

30<sup>th</sup> July 2012

The Research Director  
State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee  
Parliament House  
George St  
Brisbane 4000

Dear Sir,

## **Submission into the Future Relevance of Government Land Tenure Across Queensland**

### **AMPTO's Mission Statement:**

Our mission is to help ensure the economic and ecological sustainability of tourism within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMP).

### **Size of the Marine Tourism Industry:**

There are about 2 million visitors to the GBR each year. It is estimated by industry that there is about \$1.5 to \$2 billion in direct revenue generated by our industry. In a report commissioned by the DEH Access Economics estimated that revenue raised by tourism within the GBR catchment was about \$5.8 billion with about 63,000 jobs being provided. The tourism was the biggest employer in the region and second only to mining in value to the economy.

The industry contributes approximately \$8 million per year to the GBRMPA budget through the payment of the EMC. Research shows that the GBR is the most significant attraction for tourism within the North QLD region with about 80% of tourists visiting the GBR at least once.

The federal government collects approximately \$337 million in taxes from our efforts while it spends around \$73 million in GBR management for tourism. The state government receives approximately \$124 million of the federal tax money through GST and collects another \$19 million in other taxes from our industry. It spends about \$23 million on the GBR.

### **AMPTO Board:**

The Board of Directors of AMPTO is very impressive with it almost being a Who's Who for the marine industry. With the exception of the Executive Director, none of the Board Members receives any remuneration for their Board activities and even the expenses incurred in attending meetings are incurred at the member's own expense. Some of our Board Members are:

**a. Tony Baker - Chairman**

Tony is Managing Director of Quicksilver Connection which owns and operates Quicksilver, Great Adventures and Green Island Resort. Quicksilver is the biggest marine tourism company in Australia and employs around 500 people.

**b. Peter Boundy – Dive QLD and Deputy Chair**

Peter is an owner of Cairns Dive Centre, one of the largest certifying dive shops in the world. Last year his business taught over 6,000 divers.

**c. Alan Wallish**

Alan is the Managing Director of Passions of Paradise a 25 metre sailing catamaran operating out of Cairns.

**d. Col McKenzie - Executive Director**

Col has served on the AMPTO Board for 10 years.

**AMPTO Membership:**

AMPTO members carry 95% of the tourists that visit the GBR and most other smaller specialty Associations involved in marine tourism are members of AMPTO. Examples are:

**a. Dive QLD**

Dive QLD promoted diving in QLD and works with the state government on WH&S issues

**b. CHARROA**

The Cod Hole and Ribbon Reef Operators Association manages the moorings and site access for operators of overnight vessels working the region north of Cairns

**c. WCBIA**

The Whitsundays Charter Boat Industry Association is an association of members dealing with issues normally of local and state importance but across the whole range marine tourism.

**d. WBBCA**

The Whitsundays Bare Boat Charter Association deals primarily with bare boat issues.

Tourism Islands belong to AMPTO as a separate group within our Articles and we have been the principle collective bargainer on their behalf for more than 15 years.

**Submission:**

AMPTO believes that the use of government owned land on islands for tourism should be rated and valued using the same methodology as used by primary industry. Primary industry pays 2% per year as a lease fee. Tourism islands pay 6%. The principle reason for this was that primary industry is not very profitable and they could not afford the higher rate, yet none of the islands is currently profitable and they have not been for many years.

Our flagship island, Hamilton Island, does not show a profit without including one off land sales on the island and even then, it is still less than 5%.

The islands are a major attractant for the tourism sector, yet remain only marginally profitable even in good times. Given the closures during the last couple of years, it is easy to see that profit levels can't sustain island operations during a downturn.

Multimillion dollar capital investments simply do not stack up financially with returns all in single digit figures, yet these island operations all underpin regional tourism products and generate significant regional income. Where would the Whitsundays be without the island operations?

AMPTO requests that tourism islands be considered as a separate category for lease rates and valuations, so that the low financial returns can be weighed against the community and regional advantages of having employment intensive, highly promoted destinations.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Col McKenzie". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Col McKenzie**  
**Executive Director**