



**9 MAY 2024**

## **HYPOCRISY ALIVE AND WELL WHEN ITS FOR RENEWABLE PROJECTS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

The southern GBR is being targeted for massive Offshore Wind 'Farm' developments. "If the current known proposal is approved it will set a precedent for additional offshore wind installations within the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) Marine Park World Heritage Area adjacent to the Mackay, Townsville, and Cairns coastlines as well as the southern GBR," said Jim Willmott, Chair of Property Rights Australia.

While the company in question does not have official government approval for this venture the extent of its planning (approaching 2 years) strongly suggests it has been encouraged by government into believing such an approval would be forthcoming. An offshore installation in this location would be contemptible and completely out of character with the concept of the GBR Marine Park and world-renowned World Heritage Area.

"This proposal is in direct conflict with the responsibilities of all GBR custodians to maintain its outstanding universal values. Justifiable accusations of government hypocrisy should be levelled at the federal Minister for the Environment and Water and the Queensland Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, who talk up how the GBR must be protected at all costs, whilst establishing mountains of regulations and green tape to ensure those in farming, commercial fishing and tourism industries comply with strict guidelines," said Mr Willmott.

We have seen government move to cease commercial fishing in Cape York in the Gulf of Carpentaria for the sake of protecting the GBR.

Farmers at the very far reaches of some minor tributary that connects to waterways to the coast off the GBR, are monitored by satellite with farm inspections for a bare area the size of a table. Yet onshore wind infrastructure can level ridge tops and push loose soil over the edge. The same hypocrisy will allow offshore wind towers much closer to the reef.

"What will become of such "pristine" vistas as GBR tourists and boaties travel across the Curtis Channel on their way to tourist meccas such as Heron, Wilson, North-West, Masthead and Lady Musgrave coral cays? Could migrating humpback whales and their calves be obliged to undertake 'slalom runs' as they navigate through the 400+ wind turbine monopiles/anchoring structures that may be installed," highlighted Mr Willmott.

Meanwhile the hub (blade rotating point) of each wind turbine is 150 m above sea level and would be clearly visible from east facing residential sites and viewing platforms in Gladstone and the Capricorn Coast, especially at night when boat and air traffic warning lights on each turbine's hub are switched on. These Large offshore wind farm developments would require approximately 2,000 tonnes of concrete and 160 t of steel reinforcing to be laid on the Curtis Channel seabed for each individual turbine. Therefore for 400+ wind turbines there would be around 800,000 t of concrete anchoring.

What impact would this huge amount of installed concrete have on the extensive seagrass beds recorded in this channel? We know seagrass beds are a prime food source for 'vulnerable' dugongs and turtles.

The ongoing threat of weather extremes such as Cyclone Marcia which was a very severe tropical cyclone that crossed the Shoalwater Bay coast in 2015, not far from the proposed offshore wind 'farm' sites. This reality indicates that the proposed offshore wind farms would require very strong foundations amplifying seabed disturbance during turbine installation and leading to unknown loss of seagrass habitat.

"Let's rethink renewables. We need a Senate inquiry to ensure we are planning and delivering our energy transition so that it is secure, reliable, affordable, competitive and has very limited adverse effects on our environment, communities, and food production systems," said Mr Willmott.

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