

Tourism Advisory Group and Wetlands

G. Lee

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Today I am wearing two hats. The first hat I'm wearing is that I chair an advisory group set up by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to look at the best ways of handling marine tourism. We are an independent body. We are an allegiance to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. We don't so much take direction from them as answer their questions; we will obey and supply what they want. We are an expertise based committee. Now that, in recent times, has got a bit of a bad name. We're practical expertise based. We're the people who are actually doing it; we're the operators that take the people out; we're the operators that take the fishermen out into the reef.

The other hat is with the Queensland Charter Vessel Association. I represent the whole lot of the commercial vessels that take people out to the reef. Our future is dependent on the future of this area here. What happens here is going to depend on what happens out there. Now because I'm out there I'm one of your neighbours and I'm very loathe to tell you how to suck eggs in your own backyard.

Let me finish by saying very quickly that what you do here is definitely going to have an effect on what we can do out there in the future. Marine tourism brings \$1 billion into this area, and it accounts for 1.5 million visitors through this whole area, so we need to be looked after. Final note, at dinner last night, I believe it was Ross Digman who made an offer. In all the years I've attended these things we have always decided that something needed to be done. Last night someone got up and said something that could be done. Good on ya mate.