



Aries Tours Pty Ltd
16 Barnett Place,
Molendinar,
Qld, 4214
Tel: 07-5594-9933
Fax: 07-5594-9160
Email: clare@ariestours.com

Submission by Clare McFarlane, Chair Ecotourism Australia; Deputy Chair Queensland Tourism Industry Council; Board Member, The International Ecotourism Society.

I have been Chair of Ecotourism Australia since October 2002. In that time GBRMPA has been extremely proactive and engaging with the ecotourism industry.

I have served on a number of government/industry reference groups since 1999 and believe the GBRMPA has been an exemplar in engaging with industry and then following through can implementing agreed strategies.

The National Ecotourism Conference has been an excellent example of the way in which the GBRMPA has been prepared to engage with the tourism industry to achieve a sustainable tourism industry outcome.

The GBR is an ecotourism hot spot on a global level and is one of Australia's key tourism assets. Ecotourism as a rapidly growing segment of the tourism industry will rely more and more on the natural and cultural heritage values of the GBR.

The transition away from more exploitative resource based industries on the Reef such as commercial fishing is an essential move from both a perception and sustainability perspective. There is an inherent conflict to, on one hand, promote the GBR as a natural heritage icon, yet at the same time allow this extraordinary natural heritage area to have its wildlife harvested.

I supported the Representative Areas Plan approach by GBRMPA and believe that the economic value of tourism far exceeds the benefits that can be derived from exploitative activities. I would be greatly concerned if the protection offered by the RAP was diminished under this review process.

The management of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area is highly regarded around the world. I would be very concerned if in undertaking the review the GBRMPA lost planning, policy and management effectiveness. Too often centralised policy and planning results in unresponsive and risk adverse management styles. The GBR has been very well served by having a specialised Statutory Authority whose primary interest lies in one protected area. I urge the Commonwealth Government to value the great strengths of the GBRMPA and to fully value the potential of tourism to the economic and environmental sustainability of the region.

Clare McFarlane
Managing Director
Aries Tours