



Australian Government

Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority

The Marine Pests Unit
Animal Biosecurity Branch
Department of Agriculture
GPO Box 858
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Marine Pests Unit

RE: National Marine Pest Biosecurity Review

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the National Marine Pest Biosecurity Review.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) supports the review of the national marine pest biosecurity arrangements to further improve and protect Australia's marine environment from biosecurity risks. GBRMPA is of the view that greater consistency and guidance in managing the risks posed by marine pests in the Great Barrier Reef as well as nationally would be valuable.

Recently the Australian Government and the Queensland Government have completed a comprehensive strategic assessment of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and adjacent coastal zone in accordance with section 146 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The comprehensive strategic assessment has helped to identify, plan for and manage existing and emerging risks to ensure ongoing protection and management of the unique environmental values of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and adjacent coastal zone.

The Strategic Assessment identified that, despite technological improvements for better detection, projected increases in shipping and the transport of exotic species and diseases is considered a medium risk to the projected biodiversity values of the Region over the next 25 years. The consequence would depend on the species or disease but is likely to be serious in a small area such as a marina or port.

Currently GBRMPA management of exotic marine species is assessed on a case by case basis when permits are considered. For example: as part of granting a permit, a permittee may need to develop an Environmental Management Plan within which marine pest risks are addressed. Some dredge vessels depending on their port of departure may need to be checked for marine pests and any risks resolved prior to entering the Marine Park. Other permittees require the submission of a marine pest risk assessment and vessel inspection report prior to entry.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide comment.

Yours sincerely

Kirstin Dobbs
Director - Environmental Assessment and Protection

3 December 2014