

If the Australian government cut the area of ocean protected by Australia by even 1 percent - let alone 50 percent - this would be one of the most short-sighted decisions ever made by an Australian government.

Coral bleaching is real. I know because I'm a scuba diver and I went diving on the Great Barrier Reef in August of 2016 and saw the horrible devastation before my eyes. Over fishing is real. I know because I lived in Japan for five years and have visited the fish markets where far too much seafood is hauled in on a weekly basis. Just seeing what's there on one visit on one day is enough to leave you wondering how there could be any fish left in the ocean at all.

This is why Australia needs to be a leader. Australians are intelligent, conscientious, and disciplined. We should be world leaders, not being left behind or flailing in our own lack of initiative. The oceans are the most important element for the surviving and thriving of humanity. It's where over half of our oxygen comes from. And where so much of our food comes from.

The world needs smart countries like Australia to take the lead in protecting our dying oceans. Please, please, please do not cut back Australia's ocean protection. Not 50 percent. Not even 1 percent. If anything, fight to increase the area Australia protects.

The fate of my generation is directly tied to the fate of our oceans. I don't even want to think about what my kids may face if I have them and my country is not doing everything it can to help repair and regenerate our oceans.

Sincerely,

Celia Polkinghorne