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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **The GBR or the GB: That is the question**

We have a choice. We sustain the Great Barrier Reef for future generations – or we develop the Galilee Basin. That is the view of JCU's Professor of Marine Biology Terry Hughes, Director of the Australian Research Council (ARC) Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies, as expressed on ABC radio this morning.

'No fewer than 13 eminent international scientists, including Prof. Hughes, writing in the prestigious journal *Science* agree that if the Galilee Basin is developed for coal mining it will be at the cost of the Great Barrier Reef' said North Queensland Conservation Council Coordinator Wendy Tubman.

'How much clearer can the trade-off be?'

'No government or politician wants to be identified for all time as the one that drove the last nail into the coffin of the Great Barrier Reef. But unless they act now on the basis of the science that is what will happen' said Ms Tubman.

'Even the economics is pointing to the Reef rather than the coal mine, and the market is demonstrating how the coal industry is on its last legs. The economic value of the Reef to Australia is far greater than the value of proposed coal mines in the Galilee Basin in terms of jobs and sustainable income.'

In contrast, the Reef supports a sustainable tourism industry, creating 60,000 jobs and providing \$6 billion to the Queensland economy.

'To jeopardise this and the very survival of the Reef would be an act of criminal lunacy.'

'The task of the Federal and State governments now is to work with the local communities to identify alternatives to coal mining in the Galilee Basin.'

'They must take their heads out of the sand and work strategically for the long-term benefit of Australia and the Reef.'

'The majority of the people in Queensland and in Australia, have said that they want the Reef protected so that it is there for future generations. It is time to face the facts and for our bright politicians to come up with creative ways of ensuring a strong economy for Queensland without the opening of the Galilee Basin.'

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