

2nd March 2006

Mr David Borthwick
Secretary
Department of the Environment and Heritage
GPO Box 787
Canberra ACT 2601
Australia

Dear David,

RE – GBRMPA REVIEW

As the Review comes to a close and the debate shifts to the structure of management arrangements for the GBR Marine Park, AMPTO would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our views on this specific issue.

AMPTO believes the GBRMPA should be run by an expertise based but enlarged board reporting directly to the Minister.

Considering the amount of hype being generated by the fishing industry, with not much of it being factual or fair to the achievements of the GBRMPA, our industry is gravely concerned that any management board be constituted from expertise and not a desire to placate a minority user group.

Access Economics shows tourism within the catchment of the GBR to be worth \$5.8 billion and employing 63,000 people. The environment and its management underpin all that tourism effort and as such the future management arrangements for the GBR Marine Park are critical to the future of the tourism industry in the area.

AMPTO feels that it is essential that the staff responsible for the day to day management of the GBR be retained in Townsville where our industry members can interface with policy officers and directors on a daily basis. It would be inappropriate for this function to be moved to Canberra.

It is AMPTO's view that the expertise, which is needed on any management board, should comprise a sound mix of people who have had extensive experience in:

- a. Federal and State Government responsibilities,
- b. Environmental management,
- c. Fishing,

- d. Mass marine tourism transportation,
- e. Resort operations,
- f. Ancillary marine tourism such as dive operations, bare and crewed boat charters, scenic tours, etc.
- g. Indigenous issues.

AMPTO members have in excess of \$1.5 billion invested in infrastructure within the GBR (a new vessel to carry around 100 passengers now costs at least \$4 million). It is critical that this fact be taken fully into account in the strategic planning and management of the GBR via marine tourism expertise on any management board.

As already stated, AMPTO is very concerned that the fishing industry continues to denigrate the GBRMPA for the delivery of the RAP. We are very pleased to see that the Minister has stood his ground on the RAP and its boundaries but we would hate to see the GBRMPA now hamstrung for delivering the greatest environmentally essential initiative in our lifetimes. It appears to AMPTO that the fishing industry can not differentiate between the Review and the processes followed in the development of the RAP and that they are in the throes of a campaign to destroy the GBRMPA as some form of payback. This can not and must not be allowed to occur.

AMPTO continues to totally support the GBRMPA Chair and her senior officers, who have done an incredibly difficult task in a highly professional manner over the last few years. However, changes to the existing management structure are needed to better suit today's realities as opposed to those of 30 years ago. Those changes should enhance the existing operations of the GBRMPA along the lines suggested above and not serve as a sop to minority user group interests.

Yours truly,



Col McKenzie
Executive Director

cc. **The Hon Fran Bailey Minister for Tourism**
The Hon Virginia Chadwick AO