

Dear Minister

I can hardly believe you are proposing to wind back the protections for our marine national parks, protections which are already minimal, as you no doubt realise. These protections have huge support from most Australians who know about the coast and the sea, and the huge threats from human activity of all kinds.

I was a member of the Western Coastal Board in Victoria at a time when Victoria was legislating to set up our marine protected areas. There were objections from fishers, both commercial and recreational. Of course, now they are supporters of these wonderful nurseries for wildlife, and the population loves seeing the whales and seabirds. Just the other day there was a pod of eight dolphins slowly passing through the marine sanctuary at Aireys Inlet on their way up towards the Bay. In a lifetime here I have never seen that before.

And in the Painkalac Creek we have eels which come back here as elvers to breed and grow big before the extraordinary journey to breed up in the Coral Sea, one of the most precious areas needing protection before it is too late. Surely you are not contemplating reducing protection.

To me, it doesn't make sense, environmentally, economically and culturally and I would very much like you to explain the reasons for your decision.

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