

## **Inquiry into the economic and regulatory frameworks for Queensland island resorts**

**Submission No:** 15

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**Submitter Comments:**

**Submitter Recommendations:**  
No Recommendations

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## SUBMISSION

### Transport and Resources Parliamentary Committee Inquiry into the Economic and Regulatory Framework for the Queensland Island Resorts

My name is Howard Kerry Outerbridge. I am an orthopaedic surgeon working in Mackay and Brisbane living on Keswick Island. I built a four bedroom, three bathroom house on Keswick Island 13 years ago.

I am a member of the Keswick Island Progress Association and fully endorse the submission that KIPA has made to the Parliamentary Committee.

I have a number of issues that I would like to bring to the attention of the Parliamentary Committee.

#### 1. **Emergencies on the Island; - Terms of Reference Number 8**

##### Medical Emergency

As the only doctor living on the Island, in a community of predominantly elderly people, I have concerns regarding the ability of island management to handle medical emergencies. To my knowledge there are no basic resuscitation, transport or evacuation facilities on the Island such as stretchers, mobile means of transporting patients to a helicopter pad, etc.

If I am not on the Island and someone becomes seriously ill, i.e. Stroke, heart attack, etc, there is no-one properly trained in First Aid available to administer the essentials.

It is my view that these fundamental life saving facilities should be made available.

Not long ago, one of the residents of Keswick Island suffered a severe stroke one evening. This man's partner appealed to Island management for help. No attempt at evacuation was undertaken until the early hours of the morning, approximately 4 hours after the initial stroke.

Unfortunately, this man has not made any form of recovery from the stroke and remains in a vegetative state. It is my view that this man's management was inappropriate and irresponsible. Stroke patients need to be assessed if possible within minutes of the stroke so that life saving treatment can be undertaken.

##### Fire Hazard

During the dry season Keswick Island becomes a high risk fire hazard area. When the initial infrastructure of Keswick Island was built, fire hydrants were installed alongside all services to homes. The hydrant system has been allowed to fall into disrepair by subsequent head lease holders and at the present time is not working. In my view it is essential that this facility be restored to its original working order.

In the past residents living on the Island were organised into a fire brigade. All members were given instruction with regards to managing the small fire truck on the Island. Members of the brigades were allocated responsibility and priorities were set with regards to evacuation pathway. Fire drills were undertaken on a regular basis where fire management was practised.

Despite residents repeated efforts to lobby administrative staff to work with them in establishing an appropriate fire prevention plan, none has been forthcoming.

**2. Purchase of the Island Head Lease; - Terms of Reference Number 1**

It is my view that the purchase of the Keswick Island Head Lease requires forensic investigation by the Parliamentary Commission. As stated in the presentation from the Keswick Island Progress Association, the Head Lease was purchased by China Bloom Hong Kong Ltd under dubious circumstances. At the time of purchase we were aware of four Australian entities who were prepared to purchase the Keswick Island Head Lease. These interested parties were essentially isolated from partaking in sale negotiations.

The initial advertised sale price was \$30 million. As mentioned above, the eventual sale price has never been published, however, Keswick Island Progress Association has been able to determine that based on the stamp duty paid the sale price would have been \$2.7 million. This gross discrepancy would strongly suggest that off shore payments were undertaken by both parties and that perhaps this may have been the reason why Australian purchasers were essentially locked out of the negotiations for Keswick Island. To my knowledge the only Director of China Bloom is Nicho Teng's elderly mother who lives in mainland China and until recently she was the only person who was able to "sign off" on sub-lease sales transactions resulting in huge delays in the transfer of title.

This woman has never been to Keswick Island and I have doubts that she has ever visited Australia.

I find it extraordinary that such an absurd predicament can exist.

It is my view that a Parliamentary Committee Inquiry would have the legal power to solicit under oath all parties involved in the sale of Keswick Island Head Lease.

**3. Communication with the Head Lease; – Terms of Reference Number 8**

Since the Head Lease was taken over by Oasis Forest Ltd (formerly China Bloom Hong Kong Ltd) residents have been continuously frustrated by a complete lack of communication between the CEO of China Bloom Ltd, Mr Nicho Teng and his subordinate Peter Jones. To our knowledge, neither of these men have ever visited Keswick Island until recently. They came to Keswick Island for six hours. A number of us went down to the barge ramp in hopes of meeting Mr Teng, however, Mr Teng did not speak to any of the residents, no eye contact was made as he walked up the ramp to an awaiting truck. The residents were very disappointed at this missed opportunity to discuss future plans for the Island.

**4. Brampton Island; - Terms of Reference Number 1**

Many years ago I remember travelling to Brampton Island as a tourist with my family. It was a vibrant resort with great facilities including an air strip and docking facilities.

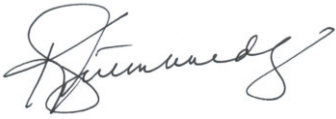
Unfortunately, Brampton Island once a tourist hotspot, remains closed. Brampton Island was purchased by United Petroleum in 2010 for \$5.9 million and promptly closed within the year. The company intended to build a 7 star resort but this has never eventuated.

The Island has been left uninhabited except for a single caretaker.

On a recent visit to Brampton Island I was appalled at the disgusting mess, the environmental damage and the complete lack of responsibility taken by United Petroleum. It appears as if the owners have simply walked away leaving beds partially made, food still on plates on restaurant tables. Around the beach Hobie cats, surf skis, jet skis, and various other pleasure craft lay strewn about.

After visiting Brampton Island one cannot help but ask the question "How has the Queensland Government allowed this appalling neglect to occur to such a beautiful pristine environment without holding the owners accountable?"

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kerry Outerbridge', written in a cursive style.

**KERRY OUTERBRIDGE**

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