

Dear Minister of Parliament,

I am part of a community of surfers, fishers, divers and ocean lovers who have a special interest in supporting stewardship and sustainable recreation around our coast. We along with the majority of Australians believe that marine park protection protects the waters we love and creates recreational, educational and sustainable business opportunities.

I welcome and strongly endorse State and Federal Liberal government's support for establishing marine parks along our coast. We are particularly supportive of the National Park zone shown off the coast from Margaret River.

I am, however, surprised and disappointed to note that the recently released draft plans for the Australian Marine Parks shows that the sanctuary/Marine National Park protection zones in Geographe Bay have been revoked and replaced with a zoning type ('Habitat Protection Zone') that offers no meaningful protection. It allows recreational and commercial fishing there, precluding all the major benefits and opportunities we know adequately protected marine parks deliver.

The only other places this Habitat Protection Zone have been used in the Southwest reserve network is in waters 600-6000m deep, well offshore. This must be an error, or anomaly driven by eastern-states decision making; as it goes against the findings of community consultation and scientific findings of previous government plans and the current government's Marine Reserve Review panels. WA Fisheries department research has demonstrated just this year that a strong majority of both local and visiting recreational fishers support the establishment of marine parks protected with sanctuary zones in the southwest.

I urge you to carefully consider the implications and opportunities of restoring our sanctuary protection in Geographe Bay, and ignore fringe voices but rather the overwhelming scientific evidence and the significant community support for having effective management plans that genuinely protect our ocean.

Yours Sincerely  
Tracey Muir

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