



MEDIA RELEASE

THURSDAY, 1 NOVEMBER, 2012

NEW REEF MEGA-PORTS PLANNED Queensland Government ignores UNESCO on Great Barrier Reef

Australia's snubfin dolphin and other marine life face new threats to survival after the Queensland Government revealed draft plans for massive industrial development along the Great Barrier Reef coast.

WWF-Australia today expressed alarm over the Queensland Government's draft plans to open up sites up and down the Queensland coast to huge new port developments and said the strategy pushed the Reef one step closer to being listed on UNESCO's 'World Heritage in Danger' list.

"Earlier this year, UNESCO delivered a 'show cause' notice to the Australian and Queensland Governments and requested that no new port development or associated infrastructure outside of the existing and long-established major port areas be permitted," said WWF spokesperson Richard Leck.

"The Queensland Government's *Great Barrier Reef Ports Strategy* puts them on a collision course with UNESCO, by flagging new ports in areas that are currently undeveloped or at a very small scale.

"The Queensland Government agreed that any port expansion will be concentrated in areas where long established ports already exist, such as Gladstone Harbour. But today's announcement that new ports are set to be green-lighted around 60 kilometres north of Gladstone flies in the face of the Government's earlier commitment to UNESCO.

"The Newman Government's plan confirms Port Alma and Balaclava Island within the World Heritage Area are earmarked for future development, effectively creating a Gladstone to Rockhampton mega-port.

"The proposed development sites are located within Keppel Bay and the Fitzroy River Delta which is home to the recently discovered Australian Snubfin dolphin and four species of turtles. An independent scientific report confirms that the Balaclava Island development would have a disastrous impact on these threatened species.

"The last thing Queenslanders want to see for the Great Barrier Reef is the type of massive, unfettered development that occurred in Gladstone Harbour being repeated along the coast.

"WWF is keen to work with the Queensland Government to ensure that a plan is developed that avoids this fate and keeps the Great Barrier Reef from being listed as 'World Heritage in Danger'."

IMAGES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST.

WWF-Australia media contact:

Daniel Rockett, Senior Media Officer, WWF-Australia, 0432 206 592, drockett@wwf.org.au