

Submission on proposed marine park roll back

I have been diving and fishing in the Batemans Bay area and the East coast of Australia for more than 20 years. Before the declaration of the Batemans Bay Marine Park there were many barren rocks, not much kelp, few large fish and many sea urchins.

Since the declaration of the Marine Park there has been an extraordinary transformation in the underwater environment. More kelp and other seaweed has grown. there are fewer sea urchins and the average size of common fish species is noticeably larger. There is also much evidence of fish breeding. Overall the whole marine area is much healthier and much pleasanter to be in and it is clearly serving to replenish fish stocks in deeper waters.

Reducing the area of Marine Parks will not benefit the fishing industry of Australia as a whole. While some people will catch more fish and make more money for a few years, the long term impact will be to make our fishing industry unsustainable and to seriously erode our overall fish stocks. This is common sense.

Determination of marine parks should not be a political decision, it should be common sense. Your advisory committee may profess to be scientists, but they are scientists who are politically motivated to come up with a recommendation that maximises opportunities for economic exploitation and does not take sustainability account. Their proposal goes against common sense.

The government has received plenty of evidence that the tourism industry as well as the sustainability of fishing will also be seriously damaged if there is a roll back of the scale suggested. Please listen to the people who actually know what they are talking about, not people who are politically and economically motivated to play into the hands of short term exploiters. Please leave the marine designations as they are, they are already the minimum necessary to support sustainable fishing and tourist industries.

Yours faithfully
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