



# ACS

Australian Coastal Society Ltd

PO Box 65, Flinders University, Bedford Park SA 5041

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21 August 2014

The Hon Greg Hunt  
Minister for the Environment  
Commonwealth Government of Australia

Dear Minister Hunt

**Re: 4 Corners Program on the Great Barrier Reef**

The Executive Committee of the Australian Coastal Society (ACS) has asked me to write to you expressing its concern over the recent ABC '4 Corners' story on the Great Barrier Reef.

While there will often be a divergence of views between scientists, politicians and public servants, the opinions of internationally recognised coral reef scientists such as Charlie Veron cannot be dismissed lightly. His comments on the program about the approval for the mass dumping of dredge spoil from Abbott Point was that *the decision has to be a political decision, it is not supported by science at all*. He went on to say *I was absolutely flabbergasted when I heard of that decision*.

In the 4 Corners program you stressed that the dump site was very small referring to it as *1/180,000 of the area of the Marine Park*, and you said that it would be taking *clean, sand-based material a short distance to other clean, sand-based material*, and that the *unequivocal advice* you received was *this can be done safely*. By 'safely' I assume you mean with minimal environmental impact to the Marine Park during the dumping operation but am not sure if this applies to possible disturbances to the site post dumping?

Given your advice was unequivocal and convincing enough for you to make the decision to allow the dumping, I assume that you were provided with findings from a comprehensive hydrodynamic sediment study for the dredge spoil site which modelled sediment dispersal from the disposal site, along with sediment plume modelling that covers different energy conditions that the site may experience in the future. Sediment dispersal will involve transport and deposition to other locations and we would like to know if any modelling showed those locations, the sediment composition and potential impacts of these on flora and fauna. In particular, ACS is seeking assurance that any such modelling included extreme events such as a tropical cyclone of category 3 or 4 that could directly impact on the area of the spoil.

The ACS would like to know if such a report is publicly available and if so we would be keen to view such a report.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Harvey', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

PROFESSOR NICK HARVEY  
*President, Australian Coastal Society Ltd*