17/04/2012

**Reef check offensive - Newman**
Courier Mail, 17/04/12, General News, Page 11
By: Brian Williams

16/04/2012

**Canberra won't back shift of reef boundaries**
Northern Territory News, 16/04/12, General News, Page 39
By: None
Compere recalls Qld Deputy Premier Jeff Seeney's reluctance regarding UNESCO and other non-Australian bodies having to be informed about resource projects in Qld that may affect the Great Barrier Reef. Compere notes that a UN committee visited Australia to assess the impact of port and gas developments on the Great Barrier Reef, particularly on Curtis Island off Gladstone. Compere then plays a prerecorded interview with Ove Heogh-Guldberg, Marine Biologist, University of Queensland, who explains the large magnitude and impressive health of the Great Barrier Reef in spite of coastal water quality and climate change issues. Heogh-Guldberg says the Great Barrier Reef brings in $5b to the Australian economy each year, mostly through tourism, and provides 50,000 jobs. Compere recalls Seeney's comment that Gladstone is not really part of the Great Barrier Reef, to which Heogh-Guldberg replies that drawing a line indicating where the reef starts and ends 'flies in the face of connectivity'. Heogh-Guldberg says that what happens inland affects what happens in the ocean, going on to say that you can have sustainable development along coastlines as long as you consider each port's specific context, particularly in regard to recent intensification of activities. He says the entire coastal system should be considered together, including both Gladstone and the Great Barrier Reef, so that it can be kept in continued good health. In relation to UNESCO's involvement in the protection of the Great Barrier Reef, Heogh-Guldberg says Australia has responsibilities to a treaty it signed up to as a country and cannot shirk those obligations when it is inconvenient. He says the UNESCO treaty is very important internationally and wonders what sort of global response would come if India decided to demolish the Taj Mahal, going on to explain its value to Australia. Heogh-Guldberg describes the 'destruction' of Curtis Island inside the World Heritage Area as 'extremely regrettable', going on to explain that Heron Island remains beautiful and largely unaffected by the coastal system. However, he says ecosystems along the coastline and within the reef remain at risk and repeats the inter-connectedness between different parts of the regional system, mentioning fisheries as well. Heogh-Guldberg states a need to 'do science' to investigate how exactly the reef has been affected in recent years, be it by floods or by industry. Compere finally mentions that Heogh-Guldberg is the Director of the Climate Change Institute at the University of Queensland.

Interviewees: Ove Hoegh-Guldberg, University of Queensland

Duration: 10.40
Summary ID: W00048296402

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13/04/2012

Reef boundary to stay Clash over proposed ports push
Newcastle Herald, 13/04/12, General News, Page 18
By: None

12/04/2012

QLD: Great Barrier Reef boundary reaction
AAP Newswire, 12/04/12, National, Page 0
By: AAP

FED: Govt has 'no plans' to move reef boundary
AAP Newswire, 12/04/12, National, Page 0
By: AAP
Reef check offensive - Newman

PREMIER Campbell Newman yesterday upped the ante in the debate over whether the Port of Gladstone should be excised from the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, saying it was offensive to suggest Queensland could not be trusted to manage its own environmental affairs.

In shades of the parochial debates of the 1980s over UNESCO World Heritage listings of the Reef and wet tropics, Mr Newman said he found it repugnant that outsiders would join the debate.

“Frankly, I find it a bit offensive to suggest that a bunch of international bureaucrats have got more to say, more to offer, or care more about the Great Barrier Reef than the Queensland Government,” he said.

UNESCO is reviewing Australia’s protection of the Reef after concerns were raised about the level of development in areas such as at Gladstone.

Mr Newman said he had been elected to take the state forward and Deputy Premier Jeff Seeney would go to Canberra to expedite major resource projects in Gladstone and the Galilee Basin.

Australian Conservation Foundation president Ian Lowe said the Gladstone excision push was a disgraceful admission that the Reef was not properly managed.

He said the move was aimed at avoiding federal government environment legislation.

“Rather than take responsibility, they just want to shift the goalposts and get on with polluting,” Professor Lowe said.

University of Queensland’s Ove Hoegh-Guldberg said the push to excise ports sent the message that while Australia was happy earning $5 billion annually from tourism aided by a UNESCO World Heritage listing, it was not committed to preserving the Reef.
Canberra won't back shift of reef boundaries

THE Federal Government will not back plans to move the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area boundaries, after the Queensland Government said it would consider plans to remove ports from the zone.

Visiting Gladstone late last week, deputy Queensland Premier Jeff Seeney said there was a case to excise the harbour from the 20,000sq km World Heritage Area.

“If there is going to be a continual misrepresentation of those boundaries then I think that will build a case for the realignment of the boundaries,” Mr Seeney said.

“It is obviously a misrepresentation to talk about Gladstone Harbour being part of the Great Barrier Reef.”

Mr Seeney later said he would consider pushing for other ports to be excised from the area, but hadn’t seen any such proposals.

But Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke said the current boundaries were appropriate.

“When Joh Bjelke-Petersen was premier of Queensland the boundary for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area was established,” he said.

“Since then, it has been appropriately managed as a multi-use property.

“The government has no plans to change the boundary of the property.”

Director of the University of Queensland’s Global Change Institute Professor Ove Hoegh-Guldberg said changing the World Heritage Area boundaries could only harm the Great Barrier Reef.

“What we’re seeing is a whole series of what are badly managed issues in the Gladstone Harbour area having an impact on coastal Queensland and that of course stretches out to the GBR,” he said.
Reef boundary to stay

Clash over proposed ports push

THE federal government says it will not back plans to move the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area boundaries, after the Queensland government said it would consider plans to remove ports from the zone.

Visiting Gladstone yesterday, Deputy Queensland Premier Jeff Seeney said there was a case to excise the harbour from the 20,000 square kilometre World Heritage Area.

He said he would meet with Gladstone Ports Corporation, which has pushed for the boundaries to be moved.

"If there is going to be a continual misrepresentation of those boundaries then I think that will build a case for the realignment of the boundaries," Mr Seeney said.

"It is obviously a misrepresentation to talk about Gladstone Harbour being part of the Great Barrier Reef."

Mr Seeney later said he would consider pushing for other ports to be excised from the area, but had not seen any such proposals.

"I wouldn't rule out looking at other ports, but they haven't been raised with me," he said. He said the decision would ultimately rest with the federal government.

"The ports were here a long time before the heritage listing," Mr Seeney said.

But federal Environment Minister Tony Burke said the current boundaries were appropriate.

"When Joh Bjelke-Petersen was premier of Queensland the boundary for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area was established," he said.

"Since then, it has been appropriately managed as a multi-use property. The government has no plans to change the boundary of the property," Director of the University of Queensland’s Global Change Institute Professor Ove Hoegh-Guldberg said.

Changing the World Heritage Area boundaries could only harm the Great Barrier Reef. "Merely moving the boundary is not the solution because it's the connectivity between the Great Barrier Reef and coastline that's important here," he said.
QLD: Great Barrier Reef boundary reaction

REACTIONS ON SUGGESTIONS THE GREAT BARRIER REEF WORLD HERITAGE AREA SHOULD BE MOVED TO EXCLUDE GLADSTONE HARBOUR.

"It is obviously a misrepresentation to talk about Gladstone Harbour being part of the Great Barrier Reef." - Deputy Queensland Premier Jeff Seeney.

"The government has no plans to change the boundary of the property." - Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke.

"It shows that the LNP is prepared to sacrifice the reef for mining profits and it puts the spotlight on whether the federal government will back that call." - Greens Senator Larissa Waters.

"To imply that the World Heritage Area and its values are just about coral reefs is simply disingenuous." - WWF Australia spokesman Sean Hoobin.

"I think it's a sensible issue to raise and we would be keen to participate in any formal consideration of that proposal." - Queensland Resources Council CEO Michael Roche.

"I guess this is why the World Heritage Area listing went ahead anyway - to remove the local decision making away from something that was actually of national significance." - Director of The University of Queensland's Global Change Institute Professor Ove Hoegh-Guldberg.

"If the boundaries are allowed to be changed, it sets a bad precedent for other World Heritage Areas in the north and undermines the whole protection status. World Heritage protection is supposed to be the highest protection in the world and to undercut it would be dangerous." - Australian Conservation Foundation climate change manager Tony Mohr.

AAP pbc/mo
FED: Govt has 'no plans' to move reef boundary

CAIRNS, April 12 AAP - The federal government will not back plans to move the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area boundaries, after the Queensland government said it would consider plans to remove ports from the zone.

Visiting Gladstone on Thursday, deputy Queensland Premier Jeff Seeney said there was a case to excise the harbour from the 20,000 square kilometre World Heritage Area.

He said he would have a meeting with Gladstone Ports Corporation, which has publicly pushed for the boundaries to be moved.

"If there is going to be a continual misrepresentation of those boundaries then I think that will build a case for the realignment of the boundaries," Mr Seeney told reporters in Gladstone.

"It is obviously a misrepresentation to talk about Gladstone Harbour being part of the Great Barrier Reef."

Mr Seeney later said he would consider pushing for other ports to be excised from the area, but hadn't seen any such proposals.

"I wouldn't rule out looking at other ports, but they haven't been raised with me," Mr Seeney told AAP, adding the decision would ultimately rest with the federal government.

"The ports were here a long time before the heritage listing."

But federal Environment Minister Tony Burke said the current boundaries were appropriate.

"When Joh Bjelke-Petersen was Premier of Queensland the boundary for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area was established," he said.

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Director of the University of Queensland's Global Change Institute Professor Ove Hoegh-Guldberg said changing the World Heritage Area boundaries could only harm the Great Barrier Reef.

"Merely moving the boundary is not the solution because it's the connectiveness between the Great Barrier Reef and coastline that's important here," he said.

"What we're seeing is a whole series of what are badly managed issues in the Gladstone Harbour area having an impact on coastal Queensland and that of course stretches out to the GBR."

Environmental groups expressed concerns at any shifting of the boundaries, while Greens Senator Larissa Waters said the move showed "the LNP is prepared to sacrifice the reef for mining profits."

The federal and Queensland governments last year earned a rebuke from the UN's environmental agency UNESCO for failing to inform it about approvals of massive liquefied natural gas projects at Curtis Island, near Gladstone.

Mr Seeney said Queensland should not have to report resource development approvals to UNESCO.

"I think the government in Queensland is perfectly able to administer our own industrial development and we're perfectly able to administer our own environment," he told reporters.

"I wonder about why UNESCO needs to be involved at all."

UNESCO sent a delegation to Australia last month to inspect the management of the Great Barrier Reef.

The delegation will recommend whether the reef should be listed as a World Heritage Site in danger.

AAP pbc/mjs/mo