



Wildlife Preservation

SOCIETY OF QUEENSLAND

Hon. Lindy Nelson-Carr MP
Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism
PO Box 15155 City East
Queensland 4002

Dear Minister

RE Hinchinbrook Island Resort

I have been directed by the State Council of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland (WPSQ) to bring to your notice concerns about the future of the existing special lease for the resort on Hinchinbrook Island.

As you are well aware the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland (WPSQ) is one of the longest established and most respected wildlife-focused conservation groups in Queensland. With over 3500 supporters spread across 19 branches throughout the State, WPSQ is a strong voice for our wildlife and its habitat.

WPSQ is apolitical. Our aims include;

- **Preserve** the flora and fauna of Australia by all lawful means
- **Educate** the community in an understanding of the principles of conservation and preservation of the natural environment
- **Discourage** by all legal means, the possible destruction, exploitation and unnecessary development of any part of the natural environment.
- **Encourage** rational land use and proper land planning of existing and future development, and the use of the natural environment and its management.

As it can be seen from our aims, WPSQ also has a focus on land planning, future development and rational land use. Hence our interest in the existing lease on Hinchinbrook Island.

WPSQ head office is receiving a number of enquiries from members in north Queensland about the proposed transfer of the special lease on Hinchinbrook Island to Mr Keith Williams.

WPSQ would prefer that the lease lapsed or was surrendered if existing lessees are questioning the viability of the existing operations. There are many difficulties managing commercial enterprises on the protected area estate. When the enterprise becomes non-viable or profits are less than projected, pressure is brought to bear on the relevant authorities for the waiving of permit conditions, the doubling of the prescribed carrying capacity, introduction of activities not compatible with the objects or intent of the protected area and the list is never ending. Such pressures may be supported by a future less caring Government. Then there is the

entrepreneur who acquires a business stating that they will operate within the constraints of the lease but has every intention to upgrade and increase its size. Naturally such action makes the enterprise better and more profitable from their perspective but invariably brings increased pressure on the purpose for what the protected area was established initially.

WPSQ is not suggesting that Mr Williams would do this or behave in such a manner. A brief review of Mr Williams' performance to date in other environmental sensitive sites would surely give a fair indication of his likely performance on Hinchinbrook Island. WPSQ is not suggesting that on those sensitive environmental sites Mr Williams operated outside or breached prescribed permit conditions but on occasions actions initiated certainly resulted in environmental harm from WPSQ's perspective.

There is an opportunity for Hinchinbrook Island to be set aside in its entirety for wildlife, conservation and appropriate opportunities for people to connect with nature. Managed by QPWS, Hinchinbrook Island could achieve its full potential as one of the more brilliant gems in Queensland's growing protected area estate. Seize the moment and let the special lease lapse.

I await your advice on the matter so that members of WPSQ can be informed of your position on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Des Boyland, Policies and Campaign Manager
26 April 2007