

Dr. James Hehre

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to you as a marine ecologist out of deep concern for the proposed changes to Australia's marine park system. The changes compromise the future of Australia's marine resources, which are critical to all of us as stakeholders and concerned citizens in the interests of short-term political gains. By ignoring years of tested science, these changes put us all at risk, compromising our future and our children's future.

It is worthy to note in this age of Trump, Australia would stand as the only country that has reduced protection for critical marine areas. And it is more than a shame; it's a crime. It is robbing our future generations of a critical resource, one that provides livelihoods, recreation, and food security. And what is more, at this moment, Australia stands worldwide as an example of how marine protection should be done. As we speak, Australia stands as a model of how marine parks can be intelligently and effectively managed. Imagine if you will, that industry proposed stripping 97% of protection on land. Think of that, 97% of land open mining, drilling and a host of other extractive uses. It would never stand because we, as a nation, understand the benefits of protecting our land-based resources. We understand in terrestrial environments it is essential to our national interests to protect critical areas. Why not in the ocean?

Further, I am deeply disheartened that the federal Government's insistence that a policy designed to gut existing protections which flies in the face of all of the published scientific literature is being presented as "science based". To anyone with a remote knowledge of marine ecosystems presenting this as science is at best disingenuous. Years of science and hundreds of peer-reviewed papers have shown that partial protection does not work. The science is clear, partial protection does not work. If making the decision to strip protection in order to garner the support of the few who stand to gain in industry is the goal, then it is a **politically** motivated decision and best to call it what it is and not insult our intelligence by trying to pass it off as science.

You have a chance to do what is right for all Australians, not just a select few seeking short term economic gains. It is essential for you to realise that full protections alone equal critical conservation outcomes for marine areas. These outcomes benefit us all by guaranteeing that our marine resources will be protected now and for future generations.

Sincerely,

Dr. James Hehre

