

MANAGEMENT OF MARINE HABITATS IN TROPICAL NORTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA By Anne Clarke and Robert Coles: Department of Primary Industries, Northern Fisheries Centre, Cairns, Queensland, AUSTRALIA:—New legislation in the Queensland Fisheries Act of 1994 provides for the protection of all marine plants except where a permit under the Act has been issued. The Act also allows for habitat reserves, and for a restoration order to be made if works in tidal areas are considered likely to damage a habitats that supports fisheries. Queensland has some 34 species of mangroves and 14 species of seagrass. While it has a relatively low population of approximately 3.5 million people, this is likely to double in the next 50 years. About 90% of the population live in the coastal strip and there is considerable pressure to develop coastal areas for agriculture, urban expansion, tourist development and aquaculture. The Department of Primary Industries in Queensland has developed an operational policy which provides a set of protocols to enable decisions to be made on the clearing of mangroves, and any work conducted below the high tide. These decisions are made on a basis that is fair to all applicants, while ensuring the best protection for the habitat. The protocols include requirements for restoration and mitigation. This paper examines two restoration cases: one involving an aquaculture development, and another, a tourist property development. We examine the problems associated with the application of policy in a fair manner, and of the restoration of valuable fishery habitats.