

15 March, 2019

A/Committee Secretary
Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee
Parliament House
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Dear Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee

Submission Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the *Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019*.

The Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) is was established in 1972 by an act of Federal Parliament, with headquarters in Townsville, on the doorstep of the Great Barrier Reef (GBR). Our world-class research infrastructure includes two modern, purpose-built coastal research vessels, and the National Sea Simulator, the world's most advanced research aquarium complex. Our scientists are among the best in the world in their disciplines, and AIMS routinely ranks in the top three marine science organisations in the world. Because our scientists focus exclusively on tropical marine science and systems, AIMS is uniquely placed to provide the expert advice and solutions required to help preserve our fabulously rich and diverse marine estate, and underpin its sustainable use.

We note the measures proposed in the *Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019* will strengthen GBR protection measures to improve the quality of the water entering the GBR. The Bill responds directly to the 2016 GBR Water Science Taskforce, the findings of the 2017 Scientific Consensus Statement, and AIMS' research that the GBR lost around 50 per cent of its coral cover between 1985 and 2012 [1]. AIMS' staff have been key members of the GBR Water Science Taskforce, and were lead authors on the 2013 and 2017 Scientific Consensus Statements [2, 3]. Indeed, our research on the GBR over the past 30 years has contributed to our understanding that human activities have increased inputs of nutrients, sediment and contaminants to Reef waters [4].

Yours sincerely



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References

1. 1. De'ath G, Fabricius K, Sweatman H, Puotinen M. The 27–year decline of coral cover on the Great Barrier Reef and its causes. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA*. 2012;109(40):17995-9. doi: 10.1073/pnas.1208909109.
2. 2. Waterhouse J, Schaffelke B, Bartley R, Eberhard R, Brodie J, Star M, et al. 2017 Scientific Consensus Statement: Land use impacts on Great Barrier Reef water quality and ecosystem condition. Summary. Brisbane, Australia: Reef Water Quality Protection Plan Secretariat, 2017.
3. 3. Brodie J, Waterhouse J, Schaffelke B, Kroon F, Thorburn P, Rolfe J, et al. 2013 Scientific Consensus Statement. Land use impacts on Great Barrier Reef water quality and ecosystem condition. Brisbane, Australia: Reef Water Quality Protection Plan Secretariat, 2013.
4. 4. Kroon FJ, Thorburn P, Schaffelke B, Whitten S. Towards protecting the Great Barrier Reef from land-based pollution. *Global Change Biol*. 2016;22(6):1985-2002. doi: 10.1111/gcb.13262. PubMed PMID: MEDLINE:26922913.