

ALP SENATORS' MINORITY REPORT

The Hinchinbrook Channel inquiry was prompted by a long running controversy over the Port Hinchinbrook resort development. The inquiry has highlighted shortcomings in terms of environmental impact assessment and approval processes, and the relationship between Commonwealth, State and local governments, and developers. These shortcomings are not only relevant to this specific case, but also have wider implications.

Recommendations made in the report deal not only with the specific issue, but also have wider implications.

Specific recommendations in relation to Port Hinchinbrook include that:

The Commonwealth should ensure independent assessment of the development, and ensure that the developer remedies any breach of the existing agreement.

- A full assessment of acid sulphate soils at the Port Hinchinbrook development be undertaken, and steps taken to ensure the developer does not breach existing agreements.

Recommendations that deal with broader environmental planning issues include the need for:

- Improved procedures for early, open and independent environmental impact assessment.
- General research into acid sulphate soils, and the effects of aquaculture.
- Regional land use planning, including support for local governments.
- Commonwealth and State co-operation in the protection of World Heritage values.
- Control of threats to dugongs in the southern Great Barrier Reef.

Labor Senators feel that the recommendations accurately reflect the findings of the inquiry, however they do not agree with many of the comments made and the conclusions reached in the body of the report.

Labor Senators agree with all the recommendations of the Chair's report.

Senator Nick Bolkus

Senator M Bishop

Senator K Lundy

