

Cape York Marine Advisory Group

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Community involvement in natural resource management

To the Committee for the Review of the GBRMPA

September 28 2005

This Committee has been active since 1992. In its primary years members concentrated on becoming informed, believing that accurate information and knowledge is the basis of all good decision making.

As the Committee progressed, members became aware of two things: 1) a serious lack of Day to Day Management in the Far North; and 2) a serious lack of accurate field data on which to base Marine Park decision making.

The then Cook RMRAC first enunciated these concerns in 1996 and has continued to do so right to the present.

Day to Day Management has actually diminished over this period, and on-ground field work has largely been replaced by computer modelling.

The attached documentation will show that CYMAG has pursued the issues of Day to Day Management, surveillance and enforcement as the primary concerns of members.

In the knowledge that unless they do it themselves it will not be done, CYMAG members set up their own programs of resource mapping and monitoring, and have appointed a highly qualified environmental scientist as our Environmental Projects Manager.

CYMAG is nearing completion of two Envirofund projects and has now commenced a third even more ambitious project. To carry out these projects CYMAG has attracted very skilled volunteers, which allows this work to be carried out to high scientific standards.

NRM is becoming more important to resource management in an effort to deliver to communities a greater sense of ownership, of stewardship, of an area's natural resources.

CYMAG is negotiating an offer from Cape York NRM to: 1) continue our vital water quality and seagrass monitoring projects; and 2) to provide extension services to other communities (predominantly indigenous) to become involved in coastal and marine environmental initiatives.

QLD government departments (EPA/ DPI) have strongly encouraged and supported CYMAG's work. GBRMPA, apart from supplying some water monitoring equipment, has little to no interest in what CYMAG is achieving or in the use of this data.

CYMAG is not interested in making this submission an attack on GBRMPA. The attached documentation will clearly show that GBRMPA senior staff are signally lacking in veracity, ability and a commitment to fair and equitable use of the renewable resources of the Great Barrier Reef.

Sadly GBRMPA in the far north has abandoned any attempts at management; surveillance CYMAG rates as less than 1% effective; and enforcement is a few "police" style raids that emanate from GBRMPA's policy of "enforcement through intimidation".

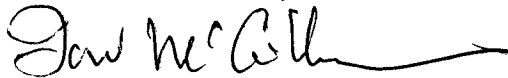
CYMAG has stated and restated that most worthwhile environmental initiatives must come from within the community and must be embraced by the community at large as worthwhile and sensible.

GBRMPA has now built up a propaganda department that they are justly very proud of. The downside of this is twofold: 1) resources that could be much more gainfully spent on basic management and similar issues are channelled into self-aggrandisement and self congratulation, and 2) even senior GBRMPA staff are falling into the trap of believing their own propaganda. This is exponentially dangerous.

CYMAG recommends that the review give high priority to the following issues:

1. The advisability of removing Day to Day Management from the Authority;
2. The oversight of research to be on a totally independent basis;
3. A much more representative and independent board for the Authority;
4. The GBR Consultative Committee to be independent and representative; and
5. Community Advisory Committees to be independent in membership and funding with on-going contact with all management agencies.

On behalf of CYMAG,



Ian McCollum
Chairman

Attachment: Indexed List of Documents