

Dear Director of National Parks (CC: Minister Frydenberg, Tanya Plibersek),

I fish and I want our marine sanctuaries restored.

I reject the Turnbull Government's proposed cut backs to high level 'sanctuary' (National Park / Green zone / IUCNII) in our National Network of Marine Parks around Australia. This includes in icons such as Lord Howe, Geographe Bay, Great Australian Bight, the Kimberley, Perth Canyon and the Coral Sea, the cradle to the Great Barrier Reef.

These draft plans put our marine life and iconic Australian way of life at risk of expanding threats like oil and gas mining, destructive commercial fishing and Supertrawlers.

Every known scientific or government survey shows the overwhelming majority of recreational fishers support sanctuaries once they're established. Last year, 76% of fishers in Cairns said they supported reinstating protection zones in the Coral Sea Marine Park. By protecting important spawning grounds for marlin and tuna from commercial longlining, the original Coral Sea Marine Park plan created what would have been effectively Australia's largest exclusive recreational fishing zone. The current plans not only open up the sanctuaries, but also this recreational fishing area to industrial scale commercial fishing. This is unacceptable.

Marine parks create a balance of conservation, business and recreation, with sanctuaries in place to protect important feeding and breeding grounds.

Some of Australia's most revered fishing destinations have been marine parks for years now, in places such as Ningaloo, the Great Barrier Reef, Port Stephens and Jervis Bay. A few recent examples from fishing media:

'Apart from being an incredible place to sight-see and holiday, the fishing on offer is second to none,' (Moreton Bay Marine Park, Fishing World, March 2016)

'It's as if this place was designed for anglers' (Ningaloo Marine Park, National Australian Fishing Annual, Summer 2016)

'The evidence is quite conclusive that the no fish zones are important to the future sustainability of the fishery and, I must say as a previous 'doubting Thomas' I doubt no more!' (Moreton Bay Marine Park, Fishing Monthly magazine 2013)

Australia's national network of marine parks and sanctuaries is the result of decades of science, consultation and work by all sides of politics. Inexplicably, these draft plans ignore the Government's own review released last year which acknowledged the level of science and consultation that has gone into the development of our marine parks.

As someone who likes to fish, I call on you to reject the proposed reduction to high level 'sanctuary' protection (National Park / Green zone / IUCNII), and restore our national network of marine parks without further delay, because despite what some lobby groups may claim, Australians enjoy fishing in marine parks every day, and have been doing so for years.

Your sincerely,

Sally Hughes

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