Name: Jo Kelly, CEO Australian Seaweed Institute

Statement

Nutrient discharge from anthropogenic sources is one of the greatest risks to the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) in Australia and coastal ecosystems globally. Excess nutrients cause increased algal growth, poor water quality, eutrophication, acidification and reduction in reef resilience to climate change impacts.

Purposefully designed seaweed aquaculture in targeted locations across the Great Barrier Reef could be part of the solution to safely soaking up excessive nitrogen, phosphorous and carbon that is damaging coastal ecosystems. The seaweed, regularly harvested to remove the nutrients from the marine ecosystem, can also provide a low emissions livestock feed and biofertiliser to further reduce environmental impacts to ocean ecosystem.

The Australian Seaweed Institute (ASI) is currently working with the Australian Government and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation to develop Seaweed Biofilters as a nature-based solution to improve water quality, increase biodiversity and resilience of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

This innovative, nature based solution aims to contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 14 for Life Below Water and particular targets including:

- 14.1 Nitrogen removal
- 14.2 protect and restore reef ecosystems
- 14.3 reduce ocean acidification
- 14.7 sustainable economic use from marine resources (livestock feed)
- 14A increase scientific knowledge for ocean health (reef and seaweed ecosystems)
- Plus SDG13 - reduce livestock emissions for climate action.

I am also here as a representative of the Safe Seaweed Coalition, and we are working with international stakeholders to highlight and promote the opportunity for sustainable seaweed aquaculture to be embraced as revolutionary solution for ocean impact.