



114 Boundary Street
Railway Estate, Townsville
Qld, 4810
PO Box 364, Townsville
Ph: 61 07 47716226
office@nqcc.org.au
www.nqcc.org.au

3 JUNE 2012

MEDIA RELEASE

UNESCO RIGHT ON REEF

North Queensland Conservation Council today commended the report on the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area released by UNESCO's World Heritage Centre. The report followed an assessment of the conservation of the GBRWHA by representatives of the World Heritage Centre and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in March.

"The report was direct and strong and validated the long-held concerns of the community", said NQCC Coordinator Wendy Tubman.

"It made no bones about the potential impact on the area from what it described as 'the unprecedented scale of coastal development currently being proposed'. This confirms what environmentalists have been saying for some time.

"The report recommends that the World Heritage Committee ask Australia to restrict new port and associated infrastructure development within or adjoining the World Heritage area to existing and long-established major port areas, and to ensure that, even there, no development be allowed if it has a negative individual or cumulative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the GBRWHA."

The report regards it as essential that no port, coastal or other development that could affect the GBRWHA be approved prior to both a positive outcome of the Strategic Assessment currently being undertaken by the Federal and State governments, and the preparation of the resulting plan for the sustainable development of the reef.

The report also calls for an independent review of the management arrangements for Gladstone port area, where Australian approval for the development of an LNG plant on Curtis Island triggered UNESCO's initial concerns.

"The report warns that unless substantial progress on protection of the GBRWHA has been made by this time next year, or if some of the developments currently under consideration proceed, UNESCO may declare the area 'World Heritage in Danger'.

"This is a massive wake-up call for the Australian government; it shows that international experts are in accord with the community in saying that the Great Barrier Reef just cannot take any more pressure," Tubman said.

"We trust that the Federal and State governments will respect the independent expert advice of UNESCO and move immediately to better protect some of the world's most outstanding natural heritage, an iconic area that North Queensland and all Australia are proud to promote to the world."

CONTACT: NQCC Coordinator Wendy Tubman 0415 176761