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MEDIA RELEASE

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OPPOSITION TO SEA-DUMPING GROWING

In an outcome that surprised even North Queensland Conservation Council, the number of people at yesterday's Cotters Market asking the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority not to allow the dumping of dredge spoil in the Marine Park was up on the preceding Sunday.

"Despite ensuring that there were no 'repeat' signatures, we beat the previous week record of 715 signatures, with 752 signatures in four hours and fifteen minutes – a staggering one every 20 seconds" said Wendy Tubman, Coordinator of North Queensland Conservation Council.

"The willingness to sign, and the comments that people make are significant. Many people are staggered that the body which they see as the protector of the Reef and for which they appear to have great fondness and regard is, indeed, even considering such a move.

"I fear that, in addition to damage to the marine environment, the reputation of GBRMPA will take a massive dive if they approve the dumping of the 3 million cubic metres of dredge spoil in the Marine Park to allow the expansion of a coal port at Abbot Point. And I imagine that it would be hard for them to recover their reputation in the eyes of the community."

GBRMPA is due to make its decision on whether or not to grant a permit for the dumping by 31 January. Coincidentally, this is the day before the Australian government is due to submit a further report to the World Heritage Committee on its efforts to better improve the protection of the Reef.

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