

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority  
Fringing Reef Workshop : Science, Industry and Management  
Management Issues Identified from Assessment  
of State Proposals for Marine Park Declaration

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Abstract:

A study undertaken on behalf of the Queensland Government to identify areas suitable for declaration as Marine Park under the Queensland Marine Parks Act 1982 has revealed several significant management issues. Key amongst these is the apparent conflict between fishing, both commercial and recreational, conservation and preservation. In seeking conservation, the overriding management factor has been found to be accessibility to the fringing reef areas.

Introduction:

The comments made in this paper are based on the experience gained in a current study for the Queensland Premier's Department. The study is entitled: "Investigation of Tidal Lands and Tidal Waters of Queensland within and adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park - Cairns Section for Declaration as a Marine Park". Similar studies in various stages of completion are underway on other sections of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

The aims of the investigation are to define areas suitable for

declaration as State Marine Parks under the Queensland Marine Parks Act 1982, and to prepare zoning plans and management plans for these areas:

The Study:

The study team for this investigation has involved the authors of this paper as environmental planners and Dr. T. Ayling as the marine biologist.

The requirements of the Marine Parks Act are that public submissions be called for to indicate areas considered suitable for declaration and issues relevant to the management of the areas. A total of 18 submissions were received (see Table 1).

The points raised in these submissions have been discussed with most of their authors and there has been further contact with the Local Authorities, Aboriginal Communities, commercial fishermen and some tourist operators.

The study is being administered by an inter-departmental, working group convened by the Premier's Department. Representation is indicated in Table 2. Representatives of these departments and authorities have attended meetings reviewing proposals and draft reports.

The study has been rather drawn out as similar investigations on other sections of the reef/coast are underway and some interaction on approach and wording of text has been warranted. The final areas recommended

for declaration are apparently now agreed upon for the Cairns Section and most of the management issues have been identified.

Management Issues:

The key management issues relate to the apparent conflict between fishing, both commercial and recreational (amateur), conservation and preservation. These are considered legitimate uses of foreshore fringing reefs. There is, however, most support and interest for conservation of reef areas.

This is certainly seen as a primary objective of the State Marine Parks Act which states that in preparing proposals regard shall be given "to the needs of conservation of, research in and reasonable use and enjoyment by persons of the area to which the proposal relates" (Section 14(2)).

In defining areas and proposed zones (which are desired to be totally complementary with the GBRMP zonings), the major issue has been fishing versus conservation. It is acknowledged that fishing is a legitimate commercial activity, for benefit to the whole community, and that recreational fishing is very popular. However, the case invariably put is that if a fisherman is disadvantaged in any way, the proposal should be dropped.

The Accessibility Factor:

In seeking conservation, the overriding management factor has been found to be accessibility to the fringing reef. The general experience

is that tourists do not wish to travel for more than 2 hours in a boat/craft to get to a day-trip destination. This clearly defines destinations within about 70 km of boarding points as being regularly visited using present craft types.'

Though this observation applies particularly to reefs and cays in the off-shore areas in the Cairns Section, a similar accessibility factor applies to foreshore fringing reefs. For example, Murray Reefs between Cape Flattery and Cape Bedford are rarely visited, other than by members of the Hopevale Community, because they are not generally accessible from the land and are too distant by boat. However, the fringing reefs north of Cape Tribulation are now more frequently visited as access has improved.

Similarly, visitation to the Rocky Ledges reefs north of the Starcke River has increased recently because of a change in access permission through the adjoining cattle station.

These factors are considered to have implications which require attention in defining management of areas of fringing reef.

Acknowledgement:

We wish to acknowledge the permission of the Queensland Premier's Department for reference to the, current study in preparing this paper.

Table 1

Summary of Public Submissions

No.	<u>Type of Respondent</u>
2	Private Individuals
3	Individuals with Commercial Interests
4	Associations and Societies
	Wildlife Preservation Society of Qld.
	Australian Littoral Society
	Trinity Bay and Inlet Society
	Australian Coral Reef Society
3	Local Authorities
	Cook Shire Council
	Cairns City Council
	Mulgrave Shire Council
1	Government Authority
	Cairns Port Authority
5	Government Departments
	Department of Forestry
	Department of - Mines -
	Department of Local Government
	National Parks & Wildlife Service
	Department of Primary Industries

Table 2

Inter-Departmental Working Group

Premier's Department  
 Queensland Fish Management Authority  
 Department of Primary Industries  
 National Parks & Wildlife Service  
 Department of Harbours & Marine  
 Department of Community Affairs  
 Department of Survey & Mapping  
 Queensland Boating & Fisheries Patrol  
 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority