

Chair Report on ISP Meeting 38 8th of March 2021

A workshop on mudcrab science and reporting issues was conducted with the ISP. This was followed by a short ISP meeting to consider other issues. The main focus of the ISP meeting was to review the science budget for 2022-23

Mudcrab workshop

The ISP participated in the Mudcrab workshop that was run prior to the ISP meeting. The workshop generated useful insights into factors that affected mudcrab populations, as well as the challenges of monitoring and interpretation. The ISP agreed to discuss the implications of the workshop for the Mudcrab indicator in more depth at the May ISP meeting and that a more detailed summary of the workshop would be developed.

Science Budget for 2022-23 and ongoing

The ISP considered options to reduce the Science program for 2022-23 from the previously scheduled \$316,300 to \$212,000, continuing at the same rate for four years.

The ISP were disappointed with the cuts to the program budget because of the difficulties of maintaining a strong monitoring program. It was agreed that:

- It was desirable to maintain the monitoring programs in the Environmental component
 - There are still large knowledge gaps around environmental indicators in the harbour
 - Building longer term datasets for environmental indicators will underpin future analysis and understanding, and provide valuable baselines in case there are future adverse events
 - Very stable habitats, like Mangroves, could be assessed every five years
 - Fish Health-Detailed Assessment was too expensive to include. It could be run whenever there assessment needed of a major impact on the harbour. The three years of collected data might form a suitable baseline.
 - There may be potential for some very stable indicators to be assessed every second year.
- It was desirable to run the Social and Sense of Place indicators in 2021-22 to be consistent with new OGBR requirements and funding for a social indicator. The cost of the Social, Sense of Place and Economic indicator can be reduced by:
 - Smaller sample size (e.g. 200 respondents instead of 400)
 - Reducing to one measure per indicator (select most appropriate)
 - Dropping the requirement for a full report
 - One implication of these changes is that there may be additional costs of changes in the DIMS system. Once the simplified system is designed, the annual costs should be much lower.
- The Economic indicators were also viewed as central to the report card. There is scope to simplify this indicator to reduce ongoing costs and simplify or remove the linkage to the collection of the community survey:
 - Develop new industry measures for Economic Performance
 - Simplify the measures for Economic Values (recreational use of the harbour)
 - Dropping the requirement for a full report

- One implication of these changes is that there may be additional costs of changes in the DIMS system. This may make it challenging to fund Economic alongside of Social and Sense of Place in 2022-23. Once the simplified system is designed, the annual costs should be much lower.
- The Cultural Heritage indicators were viewed as important, but it was noted that it is challenging conceptually to 'assess' indigenous heritage in measurable dimensions. It was discussed whether the Cultural heritage program could be staggered (to 2022-23), be potentially discontinued, or be replaced with engagement activities. In the GBR Cultural Heritage is being developed with Traditional Owners rather than formally assessing them as Human Dimensions. The ISP Chair suggested he and the GHHP Chair meet with Gidarjil to discuss the options.
- The Gladstone Harbour Model, together with the Physical (Hydrodynamic) and Biogeochemical Model, are currently in maintenance mode, costing \$10,000 per annum. The tight budget does not allow for this to continue to be funded for the report card. The ISP discussed the following steps:
 - Approaching CSIRO to identify options to further reduce costs
 - Discussing funding any maintenance requirements from reserves for future events (on the premise that the models would only need activating in these cases).
- A budget for the MC was recommended that met the cap of \$212,000 for the science program.