

**RESPONSE TO ISSUES PAPER-INDUSTRIES IN THE GREAT
BARRIER REEF CATCHMENT AND MEASURES TO ADDRESS
DECLINING WATER QUALITY**

From TULLY AND DISTRICT WILDLIFE PRESERVATION SOCIETY
OF QLD.
PO Box 771 TULLY 4854

Congratulations to the Productivity Commission for conducting the research study into ways which may address the declining water quality of the Great Barrier Reef. Thank you for providing us with the Issues Paper August 2002. We would like to respond to several of the questions raised.

Q2. A very useful example to investigate is the water quality of Hinchinbrook Channel. Although its position in the Great Barrier Reef may be a bit ambiguous, it is a very valuable part of the Great Barrier Reef lagoon because it receives outflow from the two major Northern Catchments, the Herbert and the Burdekin. The effect of these outflows is concentrated in the Channel and may well be easier therefore to study.

Q3. The entire region of Hinchinbrook is listed as World Heritage. Tropical reefs throughout the world are deteriorating rapidly. The Great Barrier Reef is the largest reef in the world and size does hold an advantage in combating impacts. As a developed nation we have a serious obligation to protect the values of the reef for our own national pride and the benefit of the rest of the less fortunate world. A healthy reef is also the essential basis for the growing Tourism industry which must regulate its impacts to safeguard the reef's future.

Q4. We feel that the Northern catchment area is the most important since it contains both the Burdekin and the Herbert catchments and represents the full variety of onshore industries. Because of currents the impact of these is also felt in the southern section of the Far Northern catchment area.

Investigation of this region would have to include Hinchinbrook Channel.

Q15. It is well known that nutrient run-off from primary production is a significant cause of water pollution. Industries must first recognize and accept the evidence of this fact. The Sugar Industry has been slow to take this initial step. Secondly, all agricultural industries must develop Nutrient Budgets to measure their own nutrient surplus or waste. The techniques to do this budgeting need to be developed and implemented and will be different for each industry. It seems likely that the process is easier for an aquaculture operation than a grazing property.

Q16. Unchecked Riparian clearing is still occurring in most catchments. While this continues its negative impact on water quality overrides any revegetation efforts.

Q18. What to target is the most pressing Policy Option because the type of pollution occurring needs to be identified clearly before particular sectors are targeted.

Q21. Institutional arrangements for managing water quality **must** be improved. The issue is far too complex to be effectively addressed by individuals, particular industries alone or regions.

Thankyou for the opportunity to comment. We look forward to further information on the decisions that the Productivity Commission makes regarding this important research.

Yours faithfully,

Suzanne Smith (Hon.Sec.)