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Committee Secretary
Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

31st May 2007

Dear Sir/Madam

WWF-Australia appreciates the opportunity to provide comment on the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Amendment Bill 2007.

Overall WWF is supportive of the amendments to the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* (the Act). WWF is hopeful that these changes will assist the Australian Government to better protect the Marine Park, primarily through management by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

In coming years the Great Barrier Reef will inevitably be subject to greater pressures from threats that occur outside the Marine Park boundaries – primarily the impacts of climate change and land-based sources of pollution. WWF expects that through these amendments the Authority will be better able to assess the health of the ecosystem and make management decisions that ensure the long term health of the Great Barrier Reef in which economic and social considerations are fully integrated.

WWF has two comments on the Amendment Bill:

1. **Section 54, subsection 3 (h):** This section should be altered to include an assessment of the long-term outlook for the *economic and social values* for the region as well as the ecosystem values.
2. **Part 3 – Membership of the Authority:** The previous membership requirements for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Board included a representative of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Currently this provision has been removed under the review of the Act. WWF strongly recommends that provision be reinstated. The Australian Government's future work to protect the Marine Park will depend to a large degree on effective engagement with traditional owners. Having indigenous representation at the board level will be a very important component in achieving this.

WWF considers the Great Barrier Reef to be one of its global conservation priorities, and is therefore keen to provide further input into the management of the Marine Park.

Yours faithfully

Richard Leck
Tropical Marine and Coastal Policy Officer