



102 Grafton Street  
PO Box 3065  
CAIRNS Qld Australia 4870  
Telephone: +61 7 4040 4444  
Facsimile: +61 7 4051 2966  
Email: info@ecofish.com.au  
Website: www.ecofish.com.au

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Mr Gavan Dwyer  
Great Barrier Reef Study  
Productivity Commission  
LB2, Collins Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 8003

Dear Mr Dwyer,

### **RESEARCH STUDY - WATER QUALITY AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF**

Further to our recent telephone conversation, please accept our submission in relation to your research study into the economic and social importance of industries in the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) Catchment, and the costs and benefits of actions to address concerns over declining water quality.

As you would be aware the commercial fishing industry has the potential to be most greatly impacted by declining water quality in the GBR. As part of your study it is of great concern to Ecofish that industries are correctly assessed when considering their economic and social importance.

- 1. Outline the economic and social importance of the main industries in the catchment at a local, regional state and national level.*

In relation to valuing the commercial fishing industry at a local, regional, state and national level we would direct you to the CRC Reef Research Centre project 'A Guide to the Commercial Fishers of Queensland' by Dr. Mark Fenton and Nadine Marshall. We have found this work to be of great value when looking at the value of the industry at a regional level. The project also provided an interactive CD-Rom that can be used to manipulate data.

In relation to accessing data through the Queensland Fisheries Service I would suggest that you contact Mr Lew Williams (Phone: 07-3224 2237) in Brisbane. Mr Williams has most probably had the most experience at QFS in assessing the value of fisheries within Queensland.

In relation to assessing the total value and employment impacts of the commercial fishing industry in Queensland and for that matter any other industry we suggest that you contact Mr Jim Hurley (Phone 07-3225 1562) at Queensland Treasury's Office of Economic and Statistical Research. I understand that they have just completed their regional input-output tables and will be in a position to provide you with estimates of contributions to Gross Regional Product for each industry.

In assessing the current value of industries we ask that you give consideration particularly to these 3 data sources and ask that you undertake this analysis at a regional level. This is particularly due to the fact that issues surrounding water quality and its impacts on industry are regionally based and should be treated as such.

In considering the economic impacts of recreational fishing we ask that you give strong consideration to the fact that recreational fishers are not generally creating wealth but merely spending disposable income. The argument being that should these recreational fishers not be able to fish this disposable income would be spent on some other recreational pursuit.

In relation to valuing fisheries I wish to draw your attention to 'Valuing Fisheries An Economic Framework', edited by Tor Hundloe and available through the University of Queensland Press. This publication sets out in clear language the correct economic methods to be used.

*2. Estimate the economic importance of the main industries in 2010 and 2020*

I find it difficult to provide you with any significant suggestions in relation to estimating the economic importance of the main industries in 2010 and 2020. I would be very interested in receiving the methodology you intend to engage in such crystal ball gazing.

*3. Discuss the current management approaches of the main industries to activities affecting water quality*

In relation to the commercial fishing industry its impacts on water quality are insignificant. It is industries belief that the focus on water quality should be targeted at land-based activity. It is therefore with great surprise that the impact of the development industry resulting from population and tourism growth is not being considered as part of your study. I suggest that these impacts should be considered.

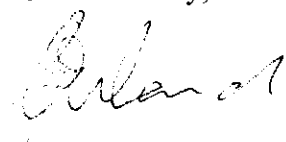
*4. Assess the costs and benefits of policies to address declining water quality*

In relation to this item, once again I would welcome your advice in relation to how the costs and benefits will be measured. GBRMPA's Cairns' Local Marine Advisory Committee have developed an action plan to address water quality in our area and I suggest that you contact Ms Anne English (Phone 07-4051 5388) who Chairs that water quality subcommittee.

As discussed on the phone Cairns is home to Australia's largest fishing fleet not to mention the large tourist and recreational fleets. It is therefore imperative that public consultation is conducted in Cairns.

I apologise for the brief nature of this submission, but do look forward to meeting with you or others involved in the study in the near future.

Yours sincerely,



DARREN CLELAND  
Executive Officer