

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

REPRESENTATIVE AREAS PROGRAM



MOST SUBMISSIONS IN THE HISTORY OF GBRMPA

Any doubt that the planned re-zoning of the Great Barrier Reef was a matter of interest to many Australians was quickly dispelled by the overwhelming response to the first phase of community consultation for the Representative Areas Program.

10,190 submissions were received, by far the highest number for any project with which GBRMPA has been involved. Many submissions contained detailed information and maps, but despite the unexpected workload, GBRMPA still proposes to release the Draft Zoning Plan mid 2003 as scheduled.

A trained team of GBRMPA analysts carefully recorded the issues raised in every submission, regardless of whether they were written by a single individual or repeated by many people. A database has been developed to manage and store these issues as well as key details of the submissions. This database has been invaluable for GBRMPA to understand, sort and use all the information from the submissions and help develop the Draft Zoning Plan.

WHAT YOU TOLD US

Many submissions, especially from communities along the GBR coast, contained site-specific information about high use areas in the Marine Park, and important recommendations for and against the location of Green Zones ('no-take' areas).

Others raised significant issues about various aspects of the rezoning of the Marine Park.

The following key themes emerged from the submissions:

- Protecting the natural and cultural values associated with the Great Barrier Reef.
- Maintaining access to the Marine Park for various activities.
- Comments about Green Zones, both for and against.
- Alternatives to Green Zones for protecting biodiversity.

- Communication of the RAP process and various information products used by GBRMPA.
- Enforcement.
- Other issues such as water quality that were not directly related to RAP, but that need to be considered within Marine Park planning.

It is difficult to summarise so many submissions involving such a wide variety of issues in this update brochure, so a summary of the content of submissions, by primary user group, will be released with the Draft Zoning Plan.

If you would like more information on the origin of submissions (within Queensland) then visit our website at: http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/key_issues/conservation/rep_areas/updates.html



HOW WE'RE USING THE INFORMATION

GBRMPA will use the information provided by the community to develop a Draft Zoning Plan that will please the vast majority of people.

The placement of new Green Zones and other zones will be guided by community input and as such the new zones will be located where they minimise impacts on users, but still act to protect the diversity of plants and animals that live in the Marine Park.

Information from the submissions will also help us to review other zones and develop consistent zoning provisions over the whole of the Great Barrier Reef.

SHARING INFORMATION

The next phase of public consultation on the Representative Areas Programme will start mid 2003 when the Draft Zoning Plan, maps and other products will be released for public comment.

We will be also undertaking an extensive program of community information sessions to introduce the Draft Zoning Plan. The locations for the information sessions, together with copies of the new zoning maps for the four main sections of the Reef, will be advertised in newspapers and on local radio along the length of the Great Barrier Reef. All the information sessions will also be advertised on the GBRMPA website.

BE INFORMED

Everyone who made a submission during the first phase of public consultation will receive reef wide maps showing the locations of the new zones.

There'll be no shortage of reading material for people and organisations that want more information about the Draft Zoning Plan. A range of products will be produced, including:

- The **Draft Zoning Plan** (this will include maps as well as the statutory draft plan provisions).
- A **Regulatory Impact Statement** describing the positive and negative impacts of this rezoning process.
- **Reef-wide maps** (4 full colour maps, same size as current 'Introductory Guides').
- **'Basis for Zoning'** document, which:
 - provides a summary of the public submissions from the first round of community participation;
 - addresses the key issues raised in the submissions; and
 - highlights the main zone amendments proposed in the Draft Zoning Plan.
- **Information papers** on key issues.
- **Submission form.**

Anyone who is interested may view and download all these publications from the GBRMPA website: www.gbrmpa.gov.au once the public consultation phase commences.

Copies of the Draft Zoning Plan, together with zoning maps that incorporate information outlining the basis for zoning, will be made available for viewing at Council offices, libraries and other locations in regional and local centres, such as bait and tackle shops.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have any queries about the Representative Areas Program, please contact GBRMPA on free call 1 800 990 177 or visit the GBRMPA website: www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/key_issues/conservation/rep_areas/index.html