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**Media Release**

**EDS welcomes review of Great Barrier Island conservation land**

Earlier this week, Conservation Minister Dr Nick Smith and Auckland Central MP Nikki Kaye jointly announced a proposal to reclassify stewardship land held on Great Barrier Island as a conservation park.

“The Environmental Defence Society supports a review of the classification of this land”, said EDS Policy Director Raewyn Peart.

“The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment’s recent report highlighted the problems of retaining large portions of the conservation estate as stewardship land.

“Responsibility for managing stewardship land was transferred to the newly created Department of Conservation in 1987.

“DOC was then expected to reclassify the land dependent on its conservation values. The stewardship designation was intended to be a short-term holding position only. It provides relatively weak legal protection for the land.

“Redesignation of stewardship land on Great Barrier Island has still to be undertaken over 25 years later. It is therefore timely that DOC is now considering the matter.

“Identifying the appropriate new conservation designation for the land will need careful consideration.

“There are a number of categories which could be applied, ranging from those that strongly protect natural values such as national parks and wilderness areas, to those that have a stronger focus on recreational values such as conservation parks and amenity areas.

“Some areas of Great Barrier have very high conservation value such as the breeding ground of the endangered black petrel on Mount Hobson. These might merit stronger protection than places where recreation is the primary focus.

“EDS will be engaging with DOC to fully consider all the options.

“Redesignation of conservation land on Great Barrier has been 25 years coming. We now need to take the time to get it right,” concluded Ms Peart.