

To the independent expert panel,

Professor Callum Roberts, Professor of Marine Conservation at the University of York, UK, who is currently visiting Australia, described in horrifying detail the damage we have been doing to our oceans and seas all over the globe for the last 150 years and the consequences this is already having and will increasingly have for the survival of humans. He emphasised that the time available to prevent irremediable catastrophic consequences is very short indeed. He argued for a six point action plan to save our oceans: 1) make 30% of seas and oceans into reserves; 2) take fewer fish from the sea and use less damaging fishing methods; 3) ban all fishing below 0.5 miles; 4) stop all forms of pollution of the seas; 5) protect coastlines and their ecosystems in wetlands, beaches, bays, mangrove forests etc; 6) make aquaculture sustainable. Professor Roberts's recommendations 1, 4 and 5 are particularly relevant to your Review.

The environmental damage, disease in marine life, depletion of fisheries and damage to the Great Barrier Reef Marine life at Gladstone Harbour is completely unacceptable. I support the Independent Review and hope that it leads to urgent action to stop the damage which is still occurring and leads to independent management of the area. It is our responsibility as Australians to ensure that the unique environment that we hold in trust for all humanity is preserved.

I understand that there are economic pressures competing with environmental concerns - but it is vital that the economics of destroying the environment are considered in this review - because there is no remedy for the destruction of the Reef and for the damage caused, and for the loss of fish species. Once gone there is no possibility of restoration.

I strongly urge the panel to recommend Governments to move to:

-Stop dumping of dredge waste into the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area or marine environment;

-Reject the fourth gas plant and efficiently use existing infrastructure rather than building a fourth gas plant in the World Heritage Area Curtis Island;

-Reject the Gatcombe and Golding Cutting Channel duplication. Gladstone already has one shipping channel and the impact of dredging inside Gladstone Harbour (which is still occurring) has been suggested as the cause of serious environmental damage in the area;

-Monitor all activities of industries, including dredging, independently of the Ports Corporation and ensure all impacts are assessed collectively rather than monitoring small parts of Gladstone or one industry at a time. All monitoring and assessment work should be made publicly available;

-Insist there is no shale oil industry in the area. It's a dirty industry and past shale oil ventures have been environmental disasters.

The Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area is a global treasure, it directly employs more than 60,000 Australians in tourism alone, not to mention the fishing industry, please ensure it is properly protected.

Sincerely,