



Reef of contention

Opinion
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THE 12th International Coral Reef Symposium held in Cairns from July 9 to 13 2012 can only be described as a junket for the legions of eco-righteousness personal attending to justify their existence.

Fabrication and blatant lies have been used addressing the claims made by UNESCO World Heritage Committee June 2012.

Three professors namely, Walter Starck, Peter Ridd and Bob Carter who have over 100 years experience in their field between them, all believe the Great Barrier reef is pristine and in excellent condition. They are not on the gravy train with their livelihoods depending on funding like the scientists who support these ridiculous claims.

UNESCO's claims are all hypothetical, and may never happen and have been agreed with and mimicked by Russell Reichelt, chairman of Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, but have been strongly refuted by world renowned marine biologist and coral expert, scientist Professor Dr Walter Starck.

Professor Starck said there is no evidence to indicate that anything detrimental is actually happening to the reef. The

human population of the reef region is small. Almost the entirety of the adjacent coast remains undeveloped.

The port expansion at Gladstone about which the UN bureaucrats expressed great concern is over 20km downwind and across the prevailing ocean current from the nearest reef. Extensive experience of such dredging in reef waters and elsewhere indicates there is no reason to expect any harm to the reef. No degradation in water quality has been detected and use of agrichemicals in the catchment area has declined in recent years.

Occurrences of coral bleaching have been associated with El Nino events, not climate change. In any event if the waters of the reef were to increase by a few degrees for some reason, it has been well documented by Japanese scientists, ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies and Dr Jessica Carilli from the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation saying corals have learnt to adapt to warmer waters and thrive.

Claims that the reef will lose all the colour in corals due to climate change over the coming years is completely irresponsible and scaremongering. There is no indication that the frequency or intensity of such events have increased nor have floods or tropical cyclones.

Surface water temperatures

show no significant trend over the past 60 years. Over the past decade there has been a slight cooling.

The maximum total catch for commercial fishing is restricted to an amount which equates with an average yearly harvest rate of only 90g per hectare. This is about 1/1600th of the average sustainable catch for well managed reef fisheries elsewhere.

The total damage to the reef from all of the shipping accidents that have ever occurred, would be only a fraction of one per cent of the natural damage which takes place naturally almost every year from tropical cyclones and that is well within the capacity of the reef to soon repair.

Quite rightly, Federal Member for Herbert, Ewen Jones said at the time when UNESCO first made these claims, "who do they think they are? UNESCO representatives come here, don't consult with anyone, have a coffee on The Strand and go back and make these outrageous claims".

The reason for all this scaremongering from some media and environmental groups is to present an important problem demanding forceful action by government. Forceful action that us, the taxpayer, will have to foot the bill.

When will all this environmental gobble-gook cease?



REEF WONDER: Coral bleaching - is it associated with El Nino events or climate change?