

Dear environmental managers

The Qld environment Dept understands the importance of the northern reefs to replace much of what is depleted by harvesting, accident or natural disaster further south. The Eastern Australian Currents bring eggs and larvae southwards. My 8 years of teaching Marine Biology at PAU in PNG taught me that the reefs between PNG and Australia have many species in a huge ecosystem that none of us could fully understand. In my practical segments using a combination of diving and plankton netting (day & night) south of Port Moresby I began to learn that while the complexity of these reefs is only partly understood (which is another reason they should not be destroyed) they attract tourists willing to pay local people to see the unique and fascinating life on these reefs.

While I had my students out on these reefs we met people from all over Europe spending their lives savings to see the unique marine life of these reefs. We locals should value them for what they are as well as conserve them for future tourist potential.

We see new species turned up in Sydney harbour this year. A lot less research has been done along the southern and western coasts - but enough has been done to tell us that each area has its unique components that should be protected for future research, future industries, and for supplying our oxygen (remember 2/3 of the earth's oxygen comes from the ocean - we need to keep it in balance).

Unless you want to go down in history as a backward government do not reduce the areas of protected reef - please.

Sincerely

Prof Mike Tarburton.