



Australian Government

Great Barrier Reef  
Marine Park Authority

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The Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee

**Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee inquiry into the Water Legislation Amendment Bill (2015)**

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority thanks the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee (the Committee) for the opportunity to provide comment in support of its inquiry into the Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 (the Bill).

The Great Barrier Reef is one of the world's most diverse marine ecosystems with a rich mosaic of plants, animals, habitats and heritage values that are universally recognised as an amazing natural treasure. In addition to its outstanding universal value as a world heritage area, the Reef is vitally important to communities and industries that depend on a healthy reef for recreation and their livelihoods.

*The Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2014* found that the Great Barrier Reef ecosystem is under pressure. Cumulative effects are diminishing the ecosystem's ability to recover from disturbances. Some threats are increasing, driven mainly by climate change, economic growth and population growth. The emerging success of some initiatives (such as improving land-based run-off) means some threats may be reduced in the future. However, there are significant lags from when actions are taken to improvements being evident in the ecosystem. More than ever, a focus on building resilience by reducing all threats is important in protecting the Region's ecosystem and its outstanding universal value into the future.

Given that the Reef's ability to tolerate further impacts is severely limited, all future developments in the adjacent coast must ensure that they can operate without significant impact on the Reef's ecosystems.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority supports the development of ecologically sustainable industries in the Great Barrier Reef Region on the understanding that these industries commit to playing their key role in ensuring that Australia meets the targets and objectives described in the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan (Reef 2050 Plan) and in the Great Barrier Reef Region Strategic Assessment and Program Report.

The Reef 2050 Plan is a schedule to the *Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement 2009* which was updated in June 2015 and signed by the Prime Minister and the Premier of Queensland. The Reef 2050 Plan vision is:

*To ensure the Great Barrier Reef continues to improve on its Outstanding Universal Value every decade between now and 2050 to be a natural wonder for each successive generation to come.*

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority would encourage the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resource Committee to investigate how the current Bill assists the Queensland Government in achieving the Reef 2050 Plan vision, and in meeting the specific targets, and objectives described across seven themes, including water quality.

The Australian and Queensland governments are jointly developing a *Reef 2050 Plan – Policy guideline for decision makers*. This guideline will provide a step-by-step approach for decision makers who are developing or reviewing agreements, policies, programmes or partnerships, to ensure they support the Reef 2050 Plan targets, objectives and outcomes. Government agencies and authorities revising or preparing *relevant agreements, policies, plans, strategies and programs* enabled through legislation should apply this guideline, to the extent permissible under the enabling legislation, if their decision is likely to interact with the Outstanding Universal Value of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

Thanking you for your consideration of this submission.

Yours sincerely



Bruce Elliot  
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Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use

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