

To whom it may concern

I am responding the proposed changes to zoning within the following areas:

Geographe Bay Marine Park

I am concerned with the Government's proposal to remove both the Marine National Park (green) zones in the Geographe Bay Marine Park, replacing them with weaker (yellow) Habitat Protection zones. These yellow zones have only been applied elsewhere in our region in waters more than 600m deep – a very different environment to our shallow, sheltered and heavily pressured Geographe Bay. The removal of the Marine National Park zones goes against the science recommendations from the Government's own Review. Acknowledging the level of consultation, the science evidence and the 'intense community interest', the Review recommended retaining the Marine National Park zones, while reconfiguring them slightly to better align with immediately adjacent green zones in the Ngari Capes Marine Park established by the Barnett Government, and to improve ease of navigation for fishers. These two Marine National Park zones recommended by the Review would take up only about 4% of the Geographe Marine Park – a balanced approach that would deliver improved outcomes for everyone and a great tourism beacon for the region.

Perth Canyon Marine Park

I am concerned about the proposal to move the Marine National Park Zone protection away from the key blue whale feeding grounds at the head of the Perth Canyon to an area of far less ecological importance. The blue whale is a protected species, still a long way from recovering from being threatened with extinction – and this area is the only area of its critical habitat feeding ground to be included in Australia's marine parks network.

Twilight Marine Park

I am concerned about the proposal to reduce over 1,000km² of Marine National Park Zone in this park. For comparison, this is an area larger than the entire NSW state waters marine sanctuary network, with the maximum economic benefit to fisheries estimated by the Government commissioned ABARES report to be only \$82,500 per annum, or \$2,500 per annum to each license holder in Zone 2 of the WA Temperate Gillnet Fishery. This combined with the loss of critical continental shelf protection at Peaceful Bay (in the **SW Corner Marine Park**) and at the head of the **Bremer Marine Park** (western side) leads to an overall loss of shelf.

SW Corner Marine Park/Diamantina Fracture Zone

I am concerned about the loss of a very large area of Marine National Park Zone over the Diamantina Fracture Zone – a Key Ecological Feature whose ridges and seamounts are thought to act as 'stepping stones' for species dispersal and migration across the region and the wider abyssal plain (Wilson & Kaufman 1987, in Richardson et al. 2005). Further, its size, physical complexity and isolation indicate that it is likely to support deep-water communities characterised by high species diversity and uniqueness – ref:

[https://www.environment.gov.au/sprat-](https://www.environment.gov.au/sprat-public/action/kef/view/22;jsessionid=ACF4D013818E181DD36A2CF029BE5656)

[public/action/kef/view/22;jsessionid=ACF4D013818E181DD36A2CF029BE5656](https://www.environment.gov.au/sprat-public/action/kef/view/22;jsessionid=ACF4D013818E181DD36A2CF029BE5656) The zoning proposed is a downgrade to the lowest level of protection in the park system – Multiple Use

(blue) zone – which will allow mining and most forms of fishing, despite its extremely remote, rough and deep location – making it unsafe for oil and gas drilling (with an adequate oil spill response most likely impossible) and highly unlikely to be a serious economic proposition for fishing.

1.

Western and Southern Kangaroo Island Marine Parks

I am concerned that despite there being no oil and gas leases over these two parks, the strong desire of the local community for their island to be as protected as possible from debilitating oil spills and the long term effects of oil and gas industrialisation of pristine seas, has not been heeded with an upgrade of zoning to ‘Special Purpose Zone (Mining Exclusion)’, as has been afforded the northern most section of the Great Australian Bight Marine Park. This is perplexing as the area around Kangaroo Island is considered to be highly prospective for oil and gas discovery, and therefore at significant risk of such operations being allowed in the foreseeable future. Creating an oil or gas field in these near-shore marine parks would put the Island’s important fishing and lucrative tourism industries at risk. This will greatly diminish the reputation and facility of marine parks in this community.

Despite finding that highly protected marine parks are vital as a key tool in marine management, the Turnbull Government has failed to act on the advice of the Review it commissioned, missing the opportunity to deliver a science based result in the South-west marine region.

The following are my recommendations to the Government in relation to the Draft South West marine region management arrangements:-

1. **I support the draft management plan where** the Marine National Park Zone (green-no-take IUCN II) areas have not changed from what was declared in 2012, or where there are new and/or increased National Park zones, ie -
 - a. the new National Park zones in the **Bremer Marine Park** (the transect and over the Bremer Canyon);
 - b. the new National Park zone transect over the Swan Canyon in the **SW Corner Marine Park**;
 - c. the increased National Park zone area in the **Two Rocks Marine Park**.
2. **I reject the draft management plans where** the Marine National Park zone (no-take IUCN II) are reduced or removed entirely, ie:-
 - a. in the **SW Corner Marine Park** (Diamantina Fracture Zone section), at the **Twilight Marine Park**; and over the western inner-shelf area in the Bay at **Bremer Marine Park** – all which have important areas of MNPZ removed;
 - b. in the **Geographe Marine Park**, and the Peaceful Bay section of the **SW Corner Marine Park** where the Marine National Park Zones are removed entirely;
 - c. In the **Perth Canyon Marine Park** where the National Park zone over the Head of the Canyon has been moved away from the critical habitat of a protected species, to an area of far less ecological importance;
- 2.
3. **I recommend that the following increase in MNPZ be made:-**
 - a. Expansion of the MNPZ in Great Australian Bight Marine Park westwards to the SA border. There is very little MNPZ protection on the continental shelf in the Commonwealth waters marine parks network. This proposal would create Australia’s largest area of high level protection on the continental shelf, in an

area with globally recognised values, and with no displacement of mining and very little additional fishing displacement.

- 3.
4. **Mining** - I support the Draft's proposal to put in place a large no-mining zone 'Special Purpose Zone (Mining Exclusion)' in the **Great Australian Bight Marine Park**, and recommend that the **Western and Southern Kangaroo Island Marine Parks** are given the same zoning upgrade throughout. Further, I recommend that the other key coastal communities adjacent to commonwealth marine parks be given protection from mining – at Esperance (the **SW Corner and Eastern Recherche Marine Parks**), Peaceful Bay (**SW Corner Marine Park**) and **Perth Canyon Marine Park**.
- 4.
5. **Gillnetting** –I recommend that the provision of permanent protection for Australian Sea Lions from gillnetting be provided in the relevant commonwealth marine parks by ensuring that the zoning does not offer less protection than existing fisheries closures.

Kind regards

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