

Environmental Protection Agency
Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park
PO Box 155
Brisbane
Albert Street
Queensland
4002

Thursday, August 19, 2004

Dear Sir/Madam

The Australian Coral Reef Society (ACRS) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Queensland's Proposed Great Barrier Reef Zoning. The Australian Coral Reef Society (ACRS) is concerned with the study and protection of coral reefs. The Society has commented on all zoning plans for the Great Barrier Marine Park and made detailed submissions to the recent Representatives Areas Program.

The Australian Coral Reef Society (ACRS) is the oldest coral reef society in the world and was founded as the Great Barrier Reef Committee in 1922. The Society has over 250 Australian and overseas members and represents the coral reef research community in Australia. The Society's members are primarily professional coral reef researchers and are employed by a wide range of State and Commonwealth agencies, as well as private organisations. We hold annual scientific meetings and support postgraduate research on Australia's coral reefs.

ACRS congratulates the Queensland Government on their proposal to declare a single marine park along the coastline, which will be an amalgamation of new and existing State marine parks. We also fully support the plans to have the same zoning as the adjacent Commonwealth Park.

While we accept that there is some urgency to declare this park as soon as possible after the complete rezoning of the Great Barrier Reef which was introduced on the 1st July 2004; we are concerned about the areas along the Queensland coast which have been omitted.

We would like to request a time table as to when rezoning of internal areas such as Rodds Bay, Corio Bay, Trinity Inlet, Hinchinbrook Channel, estuaries such as the Mourilyan and Daintree Rivers and many extensive mangrove areas in places like Shoalwater Bay and Broadsound will be rezoned to give complementarity to the GBR. As Queensland has already accepted in being a partner in the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan with the Commonwealth, these estuarine and wetland habitats are an integral part of the Great Barrier Reef marine ecosystem and need to be better protected.

Many organisms including endangered species utilize these habitats and additional protection needs to be given to many of these areas.

The Australian Coral Reef Society would be happy to provide additional information on the importance of rezoning these areas which are to be excluded from this proposed new marine park.

Yours faithfully

Professor Mike Kingsford.

President