

Chair Report on ISP Meeting 35

5th of May 2020

Management Committee

There have been some changes in the GHHP Management Committee. Paul Birch has left FBA, and has stood down as Chair of the Management Committee. Gerry Graham is the Acting Chair, and has been working hard to sort issues out. They are organising a new Memorandum of Understanding for the Partnership that will commit the partners to another three years of funding.

There has been some changes in the members who represent the partners on the Management Committee. Professor Owen Nevin, who has been the research representative on the committee, has recently left CQU under the current restructure.

Budget

Part of the challenges for the Management Committee are that the budget is very tight. For some years GHHP has been drawing down on the substantial funds that it was initially allocated, but those reserves have now gone, and the annual cost of running GHHP is above the partner contributions.

Partners have been reluctant to commit more funds, and some partners have been unwilling to provide the funds for the current year until the new agreement is in place. However there has been enough certainty over the funding established to commit to Mud Crabs, Seagrass and Corals (the last three projects to be contracted).

Costs have been trimmed further, and the Executive Officer position has been disestablished. Lyndal Hansen has been providing additional help to the Management Committee instead.

The ISP Chair and the Science team have been asked to consider options to reduce the costs of the Science program for 2020-21. These are presented at this meeting.

Data availability

The Management Committee asked whether costs could be cut in the science program by utilising other available data. A review has been conducted to address this.

Seagrass

The Management Committee identified that it may be possible to cut the costs of the Seagrass program by utilising the report and data that the JCU team provided to the Gladstone Ports Corporation. A compromise has been negotiated with the JCU team where they upload the data to DIMS and provide a very brief summary, but do not provide a seagrass report.

Science Program

The program is running well, and projects are largely on track. There have been minor delays to sampling because of COVID-19, with the only project adversely affected being the Visual Fish Health project. The Boyne-Tannum hookup has been cancelled, and alternative methods to sample have been delayed.