



# Protecting the Great Barrier Reef

22 April 2016

Research Director  
Agriculture and Environment Committee  
Parliament House  
BRISBANE QLD 4000  
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Dear Chair and Committee Members

## **Submission on Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016**

As spokesperson for the Great Barrier Reef Divers (GBR Divers), thank you for the opportunity to make this submission on Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016.

We are a group of dive professionals who work on the Great Barrier Reef. We know from firsthand experience that environmental damage done inland and on our coastline by land clearing has extensive ramifications for our precious Great Barrier Reef (GBR) and marine environment.

### **Our two major areas of concern are:**

Tree clearing near catchments can cause land erosion and run off into our river catchments – the erosion and runoff caused by clearing along the Great Barrier Reef catchment is a leading cause of impacts to our Reef. In the Whitsunday region, we have seen a 40-50% decrease in water quality due to land-based runoff and dredging.

The impact of tree clearing on climate change; as tree clearing causes millions of tonnes of CO2 to be released into our atmosphere and increase global warming. As the world knows, the Great Barrier Reef is suffering through the largest coral bleaching event in history...fuelled by global warming. On April 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 The National Coral Bleaching Taskforce released new information regarding the current horrific bleaching event, including that:

- 93% of the Great Barrier Reef has been affected by coral bleaching;
- North of Port Douglas, scientists are already measuring an average of close to 50% mortality of bleached corals;
- On some reefs, the final death toll is likely to exceed 90%.

We hope that the Committee supports the passing of the Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 because, amongst other things, it restores protections for trees next to riverbanks and extends provisions from some to all GBR catchments, which are essential to help ensure the future survival of our precious Great Barrier Reef.

Yours Sincerely

Tony Fontes  
Spokesperson  
GBR Divers

