



Office of the Dean of Postgraduate Studies  
Townsville Campus 4811.  
June 5 2007

The Secretary  
Senate Environment Communications Information and the Arts Committee  
Canberra  
ecita.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary

I note with deep concern that the legislation currently before the Senate which will amend the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act proposes to remove the requirement for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to include a representative of Indigenous people and communities adjacent to the Park.

I chaired the Great Barrier Reef Consultative Committee which advised the then Minister for the Environment and Heritage on matters relating to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park from 1989-2001 and was instrumental promoting Indigenous representation on that committee.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority has a policy of Indigenous representation on its advisory committees and it has been a statutory requirement for an Indigenous person to be a member of the Authority since April 1995.

This representation acknowledges that the Indigenous peoples whose sea country occurs in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park are landholders rather than stakeholders and that it is vital for them to have input into the management of their region at both strategic and operational levels. Unless there is Indigenous representation at every level of the GBRMPA Committee and Board structure including the Authority, it will be very difficult for Indigenous interests to be appropriately considered in the management of the region.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority has made significant advances over the years in improving its interactions with Indigenous people. The proposed removal of the requirement for the Marine Park Authority to include an Indigenous representative is a retrograde step.

Please contact me if you have further queries

Yours sincerely  
Helene Marsh  
Professor of Environmental Science