

Capricorn Conservation Council Inc.

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Media Release - 31 August 2009 Great Keppel Island Betrayal

Capricorn Conservation Council has grave concerns about the proposed development of Lot 21 by Tower Holdings. This new proposal (see <http://www.dip.qld.gov.au/projects/tourism-arts-and-recreation/tourism/great-keppel-island-resort-project.html>) alienates only slightly less land than the previous proposal which was rejected in 2008 as having “unacceptable impact” on the island.

On 28 August 2009 the Coordinator-General declared the revised Great Keppel Island Resort Project to be a ‘significant project’ for which an EIS is required.

“Our concerns are that a public process of assessment by a state government department into the most appropriate use for Lot 21 has been ignored.” CCC Project Officer Allan Briggs said.

Last year, the Department of Natural Resources and Water (DNRW) conducted a process of public consultation into the most appropriate use and tenure of Lot 21 which attracted 300 submissions of which 97% were in favour of protecting the land. As a result DNRW declared in a media release on 25th November 2008; *“The Department of Natural Resources and Water has completed its assessment of the most appropriate use and tenure of Lot 21 on Great Keppel Island. The department has determined that the most appropriate use of Lot 21 be ‘conservation’”*.

“Now we have a situation where the Coordinator General has declared that Tower Holdings development plans for Lot 21 are of state significance. These two actions by state government bodies are in total contradiction to each other. Dept of Environment and Resource Management determines that Lot 21 should be preserved for conservation and Dept of Infrastructure and Planning decides that it can be assessed for development.” said Mr Briggs.

Capricorn Conservation Council calls for Lot 21 to be protected as a Conservation Area which has been demonstrated to have overwhelming public support.

“We have no objection to the redevelopment of the existing resort, but we are totally opposed to any land grab by Tower holdings. Lot 21 is public land that is owned by the people of Queensland. It is not private land and should not be given away to greedy developers.”

Great Keppel Island is a national treasure and has been declared by the Queensland government as iconic in its Iconic Queensland Places Act (2008). Deputy Premier and then Minister for Infrastructure and Planning Paul Lucas said “These are unique areas that help define Queensland's character and local communities want to make sure they're protected”.

“Let us hold our government to account with regard to Great Keppel Island.”

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