



Conservation Groups Applaud the Greens' Support for a Coral Sea Marine Park

Brisbane, 10 August, 2010 – Conservation groups today welcomed the statement by the Australian Greens in support of a very large, world-class highly protected marine reserve in the Coral Sea and called on the two major parties to also commit to protecting this iconic marine area.

“This announcement acknowledges the truly unique environmental value of this region as well as its historical significance to our nation”, said Amy Hankinson, Coral Sea Spokesperson, Australian Conservation Foundation. “If this marine park were to be declared by the next federal government, it would be the world’s largest.”

“The creation of a Coral Sea marine park would make an unparalleled contribution to global marine conservation, lying as it does next to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park”, said Imogen Zethoven, Coral Sea Campaign Director, Pew Environment Group – Australia.

“There is no doubt the world’s oceans are in trouble: in the last 50 years, 90% of big ocean fish have disappeared. Our ocean drives our weather and climate, produces much of the oxygen we breathe and more than 80% of the fish we eat, yet it is the least protected ecosystem on our planet with less than 1% fully protected”, said Nicola Temple, Coral Sea Campaigner, Australian Marine Conservation Society.

“The Coral Sea is one of the last remaining places on Earth where populations of large ocean fish, such as sharks, tuna and billfish, remain healthy, and is home to abundant wildlife including seabirds, and a diverse range of corals and reef fish. A very large world-class marine park in the Coral Sea would provide a safe haven at a scale that matches the needs of these migratory ocean giants”, said Joanne Marston, Manager, Project AWARE Foundation.

“A place is more than its biodiversity” said Toby Hutcheon, Director, Queensland Conservation Council. “It’s also what it means to people: its history and its stories. The most important story about the Coral Sea is the Battle of May, 1942. The announcement today by the Greens recognises this important part of our history”.

“Cairns is a tourism economy,” said Steve Ryan, marine campaigner, Cairns and Far North Environment Centre. “A Coral Sea marine park would provide a major economic boost for Cairns as ecotourism becomes big business across the globe. Coral Sea marine park users would include dive boats, cruise ships and commercial ships. Marine parks are for people to enjoy.”

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Protect our Coral Sea is a joint campaign supported by regional, national and international conservation organisations, including the Australian Conservation Foundation, Australian Marine Conservation Society, Pew Environment Group - Australia, Project AWARE Foundation, Queensland Conservation Council and the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre. For more information about efforts to protect the Coral Sea, please visit: www.protectourcoralsea.org.au

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