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# GREAT BARRIER REEF CRUISES PTY LTD

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RE: Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act Review Submission

We are actively developing a new and exciting eco-tourism product to showcase why the Great Barrier Reef is truly "great" to the people of the world. Our direction is based on contemporary and future strategic best practice and sustainable management. Taking a leaf out of the current regime of the GBRMPA you could say.

We are a member of CHARROA and endorse their submission. We also endorse in the most part the WWF submission. The writer has over 30 years interest and involvement in natural resource operation and management. Mostly on the water.

It is from this coal face experience that this submission comes from.

We submit –

1. That the many awards (attached) received in relation to the introduction of the new 2004 Zoning Plan are evidence that the GBRMPA is recognized by its peers as functioning well. These awards are indeed a great accolade.

2. That this recognition supports and encourages us sea level operators to present to the millions of visitors from the world that we in Australia take seriously and actively pursue best practice and sustainable environmental practices in a responsible manner. In our experience the larger percentage of visitors are genuinely interested in how the GBRMP is managed. We are proud to acknowledge the milestone of the 2004 Zoning Plan to the people of the world. We plead that whatever the review may find that there is no turning back on this mammoth outcome achieved by many years of hard work. We say that it is -

*"Hard to do good work - not hard to undo good work"*

3. Having stated the above we are aware that the GBRMPA must remain dynamic and move to adopt best governance practices. We also understand the need for efficiencies and realize that we, the end users and the generations to come, will benefit from the evolution of management. Therefore we are not opposed to sensible re-organization between DEH and GBRMPA.

4. We plead that whatever the outcome of these best governance strategies may be that a highly visible and functional management similar to what exists be kept in place in Townsville. The Townsville area with its organizations such as GBRMPA, JCU, AIMS, NTM, IOI, et al, attracts the best brains in the world relative to these matters on a continual basis. Therefore, GBRMPA should be kept on the ground up here not only to support this but also to encourage it. The environment and users benefit from it. It's a classic win - win situation that should be maintained.

5. Further evidence of the above is widely supported by the formation of the heralded Marine and Tropical Research Facility. It would be disbelief that having created a potentially world leading centre of excellence for environmental management (remembering that science is needed to make sound and responsible decisions that affect the future of Australia and the world) that the GBRMPA would be removed from it.

The GBRMPA headquarters should stay in Townsville.

6. The bigger picture. Now that most of us understand that a holistic approach (eg: catchments and water quality issues) must be taken into the understanding and managing of the environment for the benefit of all it clearly demonstrates that DEH and the GBRMPA must take a more active role in linking associated organizations together.

7. We strongly submit that there needs to be a stronger link between the GBRMPA and the DEH without diluting the effective management system that exists. Community input and consultation should continue.

8. This can be clearly demonstrated by the Osprey Reef example where the logic of best practice governance and environmental management (other than the antics of a single vested interested fisherman) would be best served by its "roping" into the GBRMP.

9. That squabbling between state and national governance should not allow for the "eye to be taken off the ball". The GBRMPA should maintain a high level of autonomy. Simply the "big picture" is more important than any individual or user and the governments of the day. Political bargaining does not serve it well.

10. Whatever the outcome of the review may be it should not lose sight of the fact that we have a responsibility to manage it sustainably for the people of the world in a way that we can be proud of for the right reasons. Change for change sake is not necessary and can be expensive.

Conclusion:

We have an organization that is recognized as a world leader. It has a widely recognized base in Townsville. The GBRMPA should strengthen ties with the Department of Environment and Heritage while realizing that the future is best served with this leading centre for management and information exchange being retained in Townsville.

I trust that you will forgive this hastily put together submission however even though we are sometimes outside the cycle (often by our own ignorance) we (the operators) are never very far away and we care. By all means strengthen the environmental guidelines but retain the presence.

Yours faithfully

Geoff Nairn

From the reef

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