



**Tin Can Bay Chamber of Commerce and Tourism  
Incorporated**

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15<sup>th</sup> March, 2011.

Committee Secretary,  
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications,  
PO Box 6100,  
Parliament House,  
CANBERRA. ACT 2600.

Dear Sir.

Ref: Bio-regions and Marine Reserves a disallowable instrument and Threatened Fishing Closures within Fraser AFA.

This submission has been compiled by the Tin Can Bay Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Inc with input from the following groups:-

- Tin Can Bay Fishing Club
- Queensland Seafood Industry Association
- Sunfish Fraser Coast
- Marine Queensland
- Rainbow Beach Commerce and Business Association
- Gympie Chamber of Commerce
- Gympie Regional Council.

The Fraser AFA represents the greatest threat to Tin Can Bay and surrounding communities of Rainbow Beach and Cooloola Cove since the establishment of the GBRMP. While these communities are the ground zero the effect of any change in access to the area covered by the Fraser AFA will be felt from Mooloolaba on the Sunshine Coast to Hervey bay on the Fraser Coast.

Since the introduction of the GBRMP Tin Can Bay's trawler fleet has reduced from 55 to just 12. Imagine the domino loss of services,

families and downward pressure on real estate values in a small community of 2900 people.

Over the past twenty years we have slowly developed a tourism industry. This industry is based very much on water activities, sailing, kayaking, boating and above all fishing. 62% of visitors to Tin Can Bay come to fish.

To support the visitors there are a variety of accommodation types from caravan and camping resorts to 4 star motels and holiday rental homes.

Many residents of TCB, Cooloola Cove and Rainbow Beach live here to fish. They have invested in homes, boats and all the expensive fishing paraphernalia that make a fisherman.

To support fishers there are upholsterers, stainless steel and aluminium fabricators, outboard and inboard engine mechanics, bait and tackle shops, boat ramps and a Marina that is overcrowded.

98% of the commercial catch and 95% of the recreational catch comes from the Fraser AFA.

Our position so far as the Fraser AFA is concerned is simple.

1. There is no sustainability issue. Stocks have been well managed for years. A recent Queensland Fisheries report confirms this.
2. Access is over the Wide Bay Bar which effectively closes the fishing grounds for between 3 and 5 months of the year depending on the size of the boat.
3. There is no pollution or seafloor damage issue. Both State and Federal Environment Departments acknowledge this.
4. There is no unique bio-diversity. With the GBRMP and the GSMP adjacent they well and truly represent any bio-diversity that might be found within the Fraser AFA.

The decision making process has been going on for some time within the Department of Environment. This drawn out process has had the effect of depressing growth on the Cooloola Coast, from real estate values to business sales to investment in infrastructure. The socio-economic level is one of the lowest in Australia and the unemployment level one of the highest. Any decision to change access would further depress an area (that means ruins families lives and costs jobs) that has been economically hammered since 1975 when mining on Fraser Island was stopped, it continued with the GBRMP, the long winded Process mentioned above and most recently interest rates, \$A strength and weather conditions that have bought the region to its knees.

For some time we have been concerned at the obvious influence on the Department of Environment by extreme environment groups, in some cases overseas based, like PEW and WWF and while we take the assurances of current Ministers that “the pendulum is swinging” and that we should “watch this space” the community is still cynical after the Traviston Crossing Dam decision, the delay in approving the new Tin Can Bay Marina, the unilateral declaration of the Coral Sea Conservation Zone and the ETS proposal.

We are sure this Committee will consider the much broader view that Governments cannot continue to hinder producers and close down food producing areas in Australia. If continued at the pace of the last few years we will find ourselves in the ludicrous situation of not being able to feed the nation. From a strategic view this is concerning.

The wrong decision will be nothing short of devastating and the wrong decision is any change to access to the Fraser AFA.

The important point here is the process and given a wrong decision communities under the current regulation have little recourse; this new bill will give us some comfort.

There is no clearer example of the folly of allowing one person without right of recourse to declare a Marine Park than the GBRMP. This park, at the time the largest in the world, was declared by an individual and even Cabinet had no right of review. This declaration destroyed industry for 1500 klms of our coast, for 1000's of business's, countless jobs were lost and Australian Tax payers have so far forked out \$320 million dollars. We cannot allow that to ever happen again.

We thank the committee for inviting us to make a submission

Yours Sincerely

Peter Todd.