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## WHALE HERITAGE STEERING COMMITTEE

### MEETING MINUTES

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Date: Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023    Time: 10:30am    Venue: TW boardroom

Item	
1	<p><b>Members Present:</b> Olivia Brodhurst, Crystal Lacy, Lindsay Simpson, Trevor Rees, Emily Monacella, Roxanne Bowden, Stuart Allwright, Fiona Merida, Lynne Boyce, Nicole Rosser</p> <p><b>Apologies:</b> Deb Duggan</p> <hr/> <p><b>Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners:</b> Olivia acknowledged the traditional owners of the Whitsundays.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Acceptance of previous minutes and previous actions:</b> Minutes accepted</p> <hr/> <p><b>Membership Update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Membership is increasing and we are keen to keep growing the group.</li><li>- Role of steering committee is to be the driving force to get accreditation, play on strengths of each individual and bring these strengths together to help achieve accreditation. This might be experience and strengths in science, engagement, event management, art, whatever people would like to participate in.</li></ul>
2	<p><b>Actions from last meeting:</b></p> <p><b>WoW video – Crystal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Video is coming along really well</li><li>- Flowmotion media are putting it together professionally in-kind.</li><li>- A lot of local MRG’s are involved.</li><li>- Still in progress, with goal to be completed by 16<sup>th</sup> ready to be played at community event.</li><li>- Councillor Bauman has offered to create video/photo overlay to play at events so they can be on before – getting kids painted etc. Great success</li><li>- <i>See general discussion for more points on this topic</i></li></ul> <p><b>Whale song recordings for Welcome Whale night – Liv</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Liv – gathering whale songs to play. Have a great folder of videos recordings etc which Liv will share on onedrive. Cr Bauman is overlaying the song to whale videography so it can be played at the event.</li></ul> <p><b>One page on website with QR code</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Roxy to champion this</li></ul>

**Non – agenda item**

**Meeting with World Cetacean Alliance (WCA)**

- Liv met with WCA to run through everything we are doing and to make sure that all boxes will be ticked
- Fairly confident that what we are doing will hit the mark
- The application process is to be moved online to a portal.
- We have been strongly encouraged to start by September as at the end of Sep/early Oct a new program (Wildlife Places) is being launched. It will be a great opportunity to ride the tail fins of all the media at that time.
- Being in the Great Barrier Reef WHA and working closely with GBRMPA and sustainability initiatives at council, we are well ahead of other applicants and the work we are doing is basically 'sealing the deal'. Working with citizen science, particularly EOTR, will add into our accreditation and covers our region well.

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**Happy Whale & EOTR update**

- More whales are being identified, with another set of matches from Happy Whale.
- One of the new id's was seen in New Zealand, and others Hervey Bay and Victoria; one sighting 19 years apart.
- Need a lot more sightings, intention being to encourage everyone to input sightings into EOTR, where it will then be uploaded to Happy Whale.
- Naming competition – Red Cat Adventures has donated \$500 to Eco Barge and will be running a naming competition
- Other whale to be used for Family Fun Day – Fiona suggested calling it WoW, or something to link it to the region.
- Lindsay highlighted that it is important to not just have tourism operators naming the whales
- Liv – suggest everyone sign up to Happy Whale and start following others and share with us your profile.

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**Events update**

**Under 8's day at St Catherines**

- Crystal & Liv attended
- Great day. Played a game with the children where they were asked to show how close a boat can come to a whale – many of the children already knew the rules which was encouraging.
- Parents took zoning maps, brochures etc and intend on running same activity at family fun day.

Emily – suggestion for Family Fun day at Reef Festival of having 300m actually measured out on the beach / bay, make it visual as some people see 300m very differently than others..

**Presentation at Coral Sea Marina**

Liv did a presentation on whales at the Lookout Lounge as part of the start of cruising season event.

**Pre-whale season info night 7<sup>th</sup> June**

- Pre whale season info night – coming up.
- Crystal will let everyone know about the need for volunteers soon.
- Crystal has spoken to Robert Congoo who will be doing the welcome to country and has asked him to elaborate on the cultural connection with whales.
- Plan is then to hand over to GBRMPA to talk rules and about Eye on the Reef (EOTR) and to talk about data collection.
- In addition, the plan is to also talk about fun facts and general information about whales.
- Expecting 60 – 100people to attend based on tickets and Facebook Event response.

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**Welcome Whale event**

- We have approval from council, with funding.
- ARK Energy have also donated and there may be more opportunity form NQBP.
- Aunty Agnes' daughter Casey is doing the indigenous artwork piece. Currently waiting on cost estimate for canvas.
- Councillor Bauman suggested lighting and use slide projectors to beam up pictures of coral etc onto trees to attract attention and draw people in. Nicole Rosser volunteered her business to do this in-kind for the event!
- Whale art from Reef Festival are available for use – the baby whale is here and ready to install, the adult is in Mackay and will need to be transported, reassembled and mended which will cost approximately \$1000.
- Meeting on site weekend of 2<sup>nd</sup> June for whoever is keen to volunteer to meet at the site to talk logistics. Suggest meet at 5pm to match lighting on the day.
- Some merchandise – Deb is working on that.

**Reef Festival / Hydrophone training**

- Liv confirmed with UQ what type of hydrophone they suggest and what settings etc – this information was sent out via email.
- Crystal to send out industry hydrophone training invite soon.
- Call going out to register for stalls at Reef Festival is coming soon.

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**Comms**

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- Spoken about social media, main thing is doing a post on whales of the Whitsundays to get people to join the site, getting people to go through their contacts to join.
- Lyndsay has done a couple of stories now and sent through to Deb at newspaper.
- Communications plan is in place and on share drive.
- Lyndsay – great to do something concentrating on whale songs, maybe something on dwarf minke as well and potentially talk to JCU. Liv asked to stick with humpbacks this year and look at this moving forward.
- Fiona – Briefly touched on dwarf minkes and where they are located (mostly further north) / short season.
- Fiona – Suggested a crisis communication plan be agreed for when somebody hits or kills a whale in Whitsundays. No matter if the person is faultless, it will eventually happen no matter how much people care. We need a response do bring community together and maybe the group needs to consider that if it may happen there is a planned approach.
- Whitsunday Disaster Management Group have comprehensive comms platform, could pull a template that may apply, and hopefully Tourism Whitsundays make a statement on behalf of group.
- WoW steering committee to enquire about TWs preparation for a whale incident and whether they have a plan for this event. Also request TW to be more present in this steering committee.
- Messaging – slow down, don't travel at night, during whale season, maybe interview Nicole regarding not travelling at night?
- Lyndsay – who might she interview?
- Fiona – Need to highlight high risk of hitting whales feeding in sheltered waters. Mark Read is GBRMPA's humpback expert and does this type of educational pieces. The hope is to ramp up sightings this year, then use sightings for education on where they may congregate to feed / sleep etc - Not enforceable, just providing info as nobody wants to hit a whale.
- Trevor – need to change perception etc that whales won't move, we have to move – potential story and link in with hydrophones
- Stuart – Businesses are not the only users, recreational use has increased and uninformed and unaware and largely unregulated users are out there and needs to be educational piece.
- Liv - Crystal was on sunrise on Saturday which was great. Project is getting good recognition and people starting to recognise.
- Cr Bauman did an ABC interview this morning on welcome whale event.

<p>6</p>	<p><b>General Business/Open Session:</b>  <b>Video / still footage of whales.</b>  Fiona wanted to raise some points regarding the capturing and display of footage of whales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Challenge is when trying to put footage together that imagery looks like it is within 300m – even though we all know it is zoomed in/cropped – and GBRMPA have a limitation when it comes to using footage</li> <li>- How can the story be told that ‘we were sitting here and a whale just popped up and we weren’t following them’? It is a tricky one and GBRMPA can’t share drone footage or photo’s on social media as there is an outcry.</li> <li>- Potentially show a disclaimer before footage that states that it was taken with due regard to the regulations?</li> </ul> <p>Crystal – Could start the video with a blank screen stating that all the footage following is within the rules?  Lindsay – Agreed, good educational message. Need good wording to encapsulate when whales approach, what do you do? Different behaviour etc.  Fiona – Worth investing in getting the wording right. Key is to educate that there is an increase in whales in the area and people are going to come across them, but we need people to behave in an appropriate way, adhere to 300m etc.  Liv – Suggest Lindsay develop wording and circulate amongst committee for review.</p> <p><b>WoW video</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need to be mindful of how long the video will be, particularly if shown on vessels that have the capability, and that the target audience is visitors on boat/view online.</li> </ul> <p>Lindsay – suggest breaking the video into smaller snippets for social media.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overall, play the full video at festivals / events, then smaller sections on socials.</li> </ul> <p><b>EOTR and data</b>  Emily gave a quick overview of what data she had been collecting on a personal level. Emily set up the now Whales of the Whitsundays page to get information from anyone about their sightings, ie rough location and activity. She then compared to the EOTR data base to get a feel for what was being entered. The concept was to get people engaged and pop their sightings up in a quick post. Everyone who posted was then directed to the EOTR site to enter the sighting.  Fiona – Raised concern that something like this may splinter the data set and EOTR may not get a full picture. If there is a need for a page like this or is there not enough awareness of the EOTR platform then maybe use champions that can assist GBRMPA to improve their reach.  Liv/Em– it was way more a social than scientific, with Emily cross checking to see if sightings were not loaded. Enjoy seeing community get engaged which builds on awareness. Emily agreed to continue checking uploaded sightings to make sure they are making it to EYOR too.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p><b>Actions Arising from the Meeting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liv – put a call out to operators via social media to get photo’s / media for events</li> <li>• Liv / Fiona – wording to compliment whale footage</li> <li>• Crystal – call out to operators for the pre-whale season event and do an agenda / run sheet after meeting with GBRMPA reps.</li> <li>• Crystal – send information and invite for hydrophone training to industry.</li> <li>• Liv/Crystal – approach TW re crisis communications plan in the event of an incident and for attendance at WoW meetings.</li> </ul>
<p>8</p>	<p><b>Meeting Closed at 12.15 pm</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next meeting 21<sup>st</sup> June, but there will be 2 events before then. Let us know if you want to be involved or have anything to bring to the table.</li> </ul>