

I am shocked and bitterly disappointed to hear that the Government is planning to reduce our precious marine parks. This is a very misguided and shortsighted decision.

The oceans of the planet are in deep trouble. Their ecosystems are critical to the health of the planet, therefore obviously also to humans. Fish numbers are diminishing and our corals are dying. While these systems are worthy of protection in their own right and for the essential roles they play in contributing to diversity of life and shaping climate and weather, if only for the sake of humans we should be quarantining ocean habitats for future sources of food as well as the recreational, educational and economic benefits of tourism.

Please, please reconsider and do NOT take the retrograde step of undoing the important work that set aside the current areas as marine parks.

As a large island nation we are uniquely placed to act on a significant scale around our coastline. Let us be a proud world leader in this lifesaving endeavour.

I heard the erudite oceanographer Dr Sylvia Earle speak during a visit here a couple of years ago. She complimented Australia on its marine parks. She encouraged us to be bold and continue to expand these, certainly not to diminish them.

To quote this highly respected scientist:

"We need to respect the oceans and take care of them as if our lives depended on it. Because they do."

Sincerely,

Margot Masters