



31st March 2016

Marine Fisheries and Aquaculture

Productivity Commission

GPO Box 1428

CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601

Dear Sir / Madam

RE: Productivity Commission – Marine Fisheries and Aquaculture

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission. This submission from Coolum & North Shore Coast Care focuses on marine debris issues relating to the northern Sunshine Coast QLD.

For the last three years our volunteers have been recording marine debris in two separate projects:

1. Monthly beach rubbish surveys of 4 different sites in the Coolum Beach, Peregrine Beach and Marcus Beach areas. So far we have collected and recorded more than 25,200 pieces of rubbish during these surveys, with around 62% of all rubbish collected being hard plastic pieces under 8cm in length;
2. Collecting and recording the number and type of recreational and commercial fishing glowsticks found washed up on beaches between Marcoola and Sunshine Beach. So far we have collected and recorded more than 2,000 glowsticks, with around 77% of these being one particular commercial type (referred to as A5 under marine debris classification material provided by Tangaroa Blue, an organisation specialising in marine debris).

Photos of some of the 2,000+ glowsticks plus the most common type found (A5) are below.





The most commonly found type of glowstick on our beaches (A5)

We are concerned that:

- (1) The future impact of marine debris (particularly plastic pollution) has not been appropriately considered for the economically and ecologically sustainable future of Australia's marine environment. We could find no mention of plastic pollution or marine debris in the *Issues Paper* provided, yet our environment, tourism and fishing activities depend on high water quality standards. Now that marine debris can be found in every part of the world's oceans, maintaining high water quality and minimising the impacts of marine debris are important future considerations for both environment and industry;
- (2) We continue to find discarded glowsticks on a daily basis on our local beaches with more than 2,000 of these collected over the last 3 years over approximately 20km of beach. Each glowstick has both hard plastic and liquid chemical components. Once discarded the contents leak into the ocean while the plastic component breaks up into pieces which persist in the environment for some years. The glowsticks shown in the photos provided were presumably discarded during commercial fishing operations (multiple hook line fishing). However, as volunteers, we don't have the resources to track where these have come from or why they have not been properly disposed of. In reviewing the productivity of marine fisheries, we think it's important that these types of items are properly disposed of instead of ending up as marine debris;
- (3) Our beach rubbish surveys show that small fragments of plastic are common in our local marine environment. Some of the fragments come from plastic items that were dropped on land and made their way into the ocean via waterways and other items were discarded at sea. These plastics all have the potential to be ingested by marine animals with possibly unknown effects (in addition to those already documented such as gut impaction and starvation). We currently have an advantage in that our waters are relatively clean when compared to other sources of imported seafood and maintaining high quality locally sourced and sustainable fishing is a key tool for balancing commercial and environmental sustainability in our region;
- (4) Clear plastic bait bags, food packaging and bottles, soft plastic lures and scraps of plastic rope are other commonly found items of marine debris on our local beaches. Again, responsible disposal of such items is a key consideration.

Yours sincerely

Susan Richards

Volunteer – Sea Turtle Monitoring and Marine Debris Surveys

Coolum & North Shore Coast Care

157 Warran Road Yaroomba QLD 4573

Submission authorised by Leigh Warneminde, President, Coolum & North Shore Coast Care