



Great Keppel Island
REVITALISATION PLAN

9.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS





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GKI Resort Pty Ltd is proposing to undertake the GKI Revitalisation Plan on GKI, approximately 12 kilometres off the coast of Yeppoon on the Central Queensland Coast, within the GBRWHA. The Project was determined to be a “Significant Project” pursuant to Section 26 of the SDPWO Act on 28 August 2009; and a “controlled action” under the provisions of the EPBC Act. The controlling provisions for the Project under the EPBC Act include:

- World Heritage properties (Sections 12 and 15A);
- National Heritage places (Sections 15B and 15C);
- GBRMP (Sections 24B and 24C);
- Listed threatened species and communities (Sections 18 and 18A);
- Listed migratory species (Sections 20 and 20A); and
- Commonwealth marine areas (Sections 23 and 24A).

The GKI Revitalisation Plan includes the following elements:

- approximately 575 hectares of Environmental Protection Areas (approximately 65 per cent of Lot 21) to be rehabilitated and managed as part of the Resort operation;
- construction of a new hotel at Fisherman’s Beach comprising 250 suites, restaurants, reception, conference rooms, day spa and a range of resort recreation activities;
- marina at Putney Beach comprising 250 berths, emergency services facilities, ferry terminal, yacht club and dry dock storage. The marina is to be supported by an active mixed use hub comprising of apartments, cafes, restaurants and shops;
- golf club and 18 hole golf course designed by Greg Norman Golf Course Design, integrated with essential habitat and ecological corridors, and located on previously disturbed grazing lands. The golf course will form part of the wastewater re-use and treatment system;
- relocation of and extension to the existing airstrip;
- 750 eco-tourism Eco Resort Villas and 300 Eco Resort Apartments incorporating sustainable building design, rooftop solar panels and water tanks;
- submarine connection between the Island and mainland comprising electricity, water and telecommunications infrastructure services;
- utility and services area including a waste collection facility, equipment service area, best practice wastewater treatment facilities, solar electricity generation and emergency backup electricity plant (and associated fuel storage);
- establishment of the GKI Research and Heritage Centre and Biodiversity Conservation Fund (BCF) which will aim to deliver a better understanding of the surrounding marine and terrestrial environments and to actively undertake conservation works to enhance the natural environment; and
- restoration of the original Leeke’s Homestead.

The principal objective of this EIS has been to identify and assess the environmental and related impacts that could occur as a result of the construction and operation of the GKI Revitalisation Plan against the objectives of the EPBC Act and GBRMP Act. Impacts have been considered for the sustainability pillars (i.e. environmental, social, cultural and economic), and where appropriate, mitigation measures to avoid or minimise potential impacts have been put forward.

The principles of ESD have been integral to the Proponent’s decision making processes in respect to the planning and design of the GKI Revitalisation Plan. The Proponent is committed to continue to take into account the principles of ESD during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Project. The EIS has adopted the EarthCheck third party certification process to ensure that the design meets international guidelines for ESD.

The EIS describes the technical studies and community consultation undertaken. The Project's environmental, social, economic and cultural potential impacts have been identified through an assessment of the Project description against the existing baseline and identified environmental values. Where possible, impacts have been expressed quantitatively and their acceptability has been assessed according to their conformance with relevant state and national guidelines and standards. Any likely environmental harm to identified environmental values has been identified.

An evaluation of the cumulative effect of Project impacts is summarised as follows:

- mitigation measures if implemented appropriately could remove any "high" negative residual impacts for all assessed impacts except "high" impacts due to loss of marine habitat associated with construction of the marina and utilities services pipeline. However, mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts are proposed, including but not limited to the avoidance of sensitive ecological communities through detailed design and the employment of construction methods sensitive to the marine environment. Further, loss of marine habitat is proposed to be offset as part of a 586 hectare GBRWHA (combined State and Commonwealth) biodiversity package to ensure a no net loss outcome (refer **Appendix P**);
- the majority of environmental impacts will be short-term impacts associated with the construction phase and have an identified maximum residual impact of "low" or "medium". Further, the proposed Environmental Protection Precinct will provide long-term environmental management and protection benefits;
- all Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural heritage impacts are likely to be short-term impacts associated with the construction phase and have an identified maximum residual impact of "low" if appropriate controls are implemented, including the CHMP. Further, restoration of Leeke's Homestead is an identified Project benefit;
- the Resort, once operational will produce more electricity than it consumes and therefore the Project will make a positive contribution toward carbon emission reductions;
- the Project represents a mix of social impacts and benefits, and overall may be considered to improve the resilience and persistence of the Island community through providing an improved local employment outlook and improved air and sea access to the mainland and its associated essential services; and
- in general, the GKI Revitalisation Plan will generate "medium" and "high" economic benefits during construction, and will result in long-term "medium" to "high" economic benefits to the Capricorn Region once operational.

An evaluation of the cumulative effect of Project impacts on MNES is summarised as follows:

- there are no wetlands of international importance, and no terrestrial species of flora or fauna which are listed as threatened on the Island. The EPBC-listed “Littoral Rainforest and Coastal Vine Thickets of Eastern Australia” occur on the Island, but are outside the proposed development footprint area and will not be impacted. The locally-important habitat area associated with Leeke’s Estuary will be protected and buffered, as will all the coastline apart from the proposed marina;
- a number of migratory and listed marine species have been recorded or are likely to use the Island and surrounding waters, but there are no ‘important habitats’ for migratory birds (as defined by DEWHA 2009) nor is the Island a significant turtle rookery (however it is important for the few turtles who choose to nest there);
- the World Heritage Values associated with geomorphology and associated processes (terrestrial and marine) are not at risk from the proposed development;
- in terms of World Heritage aesthetic values (including the ‘existence value’ of the Island as a relatively undeveloped place close to and within view of the Capricorn Coast), the constraint-based approach to project planning has ensured that most of the proposed development will be screened from view and separated into several discrete precincts. The main visual impact will be associated with the proposed marina which, although its location and building heights will ensure it is partly-screened by Putney Point, Sand Spit and Middle Island, the built form and night-time lighting will be visible from within an arc of offshore view. All built form will be low-rise (two-three storey), set back from the shoreline and landscaped, such that other visual impacts are minor or capable of mitigation;
- the Project has been designed to ensure minimal impact on the OUV’s of the GBRWHA; and
- therefore, the proposed GKI Revitalisation Plan is likely to cause little degradation of World Heritage or National Heritage Values, or significantly affect other matters of national environmental significance. The few environmental impacts which could potentially occur are “low” risk and capable of being avoided, mitigated, managed or offset.

Having regard to the potential benefits and impacts of the Project, it is a recommendation of the EIS that the Project proceeds subject to:

- conditions pursuant to Section 39(1) of the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*; and
- conditions of approval pursuant to Section 134 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.