

NEW GKI REVITALISATION PLAN SUBMITTED

The new GKI Revitalisation Plan was submitted to the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts on Monday, 1 June 2010.

Following Minister Garrett's decision to reject the proposal in October, 2009, the GKI Revitalisation Plan Project Team has worked closely with the Environment Department to revise the plan.

The revised plan has sought to address each one of the Minister's previous concerns and to ensure that the project does not have an unacceptable impact on the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Values. Following the Minister's decision last year, a detailed environmental constraints-based approach to site planning was undertaken to form the basis of the revised plan.

As a result, the GKI Revitalisation Plan has now been significantly scaled back and incorporates a range of outstanding environmental initiatives.

The key changes to the GKI Revitalisation Plan include:

- A reduction in the overall project scale by 75% from the initial proposal (this includes a 50% reduction from the 2008 proposal and now a further 50% reduction from the 2009 proposal);
- The total building and road footprint has been reduced to less than 4% of the Island;
- The marina size has been reduced by approximately 55% and will only impact on less than 2.4% of the Island's coastline;
- The number of eco-tourism villas has been reduced by approximately 56%;
- The establishment of 545 hectares of Environmental Protection Areas will be provided on Lot 21 (equivalent to 62% of Lot 21);
- Very significant setbacks to the wetland areas to ensure NO adverse runoff into the marine park;
- Provision of buffer zones to ensure protection of habitat and provide fauna corridors;
- The establishment of the Great Keppel Island Research Centre which will be the first specialized research facility in the Keppels; and
- An ambitious target of creating a 'carbon positive' island resort with a major use of rooftop solar power. This will involve the resort producing more clean, renewable energy from solar than will actually be used by the resort. This is a new benchmark in sustainable development which will attract a lot of interest from around the country.

Developed with the assistance of a highly skilled and experienced Project Team, the Referral to the Federal Environment Department seeks approval to declare the project a "controlled action" under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

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If declared a “controlled action” this will allow the project team to undertake a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the GKI Revitalisation. This will be the first time an EIS has been compiled for Great Keppel Island.

Undertaking of an EIS does not provide any approvals for development whatsoever. The EIS studies identify the environmental, social, economic and cultural heritage values of the Island and surrounding marine waters to determine if development is appropriate on the Island and to inform the design team on how to best avoid, minimise or offset any potential impacts.

GKI Revitalisation Plan is committed to meet all current environmentally sustainable tourism practices and aims to set a new benchmark for environmental management practices on islands in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

A comprehensive EIS would involve extensive community consultation to engage with any interested party to ensure the final proposal for development on GKI is both environmentally responsible and meets and exceeds expectations of the community.

Tower Holdings CEO & Chairman Mr Terry Agnew said:

“We have gone to great lengths to address the Environment Department’s concerns in preparing this revised plan. We are hopeful that the Federal Government will give us an opportunity to subject this significant tourism opportunity for Central Queensland through a stringent and transparent EIS process.”

ENDS

For more Information

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