

Submitted on Wednesday, September 20, 2017 - 18:00 Submitted by anonymous user:  
116.250.184.224 Submitted values are:

First Name: Caitlin

Last Name: Woods

Organisation:

Which sector do you represent?

- Commercial tourism
- Conservation
- General public
- Research

Which draft plans are you commenting on? Temperate East Network Which marine park(s) are you commenting on? Lord Howe Marine Park What topic(s) or activity(s) are you commenting about?

- Commercial fishing
- Oil, gas, or mining
- Recreational fishing
- Other

What part of the plan(s) are you commenting on?

- Part 3 - Zoning
- Part 4 - Managing activities

Which program are you commenting on? Park protection and management program Please tick this box if you would like to keep up to date with all the latest information on Australian Marine Parks by subscribing to our email updates. :

Yes please subscribe me to Australian Marine Parks news Your submission may also be published online by the Director of National Parks. Please tick 'No' if you do not want it published. Your submission will still be considered in the Director's Report on the Preparation of the Management Plans, and may be provided to the Minister and tabled before

Parliament: Yes

Does your comment relate to the renaming of marine parks? No Please type your comments below:

1) The proposed zoning and rules for the Lord Howe Marine Park allow ballast water discharge and waste disposal from all vessels in all zones and this is of particular concern in the Lord Howe Marine Park. While other regulations exist (MARPOL) to prevent discharge within 3 nautical miles of Lord Howe Island itself (State waters), the proposal does not prevent discharge from 3nm of the Island or in the immediate vicinity of Elizabeth Reef, Middleton Reef, or Ball's Pyramid.

Elizabeth and Middleton Reef harbour significant and unique biodiversity, being home to almost twice the number of coral and fish species as the reefs around Lord Howe Island, many endemic species, and are an important breeding area for the endangered Black Cod, Being so isolated they are some of the last few examples of pristine reefs in the world, they warrant maximum protection so that we may in the future benefit from understanding what pristine ecosystems look like and how they function. Discharge of Ballast water is one of the major vectors of marine pests and introduced species, so allowing this to occur adjacent to pristine reefs may severely compromise their ecological integrity. Similarly, Lord Howe Island is thus far free of any known Marine Pests, again one of the few examples of this left in the world. Allowing ballast water and waste discharge within 3nm may also jeopardise this.

For these reasons I suggest a change to the proposal that prohibits waste and ballast water discharge within National Park Zones and the Lord Howe Habitat Protection Zone, and furthermore a Biosecurity Zone established preventing such discharge within 12nm of any reefs or islands in the Lord Howe Marine Park.

2) Under the proposal mining operations (including pipeline construction) are allowed in all zones of commonwealth waters. Such procedures can have large, negative impacts on surrounding marine ecosystems and would again compromise the ecological integrity of the pristine Elizabeth and

Middleton Reefs, and the World Heritage reefs of Lord Howe Island. I recommend that mining activities be prohibited in all zones within the Commonwealth Marine Park, or at least the RUZ, NPZ and HPZs (Including the Lord Howe HPZ).

3) Under the proposal Aquaculture would be permitted within the Lord Howe HPZ, which is inconsistent with State Marine Park regulations. Aquaculture could pose a serious biosecurity and economical threat to Lord Howe, with risks of disease transmission, nutrient and other pollution, and reducing the viability of the current fishing industry on Lord Howe Island. I recommend Aquaculture not be permitted within the Lord Howe HPZ

4) Lastly I recommend increasing the size of the Lord Howe HPZ northwards to encompass the seamount and pristine Elizabeth reef, and further West to provide a buffer between Lord Howe Island and the normal HPZ where commercial fishing activities are permitted, given allowing commercial fishing too close to the Island may deplete local stocks which are depended on by island resident.

At the end of the day, what exists out here is unique beyond belief; pristine, unimaginably beautiful, and in the face of damage and loss of coral reef habitats globally, it is an emblem of hope and pride for all of Australia. Furthermore, the local economy is small and there are no current political pushes to allow commercial fishing, mining, or discharge within the area. No vote will be lost by extending the LHI HPZ or from any of the above recommendations, but making sure there are political gains to be made by ensuring there is a marine paradise in Australian waters which is well-protected, pest free, pristine and unmarred by the controversy plaguing other Commonwealth Marine Parks. Lord Howe Marine Park is an easy political win if it is fortified by legislation against future threats.