

THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

The basic idea is to secure agreement on the main elements of a negotiation on the basis that the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act and the Region remain unchanged.

THE NEGOTIATING SCENARIO

1. Establishment of a Queensland-Commonwealth Council on the Great Barrier Reef Region

It is recommended that a Council of four Ministers (two from each side) representing tourism, marine parks, science and environment, be established under an exchange of letters between the Premier and the Prime Minister. The Council would include in its functions the processing of recommendations to Governments by the Barrier Reef Authority. The Council would be convened by the Commonwealth at the request of either party. Note: Ministers responsible for mining would not be members of the Council.

2. The Capricornia Section

It is envisaged that the Capricornia section will be the first area to be considered for declaration as a marine park, and the Council will take early steps to address this matter.

3. Management of the Marine Park within the Region

The Act provides for the Authority to make arrangements with the State for the management of any declared marine park. It is recommended that subject to the Authority Queensland be assigned the day-to-day management role and that the necessary preparatory steps be taken for arrangements to be put in place, on a basis to be agreed by the Ministerial Council.

4. Territorial Seas in the Region

The legal arrangements for the implementation of the Premiers' Conference decisions on Seas and Submerged Lands be subject to the following:

- (a.) the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act and the boundaries of the Great Barrier Reef Region to remain unchanged;
- (b.) the Prime Minister's statement of 4 June 1979 concerning the Great Barrier Reef;
- (c.) the day-to-day management to be undertaken by the officers of the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service, who, in discharging these responsibilities, will be subject to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority;
- (d.) relevant State legislation to be brought into line with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act.

5 Subject to the above, the arrangements with Queensland in relation to the territorial sea which will flow from the agreements of the June 1978 Premiers' Conference will be on the same basis as the arrangements to be entered into in respect of other States.

6 Scientific Research

The Ministerial Council would be asked to endorse and monitor the progress of the proposed programs of scientific research in the Barrier Reef region and to ensure that it be established on a timetable and framework acceptable to both Governments.

7. Joint Press Statement

As a first step in the implementation of these co-operative arrangements it is proposed that a joint press statement should be issued along the lines of the draft attached.