

GBRMPA review submission Sept 30/9/05 Attention Dr Diana Wright

From Angela Welk-Owner of East Coast Trawler FQGR

Have worked on a Fishermans Code of Conduct and Environmental Management System with a group of women in the Mackay area for the commercial fishing industry, that has recently been DPI approved, and I belong to Mackay Conservation Group and Local Marine Advisory Committee to GBRMPA and do see good work done by GBRMPA, but

Believe GBRMPA should no longer be a Statutory Body -it should be put under a federal department and funded accordingly and accountable and able to be scrutinised.

It has exceeded its statutory authority - they think they manage all the fisheries in Queensland.

Believe its power and activities need to be pulled back and need to be accountable with scientific evidence, which presently they do not appear to be doing ie The RAP program.

I remember when GBRMPA was created- it was partly to give dugong and its habitat protection-which doesn't happen- this should be their core work. They are not even stopping marina development in Muddy Bay-Airlie Beach area -that has dugong now living there- nor does it protect dugong habitat and food supply from inappropriate development.

In the area we mainly work (Townsville and north), because of flow on effects of RAP there are more trawlers working in a smaller less productive area. Many operators facing severe hardship even before fuel price rises.

Now many locals and tourists in Mackay, Hamilton Island etc are unable to get fresh local fish and prawns. This is because of impacts on commercial fishers not being to keep up supply of local seafood (because of closures) that has impacted on buyers and processors. This has lead to imports of cheap questionable quality seafood and destroyed local market price.

Extensive consultation was done by GBRMPA but it was very biased and designed to get the maximum response from those who had same agenda as GBRMPA was pursuing.

Recreational fishers and conservationists inputs appeared to be what was heeded while no notice was taken from commercial input. Many highly productive areas were lost leaving those left in the industry to work the less marginal areas and fight for it- not a good way to preserve marine species

Not enough trawlers were bought out to make any difference.... Suggest another buyout of trawlers ASAP

Not happy with GBRMPA information that is supplied to minister-believe it is biased and possibly untrue at times. It comes from those that are ideologically opposed to commercial fishing even though recreational fishing (not prawning) take more than the commercial

fishers. We understand the passion of committed environmentalists and recreational fishers and GBRMPA scientists.

But no understanding was made of our life style, that we have families, are taxpayers and that our livelihoods were going to be affected. We do not do this for fun when the weather is great and we have some spare time. We have a lot of very expensive infrastructure that is often heavily mortgaged to be engaged in the ocean fishing industry.

There was a study into the social and economic impacts of the proposed RAP and it identified that local communities, processors and allied industries, plus fisher folk and families would be impacted. We were given an overview of it at a port meeting.

But no notice of this was taken.

We were not told about the proposed yellow zone but we were told that 25% of the reef would be shut off from us. We ended up with yellow zones and 33% area shut off.

The commercial industry has lost all faith in GBRMPA and its upper management especially.

GBRMPA eventually signed off on the East coast Trawl management plan 2000-at first they wouldn't-but eventually they did when they felt it had gone far enough and delivered the management plan they wanted. This is not their job-fisheries management is both a federal/state matter.

Queensland and Federal governments are responsible for World Heritage area and the administration of the federal EPBC Act. This is what should manage the area not a statutory body that is trying to manage fisheries by environmental constraints.

There is wide spread belief in industry that fishers views are not taken aboard-this is partially because the form of consultation and submissions are of a formal nature for those that are computer literate, very literary and have the time and skills to get it done by the due date. This does not take in to account that fishers often work nights, are tired and worried about fixing the boat on time or getting crew organized or just staying in business while trying to get some time with the family. Like many indigenous people this is not their preferred way of being consulted and very many think it's a waste of time as decisions seem to be made before consultation takes place-just because not many comment does not mean they are not interested or impacted but they feel marginalised by this process.

Yours sincerely, Angela Welk