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22 March 2019

Committee Secretary  
Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane Qld 4000

By email: [ITDEC@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:ITDEC@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 - Call for submissions**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. Whitsunday Regional Council (Council) values the chance to comment on such a significant proposed legislative change for the protection of the Great Barrier Reef (GBR).

The Whitsunday region is uniquely placed as the gateway to the Great Barrier Reef, with Council facing considerable challenges in balancing competing interests in the protection of the GBR.

Council acknowledges the requirement to regulate nutrient and sediment runoff and the development of catchment targets to respond in a manner that will ensure the protection of the GBR. As such, Council has committed to considerable investment into the construction and maintenance of high-performance sewage treatment plants and effluent re-use schemes, which poses a significant economic challenge for this Council. The increased cost of having to offset residual nutrient and sediment loads will provide further financial pressure on an already significant investment area for Council.

Agriculture is one of the three pillars identified in the Whitsunday Economic Strategy, with Council placing particular importance on the sector for the region's economic viability. Council has consulted with stakeholders who represent the local agriculture industry and are advised that local farmers are generally prepared to test their water on entry and exit to their properties, however, there must be prescribed standards for the method of water testing, and the collation and use of that data.



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Given the above, Council wishes to submit the following requests in response to the Amendment Bill:

1. That the State provide financial assistance to upgrade existing Point Sources of pollution including STPs as a definitive way of meeting proposed catchment load reduction targets
2. That the requirement to offset Sewage Treatment Plant's residual pollutants does not come into effect until mass load limits associated with Sewage Treatment Plants Influent Design Development has been exceeded.
3. The proposed offset framework does not put undue financial, administrative and monitoring requirements upon Council.
4. Councils large investment into effluent re-use schemes are recognised as a suitable offset mechanism.
5. That requirements for agriculture, specifically horticulture and range land grazing do not result in landholders being economically worse off. Improved farming practices need to be developed that do not reduce agricultural viability.
6. Financial offsets made within the Whitsundays should be re-invested in the Whitsunday region.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the invitation to provide comment and look forward to hearing from the outcomes of this consultation.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bruce Davidson", is written over a circular blue stamp.

Bruce Davidson  
Acting Chief Executive Officer