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Australian Marine Parks Management Planning Comments
Department of the Environment and Energy

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SUBMISSION IN RELATION TO NORFOLK ISLAND MARINE PARK

My name is Brooke Watson, and I thank you for the opportunity to comment upon the review of the Norfolk Island Marine Park. I comment as a member of the public.

As a former Manager of the Norfolk Island National Park, and Conservator of Norfolk Island Botanic Gardens, and author of the current Norfolk Island National Park Plan of Management, and now retired and living on Norfolk Island, I make the following submission:

SUMMARY

I recommend that

1. The Norfolk Island Marine Park should be zoned **Habitat Protection Zone (IUCN IV)** other than 3 areas (detailed in 2, 3, &4 below)
2. A section in the North of the Norfolk Island Marine Park should be zoned **Marine National Park (IUCN II)** that section being from the northern border of the marine park, and South to 27°30' S
3. A section in the South of the Norfolk Island Marine Park should be zoned **Marine National Park (IUCN II)** that section being from 168°19.400'E - 32°27.725' S / eastward across the southern boundary to 32°11.569' S 169°03'E / north west to 31°17' S 168°15'E / south east to 31°44' S 167°41'E / and south west to 32°27.725' S 168°19.400'E -thus protecting a key portion of the Vening-Miensez Fracture Zone.
4. A section surrounding Norfolk Island should be zoned Multiple Use Zone (**IUCN VI**) that section being a rectangular area of 67 x 40 nautical miles, the defining co-ordinates being 28°38' S 167°40'E / 28°38' S 168°20'E / 29°45' S 167°40'E / 29°45' S 168°20'E - thus providing Norfolk Island residents and businesses with a local marine area where tourism, watersports, and fishing can be conducted for the benefit of the Norfolk Island economy and social amenity.
5. The Norfolk Island community be permitted to fish throughout the Norfolk Island Marine Park using agreed and approved methods, and to be permitted to catch for local Norfolk Island sale and consumption up to a limit of 100 tonnes of fish per year. The licencing, data handling and general management of such fishing to be managed and administered by a Norfolk Island Fishing Governance body, in association with appropriate Australian legislative and environmental governance frameworks.

CONCLUSION

The zoning of the Norfolk Island Marine Park as set out above will achieve, inter alia, three important aims:

- Protection of fragile marine and terrestrial ecosystems
- Reinforcement of Australia's position as a world leader in marine management
- Strengthening of the resilience and sustainability of the Norfolk Island economy.

GENERAL SUBMISSION NOTES

ENVIRONMENTAL

There exists a complex and fragile symbiotic relationship between the Norfolk Island group of islands, islets, and stacks on the one hand, and the surrounding waters, reefs, shallows, troughs, and underwater escarpments and mounds on the other hand.

It was established by Professor Richard Holdaway that the plant species on Norfolk Island group of islands depend upon seabirds for soil fertility and fungal control.

Likewise it was established that the Norfolk Island rare temperate coral reefs are dependent upon runoff from the plants on the islands for nutrients, and which reefs are in turn the nurseries for marine food chains upon which the seabirds depend.

Norfolk Island has a complex remnant biosphere with current listings:

- Threatened species: Birds 5, Reptiles 2, Plants 46,
- Listed Migratory Birds: 36
- Listed Marine Birds: 20
- Vagrant and Migrant Birds: 4
- Endangered Birds: (JAMBA) 4

By zoning the majority of the Norfolk Island Marine Park **Habitat Protection Zone (IUCN IV)** the Commonwealth of Australia will be protecting not only the complex underwater diversity of the marine park, but also the fragile terrestrial ecosystems on the group of islands within the park which depend upon the marine health for their survival.

Additionally the threat of mining if the marine park zoning is less than **Habitat Protection Zone (IUCN IV)** is a serious threat to the largely unknown complexity of deep water species along the Norfolk Ridge.

ECONOMIC

Marine protected areas have high economic value as

- Nurseries and engine rooms for the fishing industry, and as
- Visitation areas for divers, cruise ships, whale and dolphin spotters, shark spotters,
- Food supplies for local island and coastal communities

Additionally, protection afforded to the Norfolk Island Marine Park not only ensures the ongoing health of the Norfolk Island Marine Tourism industry, but also supports the economic tourism value which Norfolk Island businesses derive from the beauty of the natural ecosystem.

Norfolk Island community families and visitors have fished, and looked after, the waters surrounding the islands for more than 150 years. Fishing represents an important part of the economy, as well as having great cultural significance from the time of the Polynesians, through their penal settlements, through to today where fishing is a large part of Norfolk cultural life.

Tourism Fish Fries are a feature of visits to the Island.

Local fish sales support a number of family businesses, and Norfolk Island residents.

SOCIAL

The health of the Norfolk Island Marine Park has a significant impact on Norfolk Island community well-being and health. Many families are descended from Tahitian ancestry, and others from whaling families. Norfolk Islanders have deep cultural connection with the sea and are active on the water socially and commercially.

The protection of the marine park is critically important for social health and well-being on Norfolk Island. The community have cared for the waters and species over many generations, and have demonstrated capacity to manage the marine park.

STRATEGIC

A marine park management partnership between the Australian and NSW governments and the people of Norfolk Island would produce many long term benefits for all parties. The protective zoning will ensure cruise ship interest for the region and may also assist NSW coastal areas to also be involved in the cruise industry once attracted to the area.

INTERNATIONAL

The Australian complex of marine parks and protected areas has established Australia as a leader in world environmental management.

A properly protected area is an economic engine-room which keeps on giving, attracting visitors and researchers from all corners of the world.

CONTACT

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