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## MEDIA RELEASE

04/05/22

### SHUTE HARBOUR MARINA RESORT – AN ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTER IN THE MAKING

The proposed Shute Harbour Marina Resort, near Airlie Beach, QLD, is once again in the media and now claiming that it will begin construction this year.

This is a proposal that has been on the drawing board for decades but has failed to cross the finish line due to lack of demand, poor economics and the risk of serious environmental impacts to the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

“This project will cause serious environmental harm,” stated Tony Fontes, spokesperson for the Whitsunday Conservation Council. “Shute Harbour is an environmentally sensitive area and home to healthy coral reefs as well as iconic and endangered species including the dugong and sea turtles.”

The potential environmental impacts include:

- The project will destroy large areas of mangrove forest and seagrass meadows which are irreplaceable. These areas are critical fish nurseries and the primary food source for dugongs and many sea turtles.
- The required dredging will cause a serious water quality problem for the local marine life, particularly the coral reefs flanking the islands of Shute Harbour. Coral reefs are already struggling with increased water temperatures due to global warming. A decrease in water quality may push them to the point of no return. There is no way of safely handling toxic dredge spoil. One only has to look at the Gladstone Harbour dredging debacle of 2012 which nearly destroyed the local fishing industry.
- The inevitable increase in boat traffic will create a hazard for sea turtles. This was seen with the development of Port of Airlie where the opening of the marina, boat ramp and ferry terminal resulted in increased turtle boat strikes.

“An important point to consider...this is the kind of project, with its known impacts, that has got the World Heritage Committee so concerned with the future health of the Great Barrier Reef. Should this project go ahead, it is one more reason to list the Reef “in danger”.

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