

Australian Marine Parks Management Planning Comments
Department of the Environment and Energy
Canberra ACT 2601

Thankyou for the opportunity to provide my views as comments on the proposed management plans, including zoning, of the Commonwealth Marine Reserves network.

At the outset, I must state that I am somewhat taken aback by the apparent regressiveness of the proposed reductions in protection compared to the original Commonwealth Marine Reserves initiative. Overall the reduction in real protections across the system is disappointing and I'd go as far to say damning of a process that is supposed to primarily protect marine habitats. Notwithstanding, the increased protection (expanded green Marine National Park zone) for the Bremer Marine Reserve, near me here in Bremer Bay WA, is generally welcome.

The failings of the reductions in general protection are also evident in the renaming from 'reserves' to 'parks', and in the telling reasoning for 'marine parks' given by the Director in a statement made upon the release of the current review: *"Marine parks provide places for people to watch wildlife, dive, and go boating, snorkelling and fishing. Importantly, they create jobs in industries like fishing and tourism, and provide us with food and energy."* As I understand it, marine reserves are designed to be a standard for protection, recreation and limited sustainable use, rather than primarily recreation and commercial use; the primary reason worryingly being ignored or perhaps apparently cynically left out in the director's statement.

This latest 'process' also seems to have ignored the advice of science/evidence-based approaches by its winding back of zone protections, which will diminish marine biodiversity, impact fishery sustainability, damages our Nation's credibility, and serves as another bad look for a government that needs all the environment credentials it can get. This shouldn't be that hard or scary to achieve, given that the Howard Liberal Government championed the Commonwealth Marine Reservation initiative in the first instance.

Specifically The Bremer Canyons MP should not have that inshore trawl zone, its a nonsense to allow that type of destructive practice in a marine protected area, particularly when there's millions of hectares either side where it can happen willy-nilly; which, by the way, is why we need marine reserves!

Quality, science and evidence founded and designed Marine Reserves, support sustainable fisheries and serve as a benchmark to compare change against, vital in a changing world where environments are being impacted so severely, and with increases in human population and natural resource extractions from oceans and associated impacts. It is imperative that the science and evidence based approach is used faithfully to design Marine Reserves and their management, I strongly urge that this is done and seen to be done.

Further, I provide my views put to the earlier review and comment process that may assist this current review process:

Thanks for the opportunity to submit my views on the Commonwealth marine reserves review. I completed an online survey regarding my views on the Bremer Marine Reserve, and would like to submit my views on the broader concept of Commonwealth marine reserves, as follows.

A network of high quality Commonwealth marine reserves is important to conserve marine environments and biological diversity, to support sustainable commercial, cultural and recreational fisheries, as a prime nature-based tourism destination, and to maintain and enhance Australia's reputation as a clean green and responsible nation to visit and invest in.

Some biologically significant areas are not protected by Commonwealth marine reserves and must be. These include the subshelves and canyons to the west of the Bremer Marine Reserve as submitted in

the online survey I completed, offshore from the Ningaloo Marine Park, and the unique marine habitats of the Great Australian Bight.

The area and zoning in Bremer Marine Reserve are unsatisfactory. The area must be increased by moving the western boundary westwards by 24 nmi/45 km to adequately cover the subshelf over which the orcas and other biological wonders congregate, and the associated other smaller adjacent canyons. The current zoning does not properly protect the most biologically diverse and important sections – being the canyons. These areas and the vital western extension must be zoned as Marine National Park. The seafloor and its features must be well protected as well, including the probable hydrocarbon venting that drives the nutrient flow and the subsequent biological wonder.

The land area adjacent includes Fitzgerald River National Park and Fitzgerald Biosphere Reserve. A current community led collaborative effort has developed a renomination submission to UNESCO for an extended 'Fitzgerald Biosphere' that will include buffer and transition zones around the core zone of Fitzgerald River National Park, and includes the state marine waters. This submission process is to meet the revised UNESCO Biosphere Reserve criteria and is currently under way via the WA and Australian Governments. The submission mentions the current Commonwealth Marine Reserves and the review, and recommends that once the extended Fitzgerald Biosphere is approved and the Commonwealth marine reserves review is complete, that the inclusion of the Bremer Marine reserve in Fitzgerald Biosphere should be investigated and implemented. This uniting initiative would add exponentially to the character and profile of the area, and its appeal as a tourism and investment destination, and the Commonwealth Marine Reserves Review may wish to consider it further as part of the review process. More information on the Fitzgerald Biosphere and its renomination is available via the contact address below.

Thankyou for the opportunity to comment.

Regards

Nathan McQuoid
Landscape Ecologist
20 Short Beach Rd Bremer Bay WA 6338
P: 0439 936 591
E: nathanm@westnet.com.au