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Capricorn Conservation Council (CCC) is delighted that Federal Environment Minister, Peter Garrett, has rejected the proposal for a huge tourist resort on Great Keppel Island. He has announced that it is “clearly unacceptable under national environment law”

Mr Garrett has concluded that “a project of this size and density would lead to unacceptable impacts on the World Heritage and National Heritage values of the area including the Great Barrier Reef.”

“We are relieved that he has recognised that this resort proposal was so big that it would have had severe impacts on inshore coral communities, coastal wetlands, marine species, and island flora.” CCC Vice-president Mr Herbert said.

“In particular scientists are only just discovering the wonderful diversity of corals close to Great Keppel Island. They would have been greatly impacted by the proposed marina.”

We are also pleased that Mr Garrett took into account the recommendation by the Qld Govt that Lot 21 (875 hectares) should be retained in an undeveloped state and designated as a Protected Area under Queensland legislation.

“The proposal of 1700 villas surrounding a golf course on Lot 21 may have ended up as a ghost town. Indeed, had the Tower Holdings proposal gone ahead it would have been so huge that it may well have become the Cubbie Station of the Keppels.” said Ian Herbert.

“The supply of water and power, and the disposal of sewerage are major issues not properly addressed in Tower’s plans. Even when we asked them in person, they were unable to give us an adequate response.”

CCC is in favour of redeveloping the resort on the current site. Peter Garrett has stated that “The proponent is welcome to submit an alternative proposal in the future which does not have this level of impact.”

“This fantastic news is still sinking in, but CCC would like to thank our members and those in the community who opposed this inappropriate development so strongly and with such passion and commitment. It truly is an amazing outcome for the environment, particularly the Great Barrier Reef, and for Great Keppel Island.”

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