2050 Plan

INDEPENDENT EXPERT PANEL - MINUTES

Date	Tuesday, 28 March 2017
Venue	QUT Council Room, Level 2 U Block, QUT Garden Point Campus, Brisbane QLD
Opened	9:00am
Closed	2:00pm

ATTENDEES

Members

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

Other

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
Dr Kevin Gale	Assistant 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
Dr Will Howard	Assistant Director, Office of the Chief Scientist

APOLOGIES

Members

Prof Damien Burrows	Prof Terry Hughes
Dr Stefan Hajkovicz	Prof Helene Marsh
Prof Ove Hoegh-Guldberg	



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 to the meeting and noted the apologies of Prof Ove Hoegh-Guldberg and Dr Stefan Hajkowitz. He noted late apologies had been provided by Prof Damien Burrows, Prof Terry Hughes and Prof Helene Marsh due to Severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie descending on Northern Queensland.

Several presenters and guests were either also unable to attend due to the cyclone, or cancelled attendance due to the workshop postponement.

The Chair provided feedback to the Panel from the Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Forum in November 2016, where the Panel was charged with providing advice on further action required in the Northern Great Barrier Reef most affected by the 2016 bleaching event.

The Chair advised that, out of respect for Panel members in Townsville that were unable to make it to the meeting, the workshop *Implications of bleaching events on the Reef 2050 Plan* will be postponed, and a special workshop meeting will be scheduled in late April/early May, dedicated to preparing advice for the Ministerial Forum.

The Secretariat outlined relevant housekeeping issues for the day.

3 Conflicts of interest

The Chair noted the summary of conflict of interests and called for any updates.

4 Workshop

The Chair outlined the scope for the workshop, and the Panel discussed potential issues to be dealt with in more detail.

- Panel advice should be within the scope of the terms of reference. Advice needs to link to the Reef 2050 Plan as the adaptive management framework guiding decisions for the reef.
- Actions and targets in the Reef 2050 Plan may need to be changed to response to the pressure faced by the Reef. The mid-term review of the plan in 2018 is a convenient opportunity to formalise these changes. However, some actions may need to be implemented immediately.
- Coral is not the only marine ecosystem being affected by rising ocean temperatures and extreme weather events. Advice should consider all elements of the ecosystem and not be limited to coral.

DISCUSSION

- The Reef 2050 Advisory Committee is also planning a workshop to prepare advice on this topic. The joint secretariat will investigate options for alignment to ensure advice can be consolidated sensibly for the Ministerial Forum.
- A final copy of the advice, or at least a substantial draft, will be presented to the Ministerial Forum at their meeting in July 2017.
- Climate change is the biggest pressure affecting the Reef, however building resilience (through actions such as improving water quality) is still critical to support recovery, including for non-coral species.
- Communication of the science surrounding the severity of these issues is important to achieve community acceptance, and a greater understanding about social marketing levers may be helpful.
- Different regions may be suited to different actions and responses. The Panel should consider regional variation during the workshop.

A doodle poll will be conducted by the secretariat to identify a suitable date for the workshop in April or early May.

7 Update on Reef 2050 Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program Strategy

The Panel received an update on the Reef 2050 Integrated Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting Program strategy including the current market research running until May. Panel members were encouraged to speak to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority if they'd like to be involved.

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

5.1A Science Consensus Statement

Dr Roger Shaw gave the Panel an overview on the work being completed to finalise the 2017 Scientific Consensus Statement. It has been expanded to incorporate freshwater coastal ecosystems, urban, industrial and port water quality including associated governance and socio-economic considerations as in the water quality theme of the Reef 2050 Plan.

The Panel agreed that the Scientific Consensus Statement was a useful tool that identifies current knowledge and knowledge gaps. The Scientific Consensus Statement is intended to be finalised by the Ministerial Forum in July and released to the public with a draft Reef Water Quality Protection Plan 2018.

The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection advised that a science communicator will be engaged to better communicate this product with the public, in line with recommendations from the Water Science Taskforce.

The Panel provided feedback on the approach, preliminary conclusions and implications of the updated Scientific Consensus Statement.

DISCUSSION

5.1B Revised end of catchment load reduction water quality targets

Dr Roger Shaw gave the Panel an overview of the work to develop basin specific load reduction 2025 targets for the 35 basins of the Great Barrier Reef catchment. The Panel heard that the revised targets will not indicate which regions are performing better than others.

The Panel agreed that the workshop will be an appropriate opportunity to consider how to balance investment in water quality improvements with other approaches to improving Reef health.

5.2 Report from Independent Science Panel working group to Independent Expert Panel

The Panel noted the update of the Independent Science Panel working group.

5.3 Follow-up discussion with Bureau of Meteorology

Dr Roger Shaw and Dr Andrew Ash updated the Panel on the discussions with the Bureau of Meteorology and the potential contributions that the Bureau could make in areas of interest to the Panel.

The Panel affirmed their support for the Bureau to have an enhanced contribution to the Panel. The Chair will approach the CEO of the Bureau to discuss options.

6 Reef Water Quality Protection Plan review update

The Panel noted the update on the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan review.

The Queensland Government has a discussion paper on enhanced Reef regulations out for public comment. Elisa Nichols will circulate to Panel members, who are encouraged to provide input.

10 Update from Reef 2050 Advisory Committee

The Panel noted the update on the Reef 2050 Advisory Committee.

11 Panel business

The Panel endorsed the minutes from the fifth meeting on 18 October 2016 and noted that the minutes will be uploaded to the Department of the Environment and Energy's website following the next meeting once members affected by Severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie have had an opportunity to comment.

The Panel noted that the workshop will be the last meeting for up to three members. Up to three new members will be appointed by the Ministerial Forum in July.

DISCUSSION

8 Reef Trust

Mr Craig Moore gave the Panel an overview of the Reef Trust investment priorities from phases one to five.

The Panel discussed the broad investment priorities and project themes for investment in phase six of Reef Trust, noting that more informed decisions will be made available after the workshop session, now scheduled for late April/early May.

The Panel noted the funding available for the period 2018-19 to 2021-22 for Reef Trust and Reef 2050 Plan implementation.

The Panel endorsed the proposed expansion of scope of the Phase IV Gully and Streambank Program to incorporate digital terrain mapping of priority areas.

The Panel discussed the Reef Trust proposal process and requested individual members contact the Reef Trust section with proposals for engagement.

9 Panel self-evaluation

The Panel were provided with a collation of the results received in response to the self-evaluation survey.

The Panel discussed the areas of strength and for improvement. The Panel noted that the majority of responses were positive but there were some negative comments that had not been raised previously. Noting anonymity of responses, members were encouraged to raise areas of concern with the Chair or the secretariat as they arise.

The Panel commented that the venue was the most suitable to date, particularly for video conferencing facilities.

12 Other business

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

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

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