

# Queensland Seafood Industry Association

[www.queenslandseafood.com.au](http://www.queenslandseafood.com.au)

## Queensland Seafood Industry Association's Submission to the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities' Independent Review of the Port of Gladstone

The Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA) is the largest industry body representing the Queensland commercial fishing industry. The QSIA is comprised of licence holders across the State's commercial fisheries, master fishers, seafood processors, marketers, retailers and business allied to the seafood sector.

The QSIA on behalf of its members in the Gladstone region has been actively representing their interests and more broadly those of all commercial fishers. An independent review of the environmental management arrangements and governance of the Port of Gladstone is supported by industry. Key to the review is the impacts of an expanding port of the local community, the marine environment and industries that are reliant on the port. The following constitutes the QSIA's feedback based on key sections of the issues paper:

### Item 1 - Independent Review of the Port of Gladstone

The QSIA support the request by the World Heritage Committee and in particular that the review process is, '*...consistent with the highest internationally recognised standards for best practice commensurate with iconic World Heritage status*'. All submissions should be made public and the government should not accept submissions that are private. The marine ecosystem on the Queensland east coast is not 'owned' by industry, government or any private sector entity; it is a public resource that must be managed for the multiple users that are reliant on the health of the ecosystem.

The ongoing development in the Gladstone Harbour and the impacts on the marine ecology suggest that the LNG industry, the Port of Gladstone Corporation (PoGC) and government at the State and Federal levels have failed to preserve the marine environment.

The outcomes of the review cannot be delayed and should be provided to the community as soon as possible.

### Item 2 - Comprehensive strategic assessment of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and adjacent coastal zone

As noted in the issues paper, '*The comprehensive strategic assessment will help identify, plan for and manage existing and emerging risks to ensure ongoing protection and management of the natural values of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and adjacent coastal zone. This will be achieved by:*

- *Investigating the adequacy of the existing management arrangements for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, and*

- *Assessing current and future development policies and planning in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and the adjacent coastal zone and analysing likely direct, indirect and cumulative impacts*.

The QSIA suggests that the management arrangements of the existing management arrangements for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area has been seriously undermined by the expansion of the port under the stewardship of the PoGC. The QSIA is aware of continuing impacts on fish species that are commercially extracted despite assurances from government that dredging and other works in the Gladstone Harbour could not be the cause of fish health issues.

The QSIA is fully aware that the future of the port and other ports in Queensland that their growth is assured in the long-term based on the current minerals boom. Current and future development policies and planning will have significant impacts on the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. The QSIA suggests that given the income both the State and Federal governments will generate from the minerals boom should be used to continually analyse the impacts on the adjacent coastal zone. This will secure data on port development impacts for the long-term.

The QSIA does not support the language of 'direct and indirect' in reference to cumulative impacts. The scale of LNG and port development projects in Gladstone Harbour will have impacts on the marine ecology (e.g. loss of sea grass and fish health issues), the community (e.g. potential human health issues) and business that are dependent on a healthy marine ecology (e.g. commercial fishers and land based businesses).

### **Item 3 - Current Management Arrangements**

#### **Item 3.1 - Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership**

The QSIA believes that the partnership has not adequately taken into consideration other, independent analysis of the impacts of the expansion of LNG and the PoGC. No resources have been provided to industry to partake at the necessary level. QSIA has concerns that fish health issues may not be adequately addressed by this partnership.

#### **Item 3.2 - Monitoring and Management Plans**

The QSIA understands that the monitoring and management plans are inadequate and given continuing fish health issues the Association questions the monitoring regime. Is it effective and if government is left to judge its effectiveness given what is known by industry suggests an independent organisation should review the monitoring and management plans.

#### **Item 3.3 - Dredge Technical Reference Panel**

This panel should have non-technical expertise from organisations and/or individuals from impacted industry sectors.

### **Recommendations**

The development of the Port of Gladstone and other ports in general will meet the same issues of ensuring a healthy marine environment, impacts on industries reliant on a healthy ecosystem and potential impacts on the community.

The income generated from the development of ports which in turn are underwritten by the minerals sector will provide billions in come for State and Federal governments. This will no doubt generate employment in regional and coastal communities. At no stage have

industries in the region called for a cessation to the development of the ports. The QSIA argues that impacted industries (working on the water or land based) should be compensated for loss or better still that projects are designed to minimise damage to the ecology and other industry sectors.

#### Recommendation 1

That an independent body is established to monitor water quality and dredge work impacts on the marine ecology in Gladstone Harbour and into the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area over a 10 year period. The body should be comprised of leading experts that are in no way connected to government.

#### Recommendation 2

That a fund is established from funding generated from offset funding that project proponents and the PoGC are required to use in dealing with marine ecology impacts.

If the panel has questions regarding this submission please contact me on the QSIA on (07) 3268 3085.

Regards,



Eric Perez  
Executive Officer  
Queensland Seafood Industry Association