

Dear sirs,

There are a lot of horrified Australians out here amongst the public, who are aghast at the thought that the government intends to make such a drastic reduction in protected areas in our oceans, at a time when this protection is most needed.

To start with, we do not even know what life is in those seas, but we do know that there are a number of less common species which depend upon these areas for their lives.

The recently announced plans make Australia the only country in the world that is winding back its protections for the ocean.

In the Coral Sea, which is the area hardest hit, the area placed in Marine National Parks has been halved. The same goes for Marion Reef. Even Osprey Reef, described by David Attenborough as the perfect reef, and one of the top dive sites in the world, has had half its area removed from the Marine National Park. Shark and Vema Reefs have been taken out of the Marine National Park area altogether.

Midwater trawling is to be reintroduced and will now be possible for longlining to start at the southern tip of the Coral Sea reserve and continue all the way to the northern boundary.

No Government in the world has ever, that's right ever, taken this many hectares out of conservation before. It's the largest step backwards in areas under conservation in history.

What *is* the Turnbull Government thinking? There is overwhelming community support for these sanctuaries, including from the vast majority of recreational fishers. There is international scientific consensus to say that sanctuaries are the best thing we can do to protect our oceans. The work done by all sides of politics over many decades will be completely undone if this mindlessness goes ahead.

Do NOT let this happen!

Ron Anstis

Carlisle River Wildlife Shelter.