



**Cairns and Far North Environment Center Inc.**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**DRAFT ZONING PLAN PROVIDES LIFELINE FOR GREAT BARRIER REEF**

The Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC) today welcomed the Draft Zoning Plan for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park stating it provides a vital lifeline for the long term health of the area.

CAFNEC coordinator, John Rainbird, said "We congratulate Minister Kemp on this tremendous initiative. The 30% level of protection outlined in the Draft Plan is a vast improvement on the current 4.6%, and will go a long way in enabling this very special region survive the range of serious threats it currently faces."

"It must be remembered however, that from a marine conservation perspective, 30% level of protection is the minimum recommended for long term survival of the reef. Surely the Great Barrier Reef deserves better than a minimum?" said Mr. Rainbird.

"The Plan is by no means perfect. CAFNEC is concerned about the inadequate protection of Princess Charlotte Bay, which is widely recognised for its significant environmental values. Also of concern is the eastern coast of Hinchinbrook Island; both of which we believe should be zoned green" stated Mr. Rainbird

The GBRMPA have been given a very complex and difficult task. They appear to have taken the concerns of the fishing community on board wherever possible through the previous 2 years of consultation with the community. CAFNEC hopes that the fishing sector recognise this fact, and are prepared to look at the evidence in support of marine protected areas with respect to sustainable fishing" commented Mr. Rainbird.

"The Great Barrier Reef is recognised internationally as the world's greatest marine park. Let's give it the treatment and respect it deserves, and it will be there for many generations to come" concluded Mr. Rainbird.

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