

## Management of Great Barrier Reef into the future

### Northern Australia Priority: Good Governance for Northern Australia

**State Electorate:** Cairns / Barron River / Mulgrave / Cook / Hill / Hinchinbrook

**Federal Electorate:** Leichhardt / Kennedy

**Council:** Cairns/Cassowary/Cook/Douglas/Hinchinbrook/Hope Vale/Yarrabah/Wujal Wujal

### Priority Recommendation/s

FNQROC seeks government support of the following recommendations given the critical importance of the GBR:

- That the existing management structure should be reviewed and an overarching, de-politicized body established to manage both the Wet Tropics Rainforest and Great Barrier Reef with a contiguous approach established.
- Investment in Reef and Rainforest Management should be reviewed in the context of the significant economic benefits these assets deliver to the region.

### Project Overview

The Great Barrier Reef ('GBR') is arguably the world's most iconic natural asset and a key to our national identity. As the principal gateway to the GBR, the people of this region feel a responsibility to take a greater leadership role and to ensure that appropriate actions are identified and implemented to begin to restore both the health and the reputation of the GBR. Issues including nutrient run-off, Crown of Thorns Starfish (CoTS), water temperature, acidity and others all point to a growing need to greatly improve GBR management, structures and funding.

Recent major coral bleaching events have highlighted the sensitivity of the GBR to climate change. The reef is under threat like never seen before.

The 2017 Deloitte Access Economics Report, "At what price?"<sup>5</sup>, identified the annual GDP contribution of the GBR is valued at \$56 billion, and determined that the GBR provides support for 64,000 Australian jobs. The Deloitte's report also stated that the GBR generated \$6.5B in revenue for the Queensland Government annually. Considered in this context, current Government investment is inadequate.

Protection of the GBR is critically important to the future economic sustainability of Northern Australia.

### Management of the Great Barrier Reef

The Australian and Queensland Government's respective responsibilities in cooperating to protect and conserve the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park ('GBRMP') were incepted in the Emerald Agreement in 1979, and most recently updated in the Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement 2015.

The existing management structure for both the GBRMP and the GBR Coast MP and the external factors that impact upon them are extremely complex; we can identify 13 different organisations who receive government financial support and 54 entities and advisory groups involved in advocacy, research, monitoring, management or protection for/of the Great Barrier Reef (Attachment A).

<sup>5</sup> <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/au/Documents/Economics/deloitte-au-economics-great-barrier-reef-230617.pdf>

**Management of Great Barrier Reef into the future (Cont.)**

Crucially, a significant proportion of the river systems flowing into the GBR have their source within, or flowing through, the World Heritage listed Wet Tropics Rainforests ('WTR'). Responsibility for management of the WTR has been devolved to the Wet Tropics Management Authority.

The health of the Rainforest has a direct impact on river catchments and marine ecosystems with flow-on impacts on water quality and the health of the GBR.

**Vision & Key Objectives**

In recognition of their status as two of the world's great natural wonders and, both the Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics Rainforest have been listed on the World Heritage Register. The existing management structures (and the external factors that impact upon them) are extremely complex involving multiple Government agencies.

Existing arrangements lack clarity of purpose, strategic direction and investment. Given the critical importance of both the GBR and WTR, the exiting management structure needs to be reviewed to ensure it addresses these issues.

**Key Strategic Drivers**

|                          |  |  |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Economic</b>          | Supports good governance for Northern Australia.   |  |
| <b>Social Enterprise</b> | Establishes a shared vision in support of improved quality of life for the community.            |  |
| <b>Employment</b>        | Provides foundation for a strong economy supporting ongoing employment opportunities and growth. |  |
| <b>Tourism</b>           | Establishes a shared vision for continued regional tourism branding and market share growth.     |  |