

Template 7

Number of submissions using this template: 2,945

Dear Director of National Parks (CC Minister Frydenberg, Tony Burke MP),

At the 2030 World Conservation Congress scientists set an evidence-based target that 30% of the ocean should be protected by 2030. The government's proposed changes to Australia's marine parks network represent a giant step backward from our commitment to ocean protection.

The biological and societal benefits of marine reserves are clear. It is well established that genuine marine reserves protect wildlife and also support productive fisheries and other uses of the marine environment. Crucially, they enhance the ocean's resilience against the impacts of climate change, and mitigate its effects, promoting increased well-being for coastal communities.

Resilience is greatest in reserves that are large long-established, well-managed and have full protections from all extractive activities including mining and its associated exploration.

In the face of devastating coral bleaching, depleting global fisheries, mangrove dieback and vanishing kelp forests, Australia's Commonwealth Marine Reserves are even more important than ever.

As an Australian who wants to buy sustainable local seafood for my family, and support local fishing jobs, I value the role marine parks can play in ensuring that's possible for the long term.

Therefore, I am opposed to any rollback of marine parks especially in critical areas like the Coral Sea, and I strongly support real protection from oil and gas mining in the uniquely biodiverse and productive Great Australian Bight which is currently at risk from oil exploration.

In particular:

1. I am strongly opposed to any reduction in fully-protected National Park zones in Australia's marine parks network - science tells us these no-take areas are critical if marine reserves are to give us full benefit;
2. The network should be science based, and therefore deliver adequately sized and located National Park zones (IUCN II/ 'sanctuaries') on both the continental shelf and in deeper waters;
3. I support the draft changes where new and/or increased National Park zones are proposed.

4. I reject the draft management plans where:

National Park zone areas are made smaller (eg: the Coral Sea Marine Park, Cape York West Marine Park, Gascoyne Marine Park, Argo Rowley Terrace Marine Park, the SW Corner Marine Park (Diamantina Fracture Zone section), Lord Howe Marine Park, Dampier Marine Park and Twilight Marine Park); or removed altogether (ie: the Wessels Marine Park, Geographe Bay Marine Park, the Peaceful Bay section of the SW Corner Marine Park); or where National Park zone areas have been moved to areas of far less ecological importance (eg: the Perth Canyon Marine Park, the Gulf of Carpentaria Marine Park); or where the Government has ignored the Review's recommendations for additional National Park zone areas (eg: in the Norfolk Island Marine Park).

5. I believe it is an unjustifiable example of poor governance that the Government has ignored the findings of its own Independent Review, and is proposing significantly less National Park zone protection than the Review recommended.

6. I am gravely disappointed and it diminishes my confidence in government and in particular in Parks Australia the 54,000 submissions to last year's first round of consultation the vast majority of which called for a significant increase in marine National Park zones, have not been taken into account.

7. I reject the claims by government that Habitat Protection zones are equal to National Park zone zones.

8. I urge the Government to make the following additional changes to the draft management plans:

a) That new marine National Park zones are declared:

In the northern section of the Kimberley Marine Park; at west Holmes and South Flinders Reefs in the Coral Sea; in the Norfolk Island Marine Park as recommended in the Review; adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park as recommended in the Review;

b) That every marine park under Review be afforded an adequately sized and located National Park zone (currently 16 of the 44 of have none) and;

c) That all marine parks should be fully protected from oil and gas mining as has been achieved in the Great Barrier Reef MP and the Coral Sea MP.

9. And finally, I impress upon Parks Australia to recognise that my submission should be treated with the same regard as others made in any other format. That just because it is made online facilitated by community organisation does not diminish its importance. I ask that you act on this and all other submissions equally.

Yours sincerely,