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Australian Marine Parks Management Planning
Comments
Department of Environment and Energy
Reply Paid 787
Canberra ACT 2601

Email: Managementplanning.marine@environment.gov.au

Re: Comment regarding Coral Sea Marine Park draft management plan

The Alliance for Sustainable Tourism is an organisation with the objective of “representing the nature based tourism industry in optimising the conduct of and potential for tourism in natural areas within Tropical North Queensland”.

The Alliance made a submission to the Coral Sea Commonwealth Marine Reserve Planning process on 31 October 2016.

In our submission we stated that;

Marine tourism operators accessing the Coral Sea work from this region, Cairns in particular. The nature of the operations and the travel distances involved dictate that the services they provide are at high cost for their customers and consequently they must provide the highest quality diving and marine life viewing experience.

The plan must consider this imperative and ensure that planning and zoning allows for the limited number of key tourism sites (dictated by both the marine life experience and suitability to various weather influence) to be protected from extractive activity and the quality of the marine life presented at the sites to be retained.

At the same time, there are demands for activities such as recreational and commercial recreational fishing and controlled collecting to be undertaken in the Coral Sea. Any relevant impacts from these activities on marine tourism presentation sites should be considered and appropriate separation of activities adopted considering the limited site opportunities available for marine tourism.

Our organisation supports the formation of a Coral Sea Marine Reserve that considers protection of the marine environment and aspirations of low impact and low risk stakeholders.

We view that there has been some reduction of protection zones and have concerns if this leads to impacts on marine tourism operators in the Reserve.

The Association of Marine Park Tour Operators (AMPTO) and the Cod Hole and Ribbon Reef Operators Association (CHARROA) are the key organisations whose members operate in and are directly impacted by changes to the Coral Sea Marine Reserve.

We support the positions of the organisations as representatives of their members and the marine dive and tourism industry and their input into the plan following the stakeholders meeting in Cairns on 23rd August 2017.

Your full consideration of these tourism industry interests is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Max Shepherd
Alliance for Sustainable Tourism