

To: Mr David Borthwick
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act Review

I am an Australian and resident of Townsville. I have been working on the Great Barrier Reef for over 20 years, mostly in the capacity of coral reef research, with some time in the tourism industry. I have also worked on coral reefs overseas.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to add my voice to the general concern that changing GBRMPA's governance framework, in line with the Uhrig Review, will put the Authority further under the influence and control of short-term political agendas. As a statutory authority the GBRMPA is a strong performer whose achievements in environmental management are applauded at an international level. The GBRMPA continues to discharge its responsibilities with a high level of professionalism in the difficult and often contentious arena of environmental management. Unlike a National Park, the GBRMP is not closed to extractive industries. With the Representative Areas Program the GBRMPA has provided a new benchmark for the public consultative process. The precautionary approach taken by the GBRMPA is critical for the future of the GBRMP. It is vital that this long-term precautionary approach continues despite short-term commercial and political agendas. It appears that the recommendations by the Uhrig Review will be implemented without a public consultative process. Your review, Mr Borthwick, should consider if "world's best practice" governance arrangements (Senator Campbell 23/9/05) will support or compromise "world's best practice" environmental management. The GBRMPA not only manages the Great Barrier Reef on behalf of the Australian public, it manages a World Heritage Area on behalf of future generations. I hope your review will enable the GBRMPA to continue to function effectively to this end.

Johnston Davidson

29/9/05