

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing in regard to the proposed changes to the extents and rules governing Australia's marine sanctuaries.

Reducing the extents of the marine sanctuaries and allowing longline fishing and trawling in these areas is a false step. It may provide a short term increase in the fishing resource available for exploitation however in the medium and long terms it will lead to reduced fish stocks and the likely population collapse of many important species. There are also the issues of habitat destruction by bottom trawling and bycatch of threatened and endangered species, which compound the losses in these environments and seriously hinder their ability to maintain viable populations, let alone recover and increase.

Marine sanctuaries provide areas where populations of overfished species do have a chance to recover and continue to be viable fishing resources for future generations of Australians. Numerous scientific studies have shown that providing protected areas for breeding and growth results in population increases for many economically significant species as well as non-target species.

Obviously there must be a balance between jobs now and jobs in the future, but given the other serious threats marine species face, including pollution and climate change, erring on the side of caution with larger protected areas is much to be preferred at the current time. Reducing sanctuary size and increasing resource exploitation now will contribute to the decline of Australia's fishing industry in the future, and such decisions will be looked upon poorly by generations of future Australians.

Yours sincerely,

Jenet Austin
Kambah ACT