

TOURISM REVIEW - TERMS OF REFERENCE

A strategic approach to the future management of tourism use of the Great Barrier Reef is being developed, within the context of the broad strategic directions for the management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and World Heritage Area, biological conservation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and use values. A key part of this process is a review of Marine Park tourism, which will:

1. Review information available on the scope and extent of tourism operations in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMP) and its relationship with the broader economy.
2. Review information available on the environmental, social and economic impacts of tourism use in the GBRMP.
3. Outline current and proposed strategies and mechanisms for managing sustainable tourism use.
4. Recommend strategic tourism use policy and management mechanisms, particularly in relation to resource allocation (*broad scale*), latent capacity, site allocation (*sites for individual operations*) and permit security, which will:
 - a) provide for the ecological sustainable management of tourism
 - b) maintain tourism values and desired settings for use
 - c) maintain tourism industry viability, competitiveness and diversity and provide opportunities for a range of experiences;
 - d) ensure quality standards in presentation of World Heritage values; and
 - e) Ensure tourism use is consistent with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's obligations for protecting World Heritage, conservation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and use values in the GBRMP.
5. Recommend effective consultative mechanisms and processes for the Great Barrier Reef tourism industry which meet the needs of both the industry and government.

The review must be conducted in accordance with the objectives of the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* and be consistent with the need to ensure protection, conservation and presentation of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

The review will draw upon the recommendations arising from the review of GBRMPA conducted by Ron Brown and pay particular attention to work conducted under the Reef Tourism 2005 project. The review will also have regard to activities already being undertaken by GBRMPA in relation to tourism on the GBR, especially in regard to changes to the permit system, and will provide appropriate input into these processes.

To facilitate effective and efficient consultation a steering committee will be formed to oversee the review. Representatives will be drawn from the Marine Park tourism industry, key stakeholder interest groups and Commonwealth and Queensland Government agencies associated with tourism and environment and heritage management.

In developing recommendations on the strategic tourism use management policy and consultative mechanisms, there will be close consultation with the tourism industry, Marine Park stakeholders and Government.

A final report is to be provided to the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Industry, Science and Tourism by 30 June 1997.

**Draft Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Position Statement on
Tourism Use of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park**

1. Basis of Marine Park Management:

The Authority's approach to management of the Great Barrier Reef is founded on the following vision in the 25 Year Strategic Plan for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, in accordance with Australia's obligations to ensure the protection, conservation, presentation and transmission of the Area.

In the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area in 25 Years there will be:

A healthy environment: an Area which maintains its diversity of species and habitats, and its ecological integrity and resilience, parts of which are in pristine condition.

Sustainable multiple use: non-destructive activities consistent with GBRMPA's statutory and World Heritage properties obligations, which can continue forever, that is, in such a way that maintains the widest range of opportunities for sustainable use, and does not adversely affect the ecological integrity of its natural systems.

Maintenance and enhancement of use: the continuation and enhancement of diverse aesthetic, ecological, economic, cultural and social values, providing for the aspirations of residents, users, Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders and the global community.

Integrated management: management of activities which takes into account the ecological relationship between the Area and other adjacent areas, particularly the mainland.

Knowledge-based but cautious decision making in the absence of information: decisions based on a commitment to research, monitoring and review using data and experience from all sources and erring on the side of caution in the absence of information.

An informed, involved, committed community.

Management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and World Heritage Area will be undertaken according to the 25 Year Objectives and Broad Strategies laid down in the Strategic Plan. In carrying out its management responsibilities, the Authority will be guided by the following principles.

Nature Conservation

- Protection of the natural values of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area will be the primary concern of the Authority.
- Rare, depleted, threatened and endangered species and communities, together with their critical habitats, will be protected.
- Use practices which threaten the natural values will be effectively managed, and some areas, representative of the variety of communities and habitats found in the Area, will be maintained free from human use.

Maintaining a Cultural Landscape

- Management will recognise that the Great Barrier Reef evolved in the presence of Aboriginal people; and will enable Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders to pursue their own lifestyles and cultures, and have the responsibility for areas and resources relevant to their heritage, within the bounds of nature conservation and ecologically sustainable use.
- Sites of historical significance will be preserved, and, if appropriate, interpreted.

Presentation and Use Management

- The Authority will provide for a diverse range of use opportunities, consistent with World Heritage obligations, nature conservation, cultural & heritage values and presentation principles.

- High standards in community education and presentation of World Heritage Area values will be maintained, including the provision of relevant education, training and interpretive materials.
- Impacts of use will be managed to maintain nature conservation, cultural, heritage, use and community values, and will take into account individual and cumulative impacts of use on the World Heritage Area.
- Decision-making concerning use of the Area will involve affected use groups and stakeholders and will take into account information gathered from public participatory processes.

2. Presentation of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area:

The Authority:

- believes that the Marine Park tourism industry is the primary vehicle for the presentation of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area;
- recognises that the Marine Park tourism industry is able to facilitate presentation in accordance with Australia's international obligations under the World Heritage Convention; and
- will work with the Marine Park tourism industry to apply world's Best Practices and standards to achieve this role.

3. Basis for Consultation Processes:

In consulting with any interest group on management of that group, the Authority will ensure reasonable opportunity is given for participation by other affected interests and the public:

- recognising that the Marine Park is a publicly managed and owned natural resource and its management is of interest to the public generally; and
- recognising multiple use of the Marine Park and the likelihood that any use may impact on other users; and
- recognising that Memoranda of Understanding have been agreed between the Authority, other management agencies and with stakeholders;

therefore the Authority will continue to:

- develop consultative structures and working relationships with the tourism and other industries and Marine Park stakeholders at large;
- ensure significant management decisions are appropriately developed in consultation with tourism industry, other interest groups and the broader community.

4. Recognition of the economic significance of the Marine Park Tourism Industry:

The Authority recognises that:

- the existing Marine Park tourism industry is a major economic use of the natural resources of the Marine Park and Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area;
- the existing Marine Park tourism industry is economically significant at local, regional, state and national levels; and
- the existing Marine Park tourism industry represents major national and individual investment.

5. The Authority's Approach to Tourism Use of the Marine Park and World Heritage Area

The Authority believes that:

- tourism use of the Marine Park can be effectively managed to have no unacceptable impacts on the values of the Marine Park and Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area;
- tourism is a reasonable use of the Marine Park;
- tourism can be a desirable use of the Marine Park when it promotes awareness and understanding of the Great Barrier Reef and Marine Park, if it is conducted to achieve the aims of World Heritage Area listing and if the effects of its use are environmentally acceptable;
- in order to be able to promote understanding and appreciation of the Marine Park and Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, a Marine Park tourism industry must be:
 - professional;
 - diverse;
 - informed;
 - economically sustainable;
 - able to be commercially competitive internationally; and

- recognised as practising world best standards;
- most tourism activities can be managed through regulation, education and encouragement of self-regulation to be environmentally acceptable, to promote understanding and awareness of the Great Barrier Reef, the Marine Park and the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area;
- there is a high standard of environmental awareness, desire to conserve the environment and to promote appreciation of the Great Barrier Reef within much of the existing tourism industry;
- there is a substantial and growing awareness within much of the existing Marine Park tourism industry that economic sustainability and the competitiveness of the Marine Park tourism product rely on sound environmental management; and
- there is a growing awareness that the World Heritage values of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area can be of significant value to the Marine Park tourism industry.

therefore the Authority will:

- encourage the development of a viable, nature-based tourism industry that encourages appreciation and enjoyment of the natural qualities of the of the Great Barrier Reef with minimal disturbance of those qualities;
- work with the tourism industry and other stakeholders with the aim of defining and achieving strategic goals for a Marine Park tourism industry;
- continue to develop with the tourism industry and other stakeholders a system of managing the Marine Park tourism industry that incorporates, as appropriate: minimum necessary regulation, effective education and responsible self-management; and
- work with the tourism industry and other stakeholders to develop a system of officially-recognised accreditation for operators and staff to promote high standards of environmental care, industry professionalism and informed use of the Marine Park by the tourism industry.

6. Implications of Managing Tourism Use of the Marine Park

The Authority recognises that:

- the Authority is effectively the agency most involved in the regulating tourism activities in the Marine Park;
- its functions, obligations and principles require the management of the effects of the use of the tourism industry; but
- that management actions may have economic implications for the tourism industry; and
- it is primarily established as, and set up as, an environmental management agency;

therefore the Authority adopts the following positions:

- Economic management of the Marine Park tourism industry:
 - while recognising that its management actions may have economic implications, the Authority does not consider economic management of the tourism industry to be within its primary role or fields of expertise;

therefore:

- where major economic implications are evident arising from its actions, the Authority will seek advice from relevant agencies, experts and industry to guide its decisions; and
- the Authority will seek discussions with relevant agencies, experts, the tourism industry and other stakeholders with the aim of defining a strategic policy on economic management of the Marine Park tourism industry.
- Economic competition:
 - the Authority will maintain primacy of environmental considerations; but
 - will consider the effects of its management policies on economic competition; and
 - will endeavour to ensure that competition is encouraged providing that it is consistent with effective management of the Marine Park and Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.
- Exclusive use of Marine Park resources:
 - in principle, the Authority does not endorse the grant of exclusive use of Marine Park resources to individuals; but
 - notes that the defining of acceptable levels of use or the imposition of management requirements may on occasion result in use that is effectively exclusive.

7. Determining limits to use of the Marine Park:

The Authority recognises that:

- the Marine Park is a finite natural resource and the level of acceptable use of the resource is also finite;

- use of the Marine Park tends to be spatially concentrated around population centres, creating different pressures on natural resources within different parts of the Marine Park;
- some environments in the Marine Park have lower thresholds of acceptable use than others;
- exceeding an acceptable level of use may not be apparent until major and possibly irreversible changes occur, therefore the Authority will be guided by the precautionary principle in managing use;
- conclusive evidence that an acceptable level of use has been exceeded, or that damage can be attributed to a discrete cause, usually requires long-term research and monitoring, the results of which may only become available once damage has occurred;
- the Authority's obligations require that limits to use must be less than those likely to cause significant and irreversible ecological changes;
- orderly and proper management of the Marine Park for multiple use, and to maintain World Heritage Area values, requires setting limits to use to maintain cultural, heritage and use values as well as bio-physical values;
- reducing an existing level of use to an acceptable level of use may in certain instances require disruption of existing uses;

therefore the Authority adopts the following positions:

- where a need exists, limits to use will be set in consideration of the effects use may have on, in order of priority:
 - . the ecological or bio-physical environment:
 - : special care must be taken to protect threatened species, significant habitats or representative areas; and
 - : generally to maintain the health, dynamics and character of the natural resources of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, the Marine Park overall and at individual places;
 - . the social and cultural environment: in particular to avoid unacceptable levels of displacement of reasonable existing use by proposed new use, to maintain cultural and heritage values and to protect the Great Barrier Reef as a unique natural environment;
 - limits to use will be set on best available information, the precautionary principle, World Heritage Area objectives, the need to maintain future options and capacity to manage use effectively;
 - limits to use will be set according to the issue to be addressed, and may include, for example, numbers of visitors to islands or cays, numbers of moorings at reefs or numbers of vessels at some places;
 - recognising that ecological, social and cultural environments change over time, any limits to use set must also be flexible over time, requiring periodic evaluation of limits to use;
 - the needs of the ecological or bio-physical environment are pre-eminent and will be determined as far as possible through scientific research and monitoring;
 - the needs of the social and cultural environment will be determined as far as possible through public consultation processes, with the aim of developing consensus but recognising that many outcomes will be compromises developed from balancing competing interests;
 - where the outcomes of a decision by the Authority are likely to affect stakeholders, opportunities will be provided for comment by all affected stakeholders and, where appropriate, the public at large;
 - when the level of use of a resource is determined as likely to be exceeding the capacity of that resource, the Authority will, in principle:
 - . seek changes in the conduct of activities so that they are less likely to impact on the resource;
 - . manage the level of use to more closely align with that which is more likely to be sustainable, including re-location and control of potential but un- or under-used capacity if appropriate and feasible;
- recognising:
- . the primary need to ensure ecological sustainability;
 - . that most situations of this type will need to be individually determined on the unique characteristics of the situation; and
 - . the needs and wants of, and commitments made to and by, individuals affected.

8. Allocating Use in the context of setting Limits to Use:

For areas or activities on which limits to use are set:

- consideration will be given to minimising effects on persons with a history of use to the area or activity, providing that to do so does not negate or unacceptably compromise the reason for imposing the limitations;
- the Authority will generally give preference, in allocating use rights or privileges (eg permissions), to persons with a history of use to the area or activity;
- the Authority accepts a responsibility to continue to provide opportunities for generalised use (including roving tourism use and "as of right" uses not requiring permissions), providing it is consistent with orderly and proper management of the Marine Park;
- the Authority accepts that persons who have been granted a permission to use a specific place, or conduct a specific activity, should have precedence over persons granted a generalised permission to use the resources of the Marine Park that may include use of that specific place or conducting that specific activity.

9. Managing Growth in Tourism Use:

The Authority recognises that:

- the Marine Park tourism industry collectively, and as individual operations, needs the potential to provide a diverse range of services to increasing numbers of tourists;
- the Marine Park tourism industry (collectively and as individual operations) needs the ability to change styles of operations and services offered with changing market demands;

therefore the Authority will:

- when determining limits to use, enable a range of opportunities with capacity for the Marine Park tourism industry overall to grow, develop and adapt, providing that by so doing acceptable limits to use are not compromised:
 - recognising that best flexibility will be achieved through the Great Barrier Reef tourism industry collectively being involved in making best use of the resources within the range of opportunities provided; and
 - noting that a range of opportunities can only be provided on a broad scale, not necessarily to every operation;
- maintain areas suitable for different types of activities and operations, free of activities and operations that could cause unacceptable conflicts;
- adopt management systems for individual operations that allow more flexibility in use of the natural resources of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park within acceptable limits to use;
- collect statistics relating to those characteristics of use required for management purposes; and
- cooperate with the Marine Park tourism industry, research and tourism agencies in projects and programs to systematically collect data on visitors and visitor characteristics for the Reef and in making this information available in a format that promotes informed development of tourism use and management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park consistent with the principles of this Position Statement.

10. Contingency Planning for Disasters

The Authority recognises:

- a range of natural or human-induced events may seriously impact on parts of the Marine Park;
- those events may seriously affect the environmental values on which a part of the Marine Park tourism industry relies in offering nature-based activities and therefore the ability of individual tourist programs to operate effectively within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park while the environmental values are degraded;
- that in most cases where environmental degradation occurs through a chronic natural or human-induced event, natural recovery of the resource will be the main, if not only, feasible process of rehabilitation; and
- natural recovery of a Great Barrier Reef Marine Park resource is unlikely to occur in a shorter term than two to three years at least;

therefore the Authority will:

- as far as possible, plan for use within an area of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park to retain opportunities for re-location of tourist programs, either temporarily while a seriously degraded resource recovers or for a longer period if that is appropriate in the circumstances of a particular case;

- as far as possible while recognising the need to provide reasonable opportunities for development of new uses, plan for use in areas adjacent to areas of heavy use so that opportunities remain for re-location of tourist programs, either temporarily while a seriously degraded resource recovers or for a longer period if that is appropriate in the circumstances of a particular case;
 - develop with the tourism industry and other stakeholder interests criteria for application of contingency plans; and
 - instigate administrative mechanisms to enable a quick response to genuine contingency planning needs;
- noting that the Authority:
- does not favour in principle rehabilitation programs for tourism use locations that would rely on the translocation of resources from other parts of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park; and
 - while making every reasonable effort to assist the tourism industry in dealing with disaster situations, neither implies nor accepts any obligation or liability to an individual tourist program or any other person in preparing or implementing contingency plans for disasters.

GBRMPA Tourism Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

I. Role

- To advise the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority regarding management of tourism use of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, including management proposals and options that will maximise positive outcomes for both industry and managers.
- To examine strategic tourism use management issues and provide evaluation and feedback on strategic tourism use management processes.

II. Function

The Tourism Advisory Group is to function as a competency based group with members being appointed to the Group by the Authority on the basis of individual expertise and experience in Marine Park tourism.

The Tourism Advisory Group will function at a strategic level. It will complement, not duplicate, existing consultative processes operating at Park-wide, regional, sector-specific and local levels. The Group may also act as a referral point, passing on any non-strategic issues that may arise during discussions to the relevant Association or organisation.

In forming the Tourism Advisory Group, the Authority recognises the need to establish long term working relationships with the tourism industry which take into account environmental and socio-economic considerations.

III. Reporting

Reporting procedures, for the Advisory Group are outlined in Figure 1.

- All recommendations from the Advisory Group will be passed directly to the Managers for the relevant Project areas (eg. licensing, planning etc) to ensure that the likely impact/s of any management proposal on industry are taken into consideration during the developmental phase of management proposals.
- All recommendations will be fed directly to the Executive Group, and where necessary the MPA, in the form of attachments accompanying relevant tourism use management papers. This will ensure that the Executive Group and the MPA are fully aware of the industry's position on strategic management issues and the likely impacts of Authority decisions on industry, before endorsing management proposals.
- Where appropriate advice from the TAG will be passed on to the Great Barrier Reef Consultative Committee.
- Recommendations from the TAG will not be passed on directly to Associations or individual operators but incorporated into management proposals by the Authority which will be circulated to Associations and operators as a part of broader consultative processes.

IV. Timing

The Tourism Advisory Group will meet 4-6 times a year. Meetings will be held on a quarterly basis or as required. Meetings will take place in Townsville and typically be of one day in duration.

V. Structure and Members

At the Tourism Use Management Workshop held in May 1996 participants agreed that members elected to the Advisory Group from the tourism industry should be competency based, with individual members being appointed by the Authority.

To ensure the structure of the group is reflective of the diversity of tourism interests, it was agreed at the Tourism Workshop that members should be appointed on the basis of experience and expertise in a broad cross section of tourism related areas. These areas include types of operation, geographical area and linkages to the broader tourism community.

Individuals will be appointed to the Group on the basis of their ability to bring with them personal expertise and experience from as many as possible of the following areas:

i. Marine Park Tourism Sectors.

- Pontoon Based Operations.
- Bare Boat Operations.
- Long Distance Roving Operations - mixed Charters.
- Regular (area specific) Rovers
- Resorts.
- Game Fishing.
- Dive Operations
- Aircraft Operations

ii. Geographic Regions.

- Far Northern.
- Port Douglas/Cairns.
- Whitsundays.
- Mackay/Capricorn.

iii. Tourism Marketing and Promotion.

- Australian Tourism Commission (ATC).
- Queensland Travel and Tourism Corporation (QTTC).
- Local Tourism Associations (LTA's). Cairns/Port Douglas (FNQPB) and Whitsundays (Tourism Association).

Over 90% of tourism use in the Marine Park is based offshore these two areas.

iv. Consultative Committees and Advisory Bodies and Boards.

- Great Barrier Reef Consultative Committee.
- Maritime Industry and Science Council.
- Maritime Industry Consultative Committee.
- GBR Co-operative Research Centre Board.

To function successfully as an Advisory Group, it is recommended that the number of industry representatives be kept to around 10-12 members. The group should, however, have sufficient flexibility to bring on board individuals with expertise in specific areas on an as needs basis.

To ensure TAG members are fully aware of the views of regulatory bodies involved in tourism use management, it is recommended that representatives from the following Departments responsible for tourism and environment policy, planning and regulation also attend meetings to provide background rationale and advice to TAG members on issues.

- **GBRMPA .**
Chair or Executive Officer & the Tourism Coordinator. Other GBRMPA staff to attend on an as needs basis to provide advice on specific issues.
- **Queensland Department of Environment (DoE).**
Member to be appointed by the Department. Other DoE staff to attend on an as needs basis to provide advice on specific issues

- **Commonwealth Department of Industry, Science and Tourism (DIS).**
Member to be appointed by the Department. Other DIST staff to attend on an as needs basis to provide advice on specific issues
- **Queensland Department of Tourism, Small Business and Industry.**
Member to be appointed by the Department. Other Department of Tourism, Small Business and Industry staff to attend on an as needs basis to provide advice on specific issues
- **Experts such as economists**
For expert advice, eg on the economic implications of recommendations.

Chair

To be elected by Tourism Advisory Group members on a annual basis.

V. Review

Following an initial pilot period the functioning of the Advisory Group is to be reviewed, in a process that would include self assessment by the Advisory Group and evaluation of the Group's functioning from the GBRCC, the GBRMPA Executive and the tourism industry at large.

The TAG's operations will need to be revised periodically, taking into account the extent to which the Group remains fundamentally an Advisory Group to the Authority, or becomes an industry-driven and -resourced body operating independently but from which the Authority formally and informally accesses advice.

FIGURE 1 - PROPOSED REPORTING PROCEDURES IN RELATION TO THE TOURISM ADVISORY GROUP

