

Submission on Draft Commonwealth Marine Park Management Plans

I would like the 2012 system of Commonwealth Marine Reserves to remain in place, for the following reasons: -

It is only Green zones which offer real biodiversity protection, providing the resilience needed by marine ecosystems to cope with the effects of climate change, such as the coral bleaching which has already occurred in many areas off the Australian coast.

The Draft Plans overall reduce the Green zones from 866,335 square km to 465,327 square km, a substantial cut, and in some areas, such as the Coral Sea Reserve, the percentage reduction is even greater.

The only adequate biodiversity protection is where NO extractive commercial activities (fishing, mining, oil and gas drilling) are permitted. The Yellow and Blue zones do not offer adequate protection.

The reduction of Green zones in favour of allowing commercial fishing (particularly in the Coral Sea) is very concerning as it appears to put the interests of the tuna fisheries ahead of biodiversity conservation. This is a very short-sighted approach as Green zones serve as nurseries for marine species that are harvested commercially.

The reduction of Green zones may favour some commercial fishers but threatens the livelihoods of those who operate or work in the many tourism businesses that depend on Green zones - wildlife watching, snorkelling, diving, boating and recreational fishing. I notice that Osprey Reef, in the Great Barrier Reef, has had half of its area removed from the Marine National Park. Osprey Reef happens to be one of the world's great dive sites and anyone who saw David Attenborough's recent documentary series on the GBR will know that Osprey Reef deserves full protection - it is a site worthy of World Heritage.

And, finally, whatever protections may be in place, on paper, in Yellow or Blue zones, will be very difficult to monitor. It is hard enough for agencies to effectively monitor terrestrial national parks but marine degradation and species loss may well not be picked up until too late for the damage to be reversed.

**Catharine Errey
101 Summerleas Road
Fern Tree TAS 7054**