



20 September 2017

Commonwealth Marine Reserves Branch  
Parks Australia  
Department of the Environment and Energy  
Edgar Waite Building  
203 Channel Highway  
Kingston TAS 7050  
Email: [marinereserves@environment.gov.au](mailto:marinereserves@environment.gov.au)

Dear Sir or Madam,

To provide a response to the Draft Management Plan for the Temperate East Marine Park on behalf of the 250 commercial fishing members of the Professional Fishermen's Association (PFA). The PFA wishes to note its appreciation for the considered approach taken by the Bioregional Advisory Panel in its consultation with our industry and understanding of industry issues. From a conservation perspective it is very clear Australia is exceeding aspirational international marine conservation targets whilst providing exceptional representation of habitat in its marine zoning arrangements.

The PFA has discussed with its members the impact of the proposed management arrangements and adjustment to the existing boundaries of the Temperate East Marine Park. It should be noted that the productivity and importance of many of our fishing grounds are highly variable due to the fluctuations in currents, temperatures and seasons, and will significantly differ between fishing sectors. For example, an area that is sometimes a good lobster ground may not be as productive one year but will be productive with pelagic species. This issue was particularly noted for the amendments made to the Solitary Islands Commonwealth Marine Reserve within the Temperate East Marine Park.

The boundary changes to the Pimpernel Rock reserve within the Solitary Islands will impact directly on at least 4 of our PFA members. Although the fishers will move to other areas to fish, the boundary change removes a number of productive fishing spots for Ocean Trap and Line Fishers. These fishers are concerned that the ever-increasing reduction of their fishing grounds will significantly impact on their ability to remain viable. Within the draft Pimpernel Rock reserve boundaries are a number of bommies that are productive fishing grounds – PFA members are willing to share the GPS location of the sites and their GPS tracks to prove their long fishing history in the region.

PFA providing effective representation on NSW commercial wild harvest fishing to all levels of government and other key stakeholders



The PFA notes the Australian Government is committed to providing fair and reasonable assistance to those commercial fishing operators directly affected by the new management arrangements in marine parks. Fundamentally the Ocean Trap and Line fishers are concerned with the removal of fishing access to areas where fishing currently occurs and areas that can be sustainably developed in the future. The process of assessing and managing displaced effort must be clearly defined. Although the changes may seem minor to these specific reserves, members expressed concern regarding their constantly eroding access rights and that these areas can be productive areas, dependent on the season.

In addition to this impact, the PFA wishes to voice our support of the Tuna Australia submission. Many of our PFA members are also tuna operators who supply NSW cooperatives and seafood retailers. Our members have also expressed the concerns outlined in the Tuna Australia submission to the review.

- The Derwent Hunter Seamount is located in a strategic important fishing area of the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery. It is not clear why there is a requirement to have the seamount classified as IUCN II as opposed to protecting benthic habitat while allowing tuna longline fishing to occur in the pelagic zone.
- The seamounts that form key ecological features of the Lord Howe Seamount chain<sup>(1)</sup> have been zoned to exclude longline fishing and appear to be over represented in the park. These areas are very important fishing areas to the tuna longline industry and a balance needs to be achieved on adequate representation rather than the current zoning.
- In previous years, the area where the proposed Norfolk Marine Park is located has been a very important tuna and billfish fishery, particularly for swordfish. Whilst this area is not accessed on a regular basis it is nonetheless a very important fishing area. Consideration must be given to the size of the conservation zone and implementing zoning to achieve practical rather than aspirational objectives. Fish that are caught in the ETBF are highly migratory and follow shifting ocean currents. It needs to be demonstrated why such a large pelagic zone is required.

The PFA wishes to note the correspondence received by Parks Australia in response to the concerns we expressed in earlier meetings and advice. We appreciate the intended approval process and assurances being undertaken by the Government but wish to highlight this process still provides no certainty for fishers. The authorizing class approvals and permits process is still subject to an assessment and decision process that may not rule in favour of the existing activity continuing.

Commercial fishing in Commonwealth waters requires significant investment, resources and skill. This investment is difficult alone without including uncertainty regarding the longevity of exiting management arrangements. The PFA appreciates



the reasoning for this process but still maintains that that stronger language regarding the continuation of the fishing activity should be provided.

The PFA wish to emphasis our previously expressed concerns over the potential impact of some actions that the Review report suggests should be enacted in the future. Namely where the report suggests that;

- *The Government should during the life of the first Temperate East network management plan investigate the conservation benefits, and social and economic impacts, of creating an MNPZ (Marine National Park Zone – a no take 'green' zone) extending eastwards from state waters along the southern border of the Hunter CMR. The MNPZ transect should be not be less than 10km wide to ensure adequate protection from the impact of human activities.*
- *The Government should during the life of the first Temperate East CMR Network Management Plan investigate the conservation benefits, and social and economic impacts, of extending the east–west 'arm' of the Central Eastern CMR westwards to join the Solitary Islands CMR, and of including an MNPZ transect from state waters eastwards across the shelf and slope that includes one of the reserve's canyon features.*

These suggested future expansions, of the Marine National Park 'green zone' network without a defined statement regarding the benefits of such protection, beyond the statement of 'comprehensive, adequate and representative', is not seen as justified – in fact is of great concern. What is being proposed in the future for the Temperate East CMR would be directly adjacent to key NSW fishing ports that harvest highly desirable local seafood, namely Nelson Bay in Port Stephen's and Coff's Harbour. These ports, which are already impacted by local state Marine Reserve's in their areas, could struggle to stay viable commercial fishing ports if any further Commonwealth MNPZ's were rolled out on their doorsteps, without a strong justification as to why these restrictions are necessary and which threats they are aiming to protect against

That the significant negotiations undertaken with the NSW commercial fishing industry has already been thorough in the development of the existing Commonwealth Marine Park boundaries and management arrangements would be undermined by this process. To review these arrangements regularly weakens the certainty that fishers have regarding their business and industry. It also destabilises the confidence of our industry in future negotiations and promises.

The PFA welcomes future discussions and encourages you to contact us to discuss these important matters.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tricia Beatty', written in a cursive style.

Tricia Beatty  
Executive Officer