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Director of National Parks
Australian Marine Parks Management Planning Comments
Department of the Environment and Energy
Reply Paid 787
Canberra ACT 2601

By email to: managementplanning.marine@environment.gov.au

Dear Director,

Re: Draft Management Plans for Marine Parks

I am a keen recreational fisher with an emphasis on release game fishing. I am also involved in the administration of clubs, state and national associations and have been involved in the preparation and presentation of many submissions on marine reserves management planning.

From a purely personal standpoint I would like to make the following comments:

- The National Parks department is to be commended on the thoroughness and extent of its efforts in preparing the Draft Management Plans, the product of which is a plan that should be mostly acceptable to recreational fishers. It offers a concept of fair and reasonable access to all, without jeopardising the environmental principles that are valued by game fishing anglers and most others.
- Having reviewed the plans, the Coral Sea and Perth Canyon are my main areas of concern. I believe the proposed plans provide access that allows recreational fishers to be adequately catered for.
- Game fishing, as a distinct fishing technique, deserves more credit for its environmental credentials than it is typically afforded. It is not extractive. Best practice methods and environmental responsibility are almost universally applied within the game fishing community.
- Access for game fishing proponents to IUCN II zones will have no deleterious consequences and should be accepted on a limited basis, perhaps by permit.
- It appears incongruous that recreational fishing is excluded from IUCN II zones whereas disposal of ballast and waste water is permitted.

- Similarly there is little attention to benthic habitat protection in reef areas (coral and otherwise), that could and should be protected with the use of swing moorings. These are widely utilised in sensitive areas elsewhere and can benefit visitor experience.
- Game fishers typically fish wide from the coastline, hence they are the eyes, ears and potential allies of compliance and other agencies.
- Management strategies will need to encourage engagement with the users to develop effective and supported management plans and to avoid conflicts of usage and other management related issues.

The marine estate belongs to the citizens of Australia and should be accessible to all, whilst maintaining reasonable environmental protection. It should not be locked up.

The proposed plans offer the best hope yet of an acceptable outcome for game fishers. There is real concern however, that the concept of striking a balance with a fair go for all, as outlined in the plans, may be substantially compromised in the review and/or legislative process. The fear is that this could easily take the whole program back towards the Burke Plan. This would have a crippling impact on recreational fishing and the welfare of the many individuals and businesses dependent on it for their livelihoods.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the plans, I look forward to a positive outcome from your deliberations. I would also like it known that I fully support the submission made by The Game Fishing Association of Australia.

Yours faithfully



Peter Coote