



18 June 2013

UNESCO KEEPS GREAT BARRIER REEF UNDER REVIEW

Conservationists are pleased that the UNESCO World Heritage Committee has decided to continue its review of the Great Barrier Reef's World Heritage listing for another year.

Since 2012 the status of the 'outstanding universal values' of GBR World Heritage Area has been considered for listing as 'in danger'. This was triggered by the approvals, and failure to notify, of the LNG plants on Curtis Island and dredging to expand Gladstone Harbour.

Capricorn Conservation Council Coordinator, Michael McCabe said, "We are pleased with the UNESCO decision to maintain international scrutiny over the Great Barrier Reef."

"The World Heritage Committee mission to Australia and the assessment by UNESCO prompted the Federal Government undertake a Strategic Assessment of the GBR. This will look at its ecological condition, current and future usage, threats and opportunities to improve our management of this magnificent natural icon."

"The Federal Government's Strategic Assessment is due out soon and we hope this will lead to stronger measures to protect the resilience of the Reef."

"Locally we are extremely concerned about the lack of recovery of Keppel Bay coral reefs and the species dependant on them since the series of major flood events since 2008."

"It would be extremely foolhardy for projects such as the coal port proposals in the Fitzroy Delta and at Sea Hill on Curtis Island to proceed."

"An Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) – GBR Bill to implement UNESCO recommendations is currently before parliament. We hope this gets bipartisan support as this would prevent the extension of ports into the Fitzroy Delta and Keppel Bay."

"UNESCO's extension of its review into next year will keep all levels of government and the community focused on improving knowledge and management practices."

"By then the 2014 GBR Outlook Report will give a better understanding of the condition of Marine Park."

"The two independent scientific panels trying to get to the bottom of Gladstone Harbour's ecological conditions should add to the knowledge base and need to result in better environmental assessments and management practices for major projects in the GBR World Heritage Area."

"The Queensland Government which is responsible for the coastal zone of the GBR World Heritage Area needs to be clearer about their position on port locations and other coastal planning and hazard management."

"Without these clear and urgent actions by governments and stakeholders we run the risk of handing over a devastated Great Barrier Reef to future generations."

ENDS