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UNESCO – World Heritage Committee Mission Visits Gladstone

CCC (also representing Keppel Island Conservation Community) had the opportunity, along with Gladstone Conservation Council, Fitzroy Basin Association, Keppel Bay and Fitzroy Delta Alliance, Capricorn Coast Local Marine Advisory Committee to meet with Dr **Fanny Douvere** from UNESCO – World Heritage Committee and **Tim Badnam**, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) an independent advisory body to UNESCO, who are reporting on Australia's management of the 'universal values' of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBR-WHA). The UNESCO WHA Mission heard a very consistent voice from all speakers that Gladstone Harbour and Curtis Island are under extreme environmental pressures from the current surge of 'development' which exceeds the environmental footprint of the previous forty years of industrial growth. UNESCO will meet in St Petersburg in June 2012 to decide on the state of GBR WHA management.

The UNESCO visit was prompted when, in 2011, they noted with; '*extreme concern the approval of Liquefied Natural Gas and port facilities on Curtis Island*' in the GBR WHA. UNESCO requested a comprehensive strategic assessment of the entire Great Barrier Reef WHA property. The federal Department of Sustainability Environment Water & Communities has agreed to undertake a Strategic Assessment under the Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC). Comments on the GBR Strategic Assessment Terms of Reference are due by **13 April 2012**.

<http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/notices/assessments/great-barrier-reef.html>

Our session was also addressed by Dr Matt Landos (Future Fisheries Veterinary Service) who is conducting independent analysis of on-going fish health in Gladstone Harbour and nearby rivers. Dr Landos presented graphic biopsies and interim pathological findings on fish species and other marine life and noted abnormally high levels of dissolved Nitrogen in Harbour waters which appears to be contributing to toxic algal and cyano-bacterial blooms. He expressed concern that little attention has been given to the potential impact on marine life of the extreme noise levels from dredging, pile driving and 600+ vessels movements per day.

The brief one hour meeting was capped off by the introduction of June Norman from Walking For The Future. June, a 71 year old great-grandma, had walked 500 k from Dalby to Gladstone, along the route of the coal seam gas pipeline. She was warmly received and applauded when she made her brief statement wanting her great grand children to be able to enjoy the GBR, and the plea she heard from everyone she met on her trek to, **Save the Reef**. (The UNESCO Mission delegates and all groups making presentations were greeted by a colourful assembly of peaceful activists singing "Save The Reef".)

CCC prepared a submission to UNESCO covering all the local issues we consider have impacts on the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. To see our ten recommendations or the whole submission go to: <http://www.cccqld.org.au/gbr-whc.html>

To see the Queensland Conservation Council – Joint Environment Groups Statement on the Strategic Assessment of the GBR-WHA go to:

http://www.qccqld.org.au/docs/Campaigns/Nature_Conservation/GBR%20assessment.pdf

Queensland Election 2012

CCC send eight questions to candidates for Keppel, Mirani and Rockhampton last week. To date only one response has been received from Bill Byrne (Rockhampton). To see the Q&A go to :

http://www.cccqld.org.au/docs/Election_2012_Questions.pdf

QCC has released a joint election position and scorecard on five keys environmental matters;

http://www.qccqld.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1&Itemid=2

Wetland Day

Sunday, 25th March Bicentennial Lagoon, Emu Park will be a great day for ducks, frogs and anyone interested in learning more about our local wetlands:

<http://www.fba.org.au/news/downloads/Wetlands-Day.pdf>

Coal Seam Gas

Arrow Energy is planning to pipe coal seam gas from Moranbah to Curtis Island. CCC commented last May on the draft terms of reference and have now been invited to participate in an EIS advisory body. The pipeline will be the first of many criss-crossing our CQ farms, bushland, rivers and wetlands. Arrow LNG will be the 4th processing facility on Curtis Island if it obtains State and Federal approval. Arrow LNG's processing plant and shipping facilities will extend the Curtis Island LNG precinct destruction to east of Hamilton Point onto intertidal wetlands. CCC has submitted that insufficient is known about the ecological damage from the projects already approved and that there should be no further approvals for LNG processing, ports and shipping expansion until the GBR Strategic Assessment can consider the ecological capacity and resilience of the GBR and associated coasts and river catchments.

For more information on the Arrow Bowen (Basin) Pipeline, which would pass west of Gracemere, go to :

http://www.arrowenergy.com.au/page/Community/Project_Assessment_EIS/Arrow_Bowen_Pipeline

(comments due 24 May 2012)

Connors Dam

The Fitzroy's only remaining 'wild' river is under threat from the Connors Dam. The Connors while one of the Fitzroy Basin's smallest rivers, draining the higher rainfall country south of Sarina, provides our most reliable post-winter fresh, so essential for the ecological health of the Fitzroy. While promoting the dam and pipeline as improving the water supply to Moranbah, the intended use is to pipe the water 500k west to wash down the dusty thermal coal from the proposed mega mines in the Galilee Basin.

<http://www.sunwater.com.au/future-developments/connors-river>

SunWater wants to construct a recreational facility to provide the local community, passing travellers and tourists with facilities for camping, fishing and general recreation. If you want to give feedback go to : <http://watercoolerchat.com.au/connorsriverdamrecfacility?module=forum> by 9 April 2012. (Q:

Which is most endangered? a) Fitzroy Turtles, b) Power Boats, c) Jet Skis, d) Wild Rivers)

The Connors Dam does not yet have federal government (EPBC) approval and CCC will be writing to Minister Burke shortly expressing concerns about the impact on the River and riparian ecosystems, including the habitat of our logo the vulnerable Fitzroy River Turtle *Rheodytes leucops*. If you'd like to help in the Connors River campaign or have any suggestions or knowledge of the area please contact Chantelle or Michael/

a voice for the environment
