

Dear Director of National Parks,

I find the proposed cut-backs to Australia's Marine National Parks deeply disturbing. I support the initial draft management plan for National Park Zones, which was introduced in 2012 and I am appalled that the Turnbull Government (at the instigation of the previous Abbott Government) is now trying to reduce the protections offered to our marine life. I feel that any reduction in protection zones, such as Habitat Protection Zones replacing protected National Park Zones goes against Australia's national and international obligations to preserve and protect ecological areas for future generations. I urge the Australian Government to ensure that all National Park zones that were declared in 2012 remain as they are, and that the areas that are afforded the highest level of protection should be increased. Australian marine life is distinct and diverse, with a high level of endemism in many areas around the country, not just on the Great Barrier Reef. Less well-known areas should still be afforded high protections awarded on an environmental and ecological basis, not affected by the vested interest of industry, particularly foreign industry. The argument that Australia has world-leading sustainable fisheries is highly flawed when one considers that almost the entirety of the World's fishing stocks are over-fished. I do not believe the Government should give such heavy priority to an industry which is largely unsustainable. Furthermore, I believe that all declared marine parks should be fully protected from oil and gas mining – this is an issue I have particular interest in as a South Australian, and I find the proposed plans for drilling in the Great Australian Bight (a well-known whale birthing area) particularly offensive.

I have lived in a coastal area my entire life, and have regularly visited National Parks that extend to cover the marine zone. There is a marked difference in the diversity of life in these places when compared to urban areas with no protection. I would find it deeply shameful, and endlessly sad, if children in future generations were unable to walk along a beach in Australia and see dolphins playing in the surf, or sea-lions searching for food amongst nearby rocks. We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.

I urge Parks Australia to recognise that this submission is a submission with equal importance as others made in any other format. That just because it is made online from a member of the general public (partially facilitated by community groups) and not someone affiliated with industry does not diminish its importance. I ask that you act on this and all other submissions equally.

Thank you for your time in considering my submission.

Kind Regards,

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