

20 September 2017

Australian Marine Parks Management Planning

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Submission on Marine Reserves, East Coast Temperate Zone, Norfolk Island

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the future zoning of the waters surrounding Norfolk Island, in the East Coast Temperate Zone.

I was very disappointed to learn that the Norfolk Island Marine park 'under management' of Australian National Parks could even be considered to change the zoning to include mining, exploration and dumping of ships waste. Does that not go against any 'Park' principle?

I would also like to say that this should be a process under the jurisdiction of the Australian government as the territorial waters surrounding Norfolk Island should be in the care and control of the Norfolk Island people.

The Box

The inshore fishery zone, reserved for the exclusive use of Norfolk Island-based fishers, appears to have recently been reduced in size, and all protections removed through rezoning. Whilst the Box is a matter between AFMA and the Norfolk Island Fishing Association and therefore outside the auspices of the current draft Plan of Management it is a matter of great concern in regard to its potential effects on the marine environment.

To enable the ongoing health and preservation of fish stocks within a reasonable proximity to the island, and to allow for certain areas to be 'rested' to avoid overfishing, it is most important that the Box be retained in its original dimensions. And be recognised as a 'ZONE' in the management plan and the maps.

Furthermore with improved scientific ability comes improved knowledge of the seafloor, seamounts and other geological features, which suggest it would be prudent to increase the area of the Box to include more of these, as they are critical in protecting the marine ecosystems and the food chain.

We request that in your discussions with AFMA, within whose jurisdiction this lies, you reinforce our representations in this matter.

The Zones

Various levels of protection have been shown in a variety of maps produced over the years of discussion around the proposed Marine Parks surrounding the Australian coast, and also around the offshore islands and Territories.

I believe that :

1. the Box, currently a Multiple Use Zone (depicted in blue on your maps) should be changed to a Habitat Protection Zone (HPZ, depicted in Yellow).
2. the 200nm Zone surrounding Norfolk Island, including the Box, currently indicated in blue as a Multiple Use Zone, should be upgraded to a Habitat Protection Zone, except for those parts shown in green, providing a higher level of protection as National Park Zones.

My understanding is that this zoning (HPZ) continues to allow for Recreational and Charter fishing activities in the water column, but does not allow for any interference with the seafloor, thereby protecting it from damaging exploratory and extractive activities.

This zoning should also prevent international commercial fisheries undertaking any form of fishing that disturbs or destroys the seabed within the Box, and within the island's 200nm EEZ

The added protection thus achieved will also support the ongoing protection of the Norfolk Island waters by the Norfolk Island Fishing Association.

This will result in multifaceted positive outcomes for the environment, fishers, tourism, food security, health, recreation and the island's economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to present a submission.

Yours sincerely

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