

Normally the Minister for the Environment works to put in place better outcomes for the environment; uses their skills to persuade other members of Cabinet that the environment deserves a better outcome. Over many years I have shared with many students the positive actions of various Ministers who have done just that, from Robert Hill to Tony Burke. The proposals to gut Australia's marine reserves will never be accorded as positive for the Environment and the Minister runs the risk of being seen as missing in action. These backwards steps are for what outcome? To satisfy corporate demands? I like to think that our Ministers are honest and committed to positive outcomes for the wider community. But I am running into a great deal of cognitive dissonance from the proposals we are reading about and the apparent support for these outrageous ideas from the Minister for the Environment. There is still time to change course. People with moral conviction in politics have a choice, do the right thing or resign. I wish the Minister reviews his position and ensures he creates a reputation as a Minister who worked for the environment, not against it.

This is not a technical issue and neither is this communication. The technical environmental matters are well known. What is needed is the commitment to better environmental outcomes that will continue to secure our marine reserves. We need a committed policy for the environment and not the backward looking death of one thousand cuts currently in the offing.

It is really not too difficult to sustain the moral authority to do the right thing. The Minister for the Environment does need to show leadership to protect the environment and all the benefits that go with that outcome.

Time to do the right thing.

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