



Coral Sea Access Alliance

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CORAL SEA ACCESS ALLIANCE SUBMISSION ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AMENDMENT (BIOREGIONAL PLANS) BILL 2011.

CORAL SEA ACCESS ALLIANCE.

THE CORAL SEA ACCESS ALLIANCE IS A NORTH QUEENSLAND DIVISION OF MARINE QUEENSLAND, THE PEAK REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE RECREATIONAL AND LIGHT COMMERCIAL MARINE INDUSTRY.

THE FORMATION OF THE ALLIANCE WAS A PRODUCT OF COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY CONCERN FOR THE RAMIFICATIONS OF THE PROCLAMATION OF THE CORAL SEA CONSERVATION ZONE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE AND ARTS IN MAY 2009.

THE ORGANISATION CONTINUES TO LIAISE WITH INDUSTRY AND INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE BODIES ON ISSUES OF RELEVANCE TO THE MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR THE CORAL SEA. THE POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF THE MARINE BIOREGIONAL PLANNING PROCESS FALL WITHIN THE PARAMETERS OF OUR GROUP'S CONCERN, ESPECIALLY AS IT RELATES TO THE CORAL SEA.

PAST EXPERIENCES WITH SIMILAR DECISIONS.

GREAT BARRIER REEF REZONING 2004.

THE REZONING OF THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (GBR) MARINE PARK IN 2004 AND THE IMPACTS OF THE ASSOCIATED LEGISLATION HAS HAD A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIES OF THE AREAS UNDER ITS INFLUENCE. THE MARINE BIOREGIONAL PROCESS HAS MANY SIMILARITIES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE PROCESS TO DATE.

INDUSTRY:

BOTH THE MARINE RETAIL AND TACKLE RETAIL INDUSTRIES CONTINUE TO BE IMPACTED BY THE GREAT BARRIER REEF MARINE PARK (GBRMP) RE ZONING PROCESS. PRIOR TO THE 2004 RE ZONING OF THE GBR THERE WERE FIVE INDEPENDENT MARINE RETAIL OUTLETS IN CAIRNS. TODAY THERE ARE TWO INDEPENDENT MARINE RETAILERS UNDER THEIR ORIGINAL OWNERSHIP. THE TOTAL OF FOUR MARINE RETAIL OUTLETS THAT HAVE NEW OUTBOARD DEALERSHIPS IN CAIRNS, CONSISTS OF TWO INDEPENDENT OPERATIONS AND TWO THAT ARE CONNECTED WITH OTHER INDUSTRIES.



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THE IMPACT ON THE RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL MARINE INDUSTRY BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE 2004 REVIEW OF THE GBR RESULTED IN A RESTRUCTURE ASSISTANCE PACKAGE APPROACHING TWO HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS. ORIGINAL ESTIMATES PROVIDED TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE LIKELY RESTRUCTURE COSTS OF THIS DECISION WERE A FRACTION OF THE FINAL COST, DEMONSTRATING THE IMPORTANCE OF FULL AND THOROUGH EXAMINATION OF THE IMPACTS OF THESE DECISIONS AND THE INADEQUACIES OF THE ORIGINAL PROCESS.

THE RESTRUCTURE ASSISTANCE PACKAGE INCLUDED A BUSINESS EXIT COMPONENT WHICH FEW OPERATORS CHOSE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF - THEIR ENTHUSIASM FOR THE INDUSTRY WAS STILL APPARENT. THE RESULTANT IMPACTS ON INDUSTRY PARTICIPANTS CONFIRMS THAT THE IMPACT WAS MUCH MORE SEVERE THAN DEMONSTRATED IN THE GOVERNMENT'S INDEPENDENT REVIEW (THE HUNT REPORT) OR ALLOWED FOR IN THE RESTRUCTURE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

THE FISHING TACKLE RETAIL INDUSTRY HAS BEEN SIMILARLY IMPACTED BY THE 2004 REVIEW OF THE GBR WITH THE CLOSURE OF AT LEAST FOUR WELL ESTABLISHED INDEPENDENT FISHING TACKLE RETAIL OUTLETS IN THE CAIRNS AREA.

COMMUNITY:

REGIONAL AREAS TEND TO ATTRACT PEOPLE WHO ENJOY OUTDOOR PURSUITS INCLUDING FISHING AND WATER RELATED ACTIVITIES. THE EXPENDITURE ATTACHED TO THESE ACTIVITIES IS CAREFULLY RESEARCHED AND SUBJECT TO ALTERATION IF ACCESS AND RESTRICTIVE CONDITIONS ARE PLACED ON THE USE AND ENJOYMENT OF THE ACTIVITY.

THE MANDATORY CRIMINAL CONVICTION FOR GREEN ZONE INFRINGEMENTS WITHIN THE GBR VISITED A CRIMINAL RECORD ON MANY LAW ABIDING CITIZENS FOR WHAT, IN MOST CASES, AMOUNTED TO LITTLE MORE THAN A GENUINE MISTAKE. THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RAMIFICATIONS OF A CRIMINAL RECORD WERE A MAJOR DETERRENT TO PARTICIPATION LEVELS. COMPLIANCE CONCERNS IN MANY CASES OUTWEIGHED THE RECREATIONAL BENEFIT PROVIDED.

CORAL SEA CONSERVATION ZONE PROCLAMATION.

THE PROCLAMATION AND PUBLICITY SURROUNDING THE CORAL SEA CONSERVATION ZONE IN 2009 BY THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE AND ARTS, THE HON. PETER GARRETT RAISED CONCERNS IN THE BOATING AND FISHING COMMUNITY THAT ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS WERE TO BE IMPOSED ON THEIR USE OF THE WATERS OF NORTH QUEENSLAND. THIS DECISION HAS DONE LITTLE IF ANYTHING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT BUT HAS ONCE AGAIN RAISED MANY OF THE ISSUES THAT SEEM TO FOLLOW THE PROCESS ADOPTED IN THE GBR REVIEW.



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OBLIGATIONS:

MUCH HAS BEEN MADE BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND BY MINISTER GARRETT WHEN HE WAS THE RESPONSIBLE MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA'S INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL OBLIGATIONS. UNDER AUSTRALIA'S IUCN OBLIGATIONS, IT IS LIKELY THAT MOST COMPLIANCE LEVELS HAVE ALREADY BEEN ACHIEVED OR EXCEEDED. WITH THE COMPLIANCE DEADLINE EXTENDED TO 2020 THERE IS NO REASON FOR URGENCY ON THESE DECISIONS OTHER THAN TO SATISFY GOVERNMENT MANDATED DEADLINES. THIS EXTENSION PROVIDES THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENSURE THAT THE BEST OUTCOMES ARE ACHIEVED.

WITH THE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING THE CONDUCT OF THE MARINE BIOREGIONAL CONSULTATION PROCESS THE DECISION MAKERS ARE NOW MORE OBLIGATED THAN EVER TO ENSURE THAT ALL IMPACTED SECTORS ARE CONSULTED IN AN APPROPRIATE MANNER. COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY SUPPORT WILL ENSURE THE BEST OUTCOME FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND FOR THOSE AFFECTED. DISSATISFACTION WITH THE DECISION CAN ONLY MAKE A SATISFACTORY OUTCOME FOR ALL LESS LIKELY TO BE ACHIEVED.

PROCESS.

THE HISTORY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS MADE BY GOVERNMENTS ON SIMILAR ISSUES DEMONSTRATES THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF COMING TO INAPPROPRIATE DECISIONS. THE MISTAKES MADE DURING THE RE ZONING PROCESS OF THE GBR AND NOW THE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING THE BIOREGIONAL PLANNING PROCESS DEMONSTRATE THE IMPORTANCE OF AFFORDING THIS PROCESS ALL OF THE CHECKS AND BALANCES THAT ARE AVAILABLE UNDER PARLIAMENTARY PROCESS. DECISIONS OF THIS IMPORTANCE TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND TO THE COMMUNITY SHOULD NOT BE LEFT IN THE HANDS OF ONE PERSON.

WE PRESENT THIS SUBMISSION IN SUPPORT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO THE ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AMENDMENT (BIOREGIONAL PLANS) BILL 2011.