

## **Key Lessons from the Great Barrier Reef**

### **The main factors for the success of the rezoning in the GBR**

The successful rezoning outcome was due to:

- Using best available science/knowledge
- High level of public participation;
- Effective leadership; and
- Consequent socio-political support.

All four aspects were essential, but the importance of the latter three cannot be emphasised enough.

### **Key lessons learnt about role of science in the rezoning**

- Don't wait for 'perfect science' or data or you will never start.
- The value of a robust regionalisation as a basis for planning (*note that scientific experts alone will not develop a regionalisation useful for broad-scale planning eg. they may get 'hung up' trying to determine precise bioregion boundaries when mostly these are gradations in reality; they also need to understand how the bioregions will be used for planning purposes*).
- Having a clear and transparent set of operating principles assists everyone.
- The operating principles are not targets or 'ideal' amounts, and all need to be considered collectively as 'a package'

### **Key elements for the success regarding public participation**

- You initially need to be clear as to what is the problem
- The wide community needs to understand there is a problem before accepting a solution is required
- Follow up on suggestions, submissions and advice
- No successful campaign can be conducted from your office – need to get out and engage the community
- Demonstrate decisions are based on best available science and knowledge and be prepared to refute contrary claims
- Actively engage the scientific community
- Work to obtain political support
- Try to ensure known supporters are disciplined and unified
- Find and utilize 'Champions'
- Support can sometimes come from unlikely areas
- Don't ignore those stakeholders who choose to remain silent
- Commission polling to determine real level of support

### **Key lessons from a political perspective**

- Support at highest levels is needed to....
  - Overcome agency disinterest
  - Control interest pressures
  - Secure planning environment
- Consultation involving all major stakeholders must be genuine – up to last possible minute if necessary
- Clear principles/goals needed to manage pressures
- Environmental/ecosystem goals key basis
- Strong legislative framework to encourage agreements
- Industry adjustment needs to be dealt with early in the planning process

### **Key factors critical to GBRMPA's success with the rezoning**

- Restructuring the agency gave us necessary expertise and focus
- Effective communication campaigns (eg. the 'Under Pressure' campaign)
- Applied an ecosystem approach
- Commitment to community participation
- Response and follow through
- Gaining political support.....

### **Lessons learnt from 30 years of managing the GBR**

- An adaptive management approach is fundamental – (<5% of the Marine Park was no-take for 28 years; only after 30+ years of adaptive management and the rezoning in 2004 did the extent of no-take become >33%)
- Zoning is not the panacea for all marine conservation issues (other mgt tools also essential; zoning is only one of many management tools used in the GBR)
- A complementary approach (State/Federal) is also fundamental
- Recognise the marine areas and the land are linked
- Similarly social, economic and environmental issues are also linked
- Need effective leadership (both within agency & political)
- Need true integration (across agencies; within the agency; between governments; etc)

### **Main reasons for effective management of the Great Barrier Reef**

- strong political support (at all levels)
- a sound governance/legislative framework
- ecosystem-level management (EBM)... including management influence over a wider context than just the Federal Marine Park
- well developed/integrated management with all relevant Federal & State agencies
- widespread consensus that the GBR is important, with many industries depend upon its continuing health
- effective research & monitoring programs, prioritised to provide information for management purposes

### **Key strategies to increase the resilience of the GBR**

- Increase the extent of highly protected areas (*eg. Representative Areas Program/rezoning*)
- Improving water quality (*eg. Reef Water Quality Protection Plan addressing runoff, land use, etc*)
- Promoting sustainable fisheries (*eg. Queensland Fisheries Management Plans*)
- Developing sound policy re effects of climate change (*eg. Climate Change Action Plan; Bleaching Response Plan*)

### **Effective marine conservation (no matter where it is in the world)**

- Effective marine conservation requires:
  - regulation of land-based and maritime sources of pollution;
  - direct regulation of marine resource use (ie sustainable fishing);
  - establishment of MPAs; and
  - integrated coastal zone management.