

The Minister for the Department of Environment and Energy

As a member of the Queensland Game Fishing Association (QGFA) I take this opportunity to make formal submission on the recently released Coral Sea Marine Park zoning.

QGFA represents approximately 2500 anglers through 22 member clubs throughout Queensland. Membership continues to grow, with the introduction of 2 new member clubs and their affiliated anglers. Our members and affiliated members are regular users of the Coral Sea marine Park area. In 2012 QGFA put forward a significant submission to the then minister (Hon. Stephen Burke) outlining our concerns with the marine park and management thereof. QGFA has not changed their view on marine parks and their management since lodgement of the original submission.

QGFA supports:

- An open, fair and transparent process in which Marine Protected Area (MPA) Management decisions can be made about the Coral Sea region and which recognises the rights and roles of all stakeholders
- A healthy, resilient and productive Coral Sea ecosystem.
- The concept of a multiple use MPAs which provide for the recreational, aesthetic and cultural needs of indigenous and non-indigenous people.
- Management arrangements which recognise and maintain recreational fishing as a legitimate, sustainable and economically important activity within MPAs in the region.
- Marine park management plans which:
 - Identify, priorities and address impacting processes and aim for clear and demonstrable outcomes that lead to real and measurable environmental improvements, and;
 - utilise a risk based assessment process that is based on high quality peer reviewed science relevant to the study region
- Urgent research on the effects bottom trawling in the region with a possible moratorium to protect delicate and poorly known seamount fauna until these populations are better understood.
- The establishment of catch and release fishing zones, and a “no take away” philosophy for some particular areas of the Coral Sea region, to enhance sustainable recreational fishing ecotourism and the substantial socioeconomic benefits it can bring to the Queensland and National economy.
- Development of codes of practice and co-management regimes by recreational fishing groups which provide for high quality environmental outcomes without burdening Australian taxpayers or users with excessive operational or set up costs

- Recognition by all government and NGOs of the economic and social wellbeing that is generated by the provision of recreational fishing opportunities.

QGFA categorically opposes

- Any further increases in the area of blanket no fishing zones (i.e. green zones) in the Coral Sea region. Fishing is already excluded from 60% of the available reef platform and coral bank area in the region.
- Establishment of MPAs that fail to recognise the importance of the numerous social, cultural and economic aspects associated with the sustainable use of marine ecosystems.
- Establishment of MPAs that are not accompanied by management plans which identify existing problems and aim for measurable outcomes that lead to real improvements in the environment. The identification of key threatening processes should be the first stage of the process, followed by a thorough risk analysis. This should lead to an action plan aimed at achieving a set of clearly defined and measurable objectives with an established time frame. We will not support a “lock it away and forget it” approach to natural resource management.
- Any process of establishment and/or review of MPAs that is not completely open, fair and transparent, that does not provide sufficient time or adequate forums for stakeholder groups to fully engage in the process, or that does not provide adequate compensation or offsets to any stakeholder group (including recreational fishers) that has been disadvantaged by the process.

It should be noted that as the Immediate Past President of QGFA I am supportive of the government with this current proposal. Whilst this proposal does not fit with our organisational goals, I am of the belief that Australian anglers will maintain access to traditional fishing grounds and retain the ability to fish such icon regions. This will allow many anglers the opportunity to attain ideological fishing challenges. As such not only our affiliated members but all Australian anglers are better off under this proposal than early versions of the marine park.

Regards

Graeme Devin
Immediate Past President
QGFA
32 Kennedy Pde
Golden Beach QLD 4551