

18.73 Prohibition of Oil Tankers Inshore of the Coral Sea Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, Australia

RECOGNIZING that the Great Barrier Reef is the largest reef formation of its type in the world and that it is a World Heritage Site;

RECOGNIZING that the Great Barrier Reef area is particularly sensitive to impact by water-borne pollutants;

AWARE that at present the channel separating the reef from the Australian coastline is used by large oil tankers for the transportation of hydrocarbon products, which have the potential to cause disastrous pollution of the reef if released into the area;

AWARE that the channel is in places dangerously shallow and narrow, sufficient to make the passage of oil tankers an unacceptable risk to the Great Barrier Reef and its environs;

AWARE that there are no requirements for tankers to be of double bottom construction;

The General Assembly of IUCN—The World Conservation Union, at its 18th Session in Perth, Australia, 28 November-5 December 1990:

1. APPLAUDS the decision by the Maritime Environment Protection Committee of the International Maritime Organization to declare the Great Barrier Reef to be a "particularly sensitive area" and to support the establishment of mechanisms to protect it;
2. WELCOMES the announcement by the Australian Government that it intends to introduce legislation to require pilotage for merchant ships 70 metres in length and over, or oil tankers, chemical tankers and gas carriers irrespective of size, navigating the northern section of the inner route of the Great Barrier Reef and Hydrographer's Passage;
3. NOTES that this is a response to a unique Reef Marine Park situation and may not necessarily be used as a precedent elsewhere;

and the Government of Australia to move towards prohibiting coastal tanker traffic in the channel by establishing rail facilities sufficient to obviate the need for coastal transport of oil and other hazardous substances within the Great Barrier

