



27 March 2013

Gladstone Review Secretariat
PO Box 787
Canberra ACT 2601
Email: GladstoneReview@environment.gov.au

Dear Sir or Madam,

Re: Submission to the Independent Review of the Port of Gladstone

Capricorn Conservation Council Inc. (CCC) is a community not-for-profit environmental organisation in Central Queensland (CQ) that is focused on the conservation and protection of environmental values, biodiversity and ecological integrity. Established in 1973, the group has a historical record of communication and engagement on environmental issues in CQ, including the Gladstone and Curtis Coast region.

As a member group of Queensland Conservation Council (QCC), CCC supports the submission to the Independent Review by QCC and supports the comments and recommendations submitted contained there-in (CCC as a member had input into this submission). Therefore this submission from CCC is to identify further issues or concerns and recommendations.

CCC has actively been involved in reviewing and commenting upon Environmental Impact Statements in the region, reviewing compliance monitoring and offset delivery for some projects, and has been involved in the previous Extended Oversight Committee (on Fish health and water quality set up by the previous Department of Environment and Resource Management) and is now participating in the community component of the Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership.

CCC has grave concerns for the current and future ecological health and protection of coastal and marine ecosystems in Gladstone Harbour, Curtis Island, The Narrows and the greater Curtis Coast region, particularly given the current rapid industrial expansion (and future proposals) of the region.

SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are often poorly considered in the Environmental Impact Assessment process, and thereafter once projects are approved, monitoring is generally inadequate for a quantitative assessment of cumulative impacts to water quality, ecosystem health and species.

We recommend that quantitative cumulative impact monitoring and assessment is a necessity and needs to be completed independently in the Port of Gladstone and other areas. Cumulative impact assessments for flora and fauna species and their habitats and ecosystems (including those under Matters of National Environmental Significance and Outstanding Universal Values of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area), is essential to ensure their long term protection and conservation into the future.

Independent Scientific studies

The review should consider independent and other relevant scientific studies completed within the Port Curtis, Curtis Coast and Gladstone Harbour area and immediate marine and terrestrial catchment surrounds since the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWHA) was inscribed. This would provide essential information to consider the impacts to OUV and MNES in the region over recent decades.

Of particular importance for inclusion in the review in relation to recent fish health and water quality concerns, are the independent scientific reports commissioned by the Gladstone Fishing Research Fund and completed by Dr Matt Landos of Future Fisheries Veterinary Service and researchers of James Cook University (all reports available for download at <http://www.gladstonefishingresearchfund.org.au/#/reports/4565752703>). We recommend that research findings and recommendations from these reports must be considered by the Independent Panel in the Review.

Other scientific studies of absolute importance for consideration and inclusion in the review are the multitude of research and technical reports completed for the Port Curtis region by the Coastal CRC (Cooperative Research Centre for Coastal Zone, Estuary and Waterway Management). Reports on contaminants, intertidal wetlands, bioaccumulation of metals and remote sensing are just a few of the reports available for download at http://www.ozcoasts.gov.au/search_data/crc_rpts.jsp . We recommend that the discussions and conclusions of the reports be considered by the Panel for a necessary historical ecological and technical perspective regarding Port Curtis and the Port of Gladstone in the Review.

Outstanding Universal Values (OUV) – in Port of Gladstone and surrounding region

There have been many changes to the extent and condition of coastal catchments, mangroves, intertidal wetlands, seagrass beds, fish habitat and terrestrial ecosystems in the Port of Gladstone area and the Curtis Coast over the decades as a result of industrial and urban expansion. A pictorial history would provide an excellent medium for the panel to review and understand the level of changes to the region since the inscription of the WHA in 1981. We recommend that the Panel request for a collation of aerial photographs, satellite imagery and other photography, over the past four decades to understand the loss of and scale of impacts to coastal and marine habitats (and OUV's) within and adjacent to the GBRWHA over the Curtis Coast region and Port of Gladstone. Ideally, yearly imagery would be best to provide this visual and pictorial time series.

Compliance monitoring and offsets

We have concerns regarding compliance monitoring and management and offsets and their management for marine and coastal ecosystems in the area, however do not have adequate time to detail this concerns today. We would be happy to provide these details at a later date.

Recommendation:

The above concerns, suggestions and recommendations are included in the scope of the review.

We appreciate the extension granted to provide this submission and would like to offer the opportunity for further communication with the Panel and further provision of information during the Review process. We would consider meeting with Panelists in Gladstone or over the phone should such an opportunity be considered worthy by the Panel.

Regards,



Chantelle James
Project Officer