



# Reef 2050 Plan

## INDEPENDENT EXPERT PANEL - MINUTES

<b>Date(s)</b>	Monday, 5 November 2018, 12:15pm – 7:00pm Tuesday, 6 November 2018, 9:00am – 1:30pm
<b>Venue</b>	QUT Gardens Point – Council Room (U Block Room 214)

### ATTENDEES

#### Members

Prof Ian Chubb AC, Chair	Adj Prof Natalie Stoeckl
Prof Damien Burrows ( <i>excluding items 9a, 9b</i> )	Ms Jane Waterhouse
Prof Ove Hoegh-Guldberg ( <i>excluding items 9a, 9b, 9c, 9d, 9e, 9f, 10, 11, 12</i> )	Dr Stuart Whitten
Dr Russell Reichelt ( <i>excluding items 9a, 9b, 9c, 9d, 9e, 9f, 10, 11, 12</i> )	Prof Kerrie Wilson
Dr Britta Schaffelke ( <i>excluding item 9a</i> )	

#### Other

Mr Craig Moore	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 ( <i>items 1-9</i> )
Mr Matthew Fullerton	Manager, Office of the Great Barrier Reef, DES ( <i>item 6</i> )
Ms Belinda Jago	Director, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
Ms Jessica Hoey	Director, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority ( <i>items 1-5</i> )
Dr Mel Cowlshaw	Manager, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
Dr Roger Shaw	Chair, Independent Science Panel ( <i>items 7-9f</i> )
Dr Alana Grech	Director, ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies ( <i>observer attending on behalf of Terry Hughes</i> )

#### Presenters

Mr David Mead	Australian Institute of Marine Science ( <i>item 8</i> )
Dr Ken Anthony	Australian Institute of Marine Science ( <i>item 8</i> )
Dr Bruce Taylor	CSIRO ( <i>item 8</i> )
Mr John Gunn	Great Barrier Reef Foundation ( <i>item 9</i> )
Dr Cedric Robillot	Great Barrier Reef Foundation ( <i>item 9</i> )
Ms Liz Wren	Reef and Rainforest Research Centre ( <i>item 9e</i> )
Mr Duane Fraser	Reef and Rainforest Research Centre ( <i>item 9e</i> )



## APOLOGIES

### Members

Dr Andrew Ash

Dr Eva Abal

Prof Bill Dennison

Prof Terry Hughes

Prof Helene Marsh

Adj Assoc Prof Stephan Schnierer

## **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 both past and present.

## **2 Welcome to Members**

The Chair welcomed members and presenters to the meeting, noting apologies from Dr Andrew Ash, Dr Eva Abal, Prof Bill Dennison, Prof Terry Hughes, Prof Helene Marsh and Adj Assoc Prof Stephan Schnierer. The Chair noted that Dr Alana Grech was attending the meeting as an observer with speaking rights (but not voting rights) on behalf of Prof Terry Hughes.

The Chair noted the attendance of Dr Roger Shaw, Ms Jessica Hoey, Mr Matthew Fullerton, Ms Belinda Jago, Mr David Mead, Dr Ken Anthony, Dr Bruce Taylor, Mr John Gunn, Dr Cedric Robillot, Ms Liz Wren and Mr Duane Fraser as presenters and observers for various agenda items.

## **3 Conflicts of interest**

Panel members declared actual and perceived conflicts and provided written documentation to the Chair and Secretariat. The Chair addressed the 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.

To manage potential conflicts of interest the Panel noted that some members would absent themselves from discussion and deliberation relating to particular agenda items. Attendance for particular items has been noted in the attendance list above. The Panel noted the importance of managing potential conflicts of interest, especially as funding arrangements continue to evolve.

## **4 Panel business**

The Panel endorsed the minutes of Meeting 11, which was held on 25 July 2018.

The Chair reminded members of his intention to split the current membership into two groups, to allow for staggered appointments to the Panel commencing 1 July 2019. He noted that this means one group would be appointed for an initial 1.5-year term, and the other group would be appointed for five years. He noted that subsequent re-appointments for both groups would be for 5-year terms.

## **5 GBR Outlook 2019**

Ms Jessica Hoey provided the Panel with an update on early findings of the 2019 Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report. The Panel discussed how the Outlook Report considers and maps the values of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

The Panel noted that the Outlook Report currently looks at the reef at a whole-of-Region level and discussed the possibility of shifting to more regional, catchment-based reporting in future Outlook Reports. The Panel noted the importance of actions to manage Outstanding Universal Value and that a dynamic reef needs dynamic management.

The Panel also discussed the definition of Outstanding Universal Value as it applies to the Great Barrier Reef. The Panel noted that the baseline for what constitutes Outstanding Universal Value is different now to when the Great Barrier Reef first received world heritage status. The Panel suggested that the Reef 2050 Plan could outline how to manage that difference.

The Panel noted that the condition of the Reef has changed as a result of bleaching and other damage. The Panel noted that some coral species have shown greater resilience than others and that the Reef is likely to be very different in future due to these changes. The Panel discussed the importance of identifying key ecological functions as well as social indicators for how people use and value the Reef and working to maintain it.

## **6 Reef 2050 Plan**

The Panel discussed the approach to the 2020 comprehensive review of the Reef 2050 Plan. They discussed elements of the review, including proposed work to model climate change trajectories in the future and the structure of the plan. The Panel:

- advised that the 2020 comprehensive review of the Reef 2050 Plan should have clear links to the protection of the Reef's Outstanding Universal Value.
- noted that the current version of the Reef 2050 Plan does not place enough emphasis on climate change, particularly given what is now known about the pressures on different parts of the reef and in light of the IPCC's advice that coral reefs will decline under even a 1.5 degree Celsius rise in temperatures.
- noted that under the IPCC's scenario of a 1.5 degree Celsius rise in temperatures, there would still be around 20-30% of functioning reef remaining. The Panel noted the importance of identifying where those areas would be and determining how to maintain them.
- recommended concentrating on getting the best modelling possible for all habitats (e.g. mangroves and seagrasses), not just corals.
- recommended limiting the scenarios to potential temperature rises of between 1.5 and 2 degrees Celsius, given that the IPCC report indicates that a rise of over 2 degrees Celsius would result in more than 99% reef loss. The Panel added that it was preferable to concentrate modelling within the 1.5-2 degrees Celsius range for now, with the option of changing or adding to the trajectory in future if needed.
- noted that the elements of the models and assumptions used to develop management scenarios under the climate change trajectories need to be made clear.

The Panel discussed the benefits and outcome statements to inform the review of the program logic. The Panel:

- noted that the Program Logic Working group has met several times to advise on the program logic methodology and to develop a high level framework.
- reflected on previous advice to amend the current vision of the Reef 2050 Plan and advised the team to reinforce the concept of a 'functioning ecosystem', noting that it was important to conserve ecological function in terms of what is currently known.
- agreed to develop and provide a clear definition and outcome statement of what constitutes a functioning ecosystem, noting that this would inform the comprehensive review of the Plan.
- agreed that of the benefits identified by the Reef 2050 Plan Reef Advisory Committee at their meeting on 9 October 2018, the top three to focus on are ecological function, ecological services/processes and resilience. These should be used as a starting point to develop the next version of the Reef 2050 Plan.

## **7 Update from Reef Independent Science Panel**

The Panel received an update from Dr Roger Shaw, Chair of the Independent Science Panel.

The Panel noted the activities of the ISP reported by Dr Shaw and the recommendations outlined in his paper. The Panel noted that they were not the decision-making body in this circumstance and they were not being asked to action the recommendations.

The Panel did, however, support the recommendation that the water year (1 October – 30 September) would be used as the basis for the marine water quality metric in future.

The Panel did not support the recommendation to change the scope of regional report cards and requested further information about regional report cards be provided at a future meeting.

## **8 Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program**

The Panel received a verbal update from Mr David Mead, Dr Ken Anthony and Dr Bruce Taylor on the Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program (RRAP).

The Panel discussed the presentation and noted that work on the concept feasibility design phase had not yet been completed. The Panel offered to provide advice on the penultimate version of the report once it has been completed in early 2019.

The Panel noted that the RRAP was a feasibility study. Once the study was completed it should be able to identify the interventions that were scalable and provide a more detailed analysis of the risks associated with the new technologies. The Panel acknowledged the work done on social license and the importance of public acceptability of any proposed interventions.

The Panel was of the view that it would be useful to have a clearer understanding of the risks and opportunities for investment. The Panel noted that the scope for RRAP was focused on corals and did not consider restoration or adaptation of other components of the Reef ecosystem such as mangroves and seagrasses.

## **9 Reef Trust – Great Barrier Reef Foundation Partnership**

The Panel received a presentation from Mr John Gunn and Dr Cedric Robillot on the GBRF draft Investment Strategy.

The Panel noted that it is not their role to endorse the draft Investment Strategy but to provide advice on Reef Trust investments.

The Panel noted that they would have the opportunity to provide advice on future Reef Trust-GBRF Partnership investments by reviewing the GBRF's draft 2019/2020 Annual Work Plan in the second quarter of 2019.

### **9a-9f Reef Trust–GBRF Partnership**

The Panel discussed the GBRF Investment Strategy in separate sessions. These were:

- 9a – Reef Trust–GBRF Partnership: Reef Restoration and Adaptation Science
- 9b – Reef Trust–GBRF Partnership: Reef Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program
- 9c – Reef Trust–GBRF Partnership: Water Quality
- 9d – Reef Trust–GBRF Partnership: Crown-of-Thorns-Starfish Control
- 9e – Reef Trust–GBRF Partnership: Indigenous and Community Reef Protection Actions
- 9f - Reef Trust–GBRF Partnership: Summary of IEP advice on the Investment Strategy

Panel members that had declared actual and perceived conflicts in relation to some of these items absented themselves from discussion and deliberation. Attendance for particular items has been noted in the attendance list above.

The Panel finalised out of session and provided to the GBRF. It is included at [Attachment A](#).

## **DISCUSSION**

After the discussions about RRAP (item 8) and the Investment Strategy (item 9), the Chair expressed his disquiet at the way this business was conducted. There were no written papers, two detailed and complex (and long) presentations and an expectation that on the basis of them, the IEP would offer advice. Time for questions was limited.

The Chair noted that this would not be acceptable in the future. He undertook to discuss the matter with officials to ensure that all relevant agenda items would include written material circulated prior to the meetings, and that their papers would include recommendations and identify any particular points for discussion.

### **10 Communiqué**

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

### **11 Next meeting and 2019 meeting dates**

The Panel noted that meetings were currently proposed for late February/early March, August and November 2019, with specific dates to be advised in coming weeks.

The Panel noted that the February/March IEP meeting may include a joint workshop with the Reef 2050 Reef Advisory Committee on the comprehensive review of the Reef 2050 Plan.

### **12 Other business**

The Panel did not raise any other business.

**Reef 2050 Plan Independent Expert Panel - comments on draft Investment Strategy.**

The comments have been extracted primarily from a verbal briefing given to IEP at its meeting (without prior circulation of the paper) and some additional comments from individual members<sup>1</sup>.

Some of the comments below reinforce aspects of the strategy. A number go to the prominence (or emphasis) given to the issue in the overarching strategy. They all have relevance for the developing Work Plans.

**Substantial (and external) peer review.**

The Foundation should clearly consider drawing largely on international expertise as part of its peer-review process – given the relatively small size of the local research community with deep expertise in the area. Anything less risks diminishing the value or standing of the work – or may lead to destructive allegations of conflict of interest.

**Ensure transparent conflict management.**

The processes designed to manage conflict of interest should be given prominence in all documents. International peer review, that is review by the extended community, will be important for a number of reasons; one of them is helping deal with conflict of interest – actual or perceived.

**Ensure complementarity.**

Funding decisions must complement and build on existing activities undertaken by different agencies and institutions, as well as complement other activities funded through the Partnership. Existing programs and foundational activities should be mapped and clearly show how they will transition into the Partnership, or complement it.

**Priorities.**

Investment decisions must address the impacts identified in Outlook Reports and be clearly linked to achieving the outcomes of the Reef 2050 Plan. A clear framework to show how interventions will be prioritised is required. In order to maximise benefits to the Reef, investment decisions should take into account the activity proposed, location, capacity to scale and timing. The potential for positive impact only in a local area should not be an exclusion criterion when balanced against scalability, but it should be clear. Consideration should be given also to the different variables that effect different areas of the Reef i.e. what works in one region may not work in another.

**Identify linkages.**

Linkages between the components should be built where that is sensible for maximum benefit, and be clear.

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<sup>1</sup> A personal note: The strategy paper is much longer than it needs to be. It could do with a serious, serious edit.

## **Scalability.**

Interventions for the most part need to be scalable or to have the prospect of scalability if they are to have the impact on the GBR that an investment of this magnitude should achieve.

## **Adaptable management of the process.**

The best available science and the conclusions to be drawn from it may well highlight the need for different approaches during the life of the partnership – sometimes in short time frames. The management of this fund will need to be able to adapt to new knowledge as it becomes available. This could include approaches such as rolling application periods to ensure new and innovative ideas continue to be brought forward for consideration as they arise.

## **Global warming.**

Potential on-ground actions, initiatives, controls and interventions are critical in that they provide the reef with a better chance of recovering from insult. The evidence is, of course, that whatever can be done locally, sea surface temperatures will continue to increase over the decades ahead. The evaluation of the effectiveness (and longevity of any impact) of proposed interventions should also be assessed in the context of increased sea surface temperature, sea chemistry, changes in the overall ecosystem (marine life, grasses etc.) and possibly stronger or more intense storms.

## **Monitoring and evaluation.**

Clearly monitoring and evaluation needs to be part of all Foundation-led interventions and compatible with RIMREP. Outcomes of evaluations should be publicly available and open to peer review. It is important that monitoring and evaluation activities align with the outcomes identified (or expected) in the Reef 2050 Plan and link, where possible, to the findings of Outlook Reports. Results from monitoring and evaluation that have been openly accessible must inform the impact of the Partnership and the design of future activities undertaken as part of the Partnership.

## **Advice on specific components**

### Reef Restoration and Adaptation Science component

The Panel advises that this component should be broader in scope than just coral restoration, in line with the Reef 2050 Plan. The Panel recommends the scope include the protection and restoration of other species and habitats such as mangroves, seagrasses, coastal wetlands and fish habitats, ensuring that this complements work undertaken through all other components, particularly Water Quality. Additional feasibility studies are required as the Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program Design Phase has only considered coral so far.

The IEP looks forward to a more focussed paper as work progresses.

The Panel supports continued active collaboration with stakeholders to establish social licence for innovative proposals.

### Reef Integrated Monitoring and Reporting component



The Panel advises the Foundation to articulate how this component will complement and operationalise the Reef 2050 Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program (RIMReP).

The Panel advises that all data should be integrated across components and shared with the broader community, and provide some of the context for future funding decisions.

#### Crown-of-Thorns Starfish Control

The Panel advises that future decisions should reflect the outcomes of an independent, open evaluation on the effectiveness of the current suite of work.

#### Indigenous and Community Reef Protection Actions

The Panel advises that this component should be informed by the Traditional Owner Aspirations Project, being undertaken by Reef and Rainforest Research Centre and funded under the Reef 2050 Plan.