



**MEDIA STATEMENT - 16 February 2018
Great Keppel Island (Wop-pa) Alternatives**

This year presents the best opportunity to achieve a positive outcome following a decade of uncertainty and dispute over the future of Great Keppel Island (Wop-pa).

Capricorn Conservation Council coordinator Michael McCabe said today, “We met with Tower Holdings (GKI Resort Pty Ltd) in 2010 and provided constructive comments on how best the resort could be re-developed while protecting the natural values of Great Keppel.”

“CCC comments were based largely on the 2009 (Lot 21) Land Evaluation by the Department of Natural Resources. The study included detailed scientific input with widespread community engagement and recommended that: *The Most Appropriate Use is conservation based on the significant natural and cultural values ... identified by the Environmental Protection Agency and other organisations. Conservation values are best protected by maintaining the land in its current non urban state.*” Mr McCabe said.

“The islands of Keppel Bay are great representatives within the GBR World Heritage Area of accessible continental islands still largely in their natural condition. Their unique coral communities have evolved and adapted to flourish despite being within the flood plume of the Fitzroy, the largest river system entering the GBR lagoon. GKI and nearby Peak Is. a GBR Marine Park ‘preservation zone’ provide critical nesting sites for ‘vulnerable’ Flatback Turtles¹.”

“Throughout the drawn-out environmental assessment and approval process, CCC has continued to hold the firm view, firstly, that a smaller scale resort within the existing footprint, west of the steep erodible ridge from Mt Wyndham and Putney Point was the most ecologically sustainable outcome.”

“Secondly that a jetty with safe moorings for commercial ferries and associated landing facilities for recreational craft would be less environmentally hazardous than a dredged, sand-bagged marina enclosing the tidal entrance to Putney Creek. The current dilemma to ‘defend or retreat’ at the other end of Putney and Fishermans Beach spit, reinforces our concerns about interfering with natural sand and wave actions by placing a 250 berth marina right beside the wonderful coral community on Putney Point and over healthy inter tidal sea-grass beds.

“Thirdly, CCC insists that the 2009 DNR recommendations to protect remaining GKI public lands (Tower’s ‘Clam Bay precinct’ - 1100 villas & apartments plus golf course) as National Park, should be expedited.”

“The community is very frustrated and disillusioned with the developer’s promises and the failure by the Queensland and Australian governments to enforce requirements of leases, marine permits (Middle Island Underwater Observatory) and so called ‘strict major project’ approval conditions and deadlines.”

“The declaration of the Balban Dara Guya (Leekes Creek) Fish Habitat Area² in 2016 was recognition of the importance of Wop-pa (GKI) as a fish (and Manta Ray) nursery and, especially the need for true and respectful involvement of the major island land holder, the Woppaburra Land Trust.”

“Queensland Labour’s election promise of \$25 million to improve island facilities creates a unique opportunity for community engagement and assessment of environmentally sustainable energy and water possibilities, especially if the proposed 12-15 kilometres dredged trench to the mainland can be avoided.”

“CCC welcomes the opportunity to re-open communication about any revised plans by Tower Holdings, and with the government agencies who seems to have sat on their hands since project signed off in 2012.”

Attachment: Figure 1 Alternative concept plan for Great Keppel Island

¹ Flatback turtle *Natator depressus* <http://www.environment.gov.au/marine/marine-species/marine-turtles/flatback>

² Balban Dara Guya <https://www.npsr.qld.gov.au/managing/area-summaries/leekes.html>



Figure 1: attrib. ourkeppel.com (2011)