

Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership (GHHP) Independent Science Panel (ISP)

Chair's report from ISP meeting #15 held on 23-24 June 2015

Day one of the meeting was a joint Management Committee (MC)/ISP workshop primarily focused on the development of the Gladstone Harbour Model (ISP006) using the Atlantis ecosystem modelling approach. The MC also discussed possible economic scenarios that could be investigated by the model (steady growth, rapid growth and slow growth) and a range of potential social, economic and ecosystem drivers that could be used to generate scenarios. Dr Beth Fullton (CSIRO) facilitated the workshop. The MC/ISP also discussed the 2015 Report Card including the methodology through which raw water quality data is converted to scores and grades for Gladstone Harbour and potential scoring systems to be used in the Report Card.

The ISP meeting was held on day 2 and the objectives of the meeting were to provide ISP members with an update on GHHP activities, and to review progress against the GHHP Science Program milestones. In addition the ISP finalised: the 2015 Report Card timeline; the outcomes of the GHHP/FRDC fish health workshop held on 22nd and 23rd April; and, the statistical support team for 2015 Report Card. ISP also ratified the out of session endorsement of the updated ISP Conflict of Interest declarations.

The Science Program is on track to deliver the required science inputs into the 2015 Pilot Report Card. Overall the milestones are on track. Although in consultation with the GHHP Management Committee there have been some revisions of deadlines for data agreements and contracting of projects. ISP agreed to three changes to the timing for the delivery of the DIMS project (ISP009) milestones 4, 5 and 6. The changes will not impact on the timing of the final delivery of the project.

The ISP agreed Dr Murray Logan (AIMS) would be a suitable contractor to provide the statistical support for the 2015 Report Card (Project ISP008) and finalised the list of statistical tasks that Dr Logan would be required to complete.

The ISP discussed and endorsed the recommendations from the GHHP/FRDC Gladstone Harbour Fish Health Research Program workshop held on the 22nd and 23rd April 2015. There had also been some out of session discussions about the recommendations. There were two key recommendations from the workshop. Commission two literature reviews: the first on fish health indicators and the second on the use of biomarkers in aquatic environments. The second is to develop a joint GHHP/FRDC project to develop an Australian approach to fish health monitoring using Gladstone Harbour as a case study.

The ISP discussed the how the connectivity indicators should be included in the Gladstone Harbour Report Card noting that connectivity is unlikely to change from year to year, and is more of a driver of harbour health than an indicator. The ISP discussed a number of potential options for connectivity indicators and agreed this needs to be discussed with the Management Committee but the ISP will recommend it remain in the Report Card as is for 2015, and will be discussed in the Technical Report as an environmental driver. The ISP will suggest to the Management Committee that the 2016 Report Card be modified to include a 'Pressures' box that will include Connectivity and other environmental drivers.

The ISP also continued their discussions about the development of the mudflat biodiversity indicators including a presentation by Professor Emma Johnston of The University of New South Wales addressed the ISP on the use of biomarkers to assess the health of marine communities.

The ISP acknowledged the significant amount of work the science team had completed since our last meeting, thanked them for their dedication and noted the ongoing high quality of their work. The next ISP meeting is scheduled for the 4 May 2015 in Gladstone.