

# Deborah Lewis Marine / Tourism Consulting

PO BOX 151 AIRLIE BEACH Q 4802  
P +617 4948 0601 F +617 4948 2069 M 0439 48 06 01  
deb.lewis@whitsunday.net.au

ABN: 31 279 633 683

29<sup>th</sup> September 2005

Dr Diana Wright  
Executive Policy Advisor  
Department of the Environment and Heritage  
**CANBERRA ACT 2601**

Dear Dr Wright,

**RE: Submission – GBRMP Act Review**

As a marine tourism development consultant who has operated exclusively in the Whitsunday Marine Park region for over seven (7) years, I would like to comment regarding the review of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act.

Tourism in the catchment of the GBR is the largest employer and second largest dollar earner for our region. Visitors to the World Heritage Listed Marine Park do so to experience the wonders of a natural and pristine environment.

Over the past four years I have noticed a positive, proactive, strong and collaborative relationship continue to develop between the Authority and industry with the objective being to balance and sustain the future of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

The Representative Areas Plan (RAP) that now provides protection of 33% of the Great Barrier Reef is a significant example of how effective the Authority is when engaging stakeholders. The outcome of this consultation is an international milestone and the Authority continues to recognize the need for other measures to ensure protection of the Marine Park, at the same time allowing for usage by both recreational users and marine tourism operators.

Should the decision-making powers that impact on the marine park, its users and the surrounding, local communities, be taken away from the regionally based Authority, I believe the success we have seen in the Marine Park's strategic planning will be adversely affected.

Government decisions made in Canberra about the marine park and usage, would be done so in isolation; without the effectiveness, expediency and transparency that currently

exists. It is vital that marine tourism expertise, along with that of other relevant stakeholders, continue to be incorporated into the Authority's planning.

As a consultant I have been actively consulted by the GBRMPA on relevant marine tourism issues such as:

- Site Management Issues - Blue Pearl Bay, Hill Inlet, Tongue Bay and Bauer Bay;
- Mooring and Marker Buoys;
- Eyes and Ears on the Reef (partnership in compliance);
- Permit Allocations;
- The RAP;
- Reef Guardian Program;
- Issues surrounding Protected and Endangered Species;
- Water Quality Management;
- Sewage Legislation;
- Environmental Management Charge;
- Updating of the Tourism Operators' Handbook;
- Partnership Arrangements with the Authority and QPWS;
- Day to Day Management Unit and compliance issues;
- Guidelines for Environmental Best Practice;
- 15 year permits and Accreditation

The positive outcomes of the last three years demonstrate how the current relationship GBRMPA has with industry and other stakeholders not only is working well but continues to strengthen and consolidate.

Please contact me should you require further comment.

Yours sincerely,

*Deb Lewis*

**Deborah C. Lewis**  
**Marine Tourism Development Consultant.**