

Protecting and Conserving our Marine Natural Heritage in the Port Stephens/Great Lakes Marine Park

This Marine Park presents each one of us the opportunity of gifting to our children, grandchildren and future generations, a protected and productive marine environment.

The opportunity is with us right now to ensure that seriously declining marine biodiversity including edible fish stock, are given adequate sanctuary protection for long-term survival, regeneration and replenishment.

Our natural marine resources are not adequately protected just by declaring a marine park. This now requires an effective system of marine park zonings that will reduce human impacts on marine species, habitat and ecosystems. We must now be sure our input will deliver the best conservation outcomes that will also have the best chance of increasing natural fish stock.



The advice, vision and wisdom of marine science

In year 2000, 1600 world-wide marine scientists adopted a Consensus Statement supporting and recommending introduction of no-take marine reserves (sanctuaries).

In Australia, 115 leading marine scientists backed the Consensus Statement on sanctuaries; including 13 Professors, 11 Associate Professors and 91 PhD marine scientists.

In 2004, 17 top scientists from the US, UK and Australia reached consensus on how to avert the collapse of fishing populations by: Avoiding degradation of ecosystems; Minimising the risk of irreversible damage; Maintaining long-term socio-economic benefits without compromising ecosystems.

We must avoid a tokenistic “Claytons” model

A major problem exists for the Port Stephens/Great Lakes Marine Park. Sanctuaries comprising 20% of the park were inappropriately projected in January 2006 by the Fisheries Minister, pre-empting and compromising what should be a process determined by good science and transparency, not by ministerial decree.

The Minister's pre-emptive and tokenistic 20% won't deliver the marine conservation needed or the replenished fish stocks we all seek.

It is appropriate in the circumstances of this Park, that around one third of the Park should be in sanctuaries.

So, the opportunity is with us to either seek the best possible conservation outcomes with 33% sanctuaries or opt for continuing mediocrity.

**You can make a difference! Don't opt for a “Claytons” marine park
MAKE IT A 33% SANCTUARY PARK**

Why this Marine Park needs your support.

The appeal and prestige that comes with the higher levels of environmental awareness and the clean green image of a marine park also enhances the conservation integrity and international appeal of the whole Port Stephens/Great Lakes area. It becomes a promotional and marketing tool and attraction for the expectations of the more discerning tourist seeking responsible, aware and well- governed destinations. It can put our environmental credentials up there with The Great Barrier Reef, Uluru and Kakadu. Lets become an integral part of world best practice in environmental standards. That's the future.

What are marine Parks?

Marine parks aren't all sanctuaries, they are divided into 4 zones, these are:

- **MARINE SANCTUARY ZONES-** fully protected waters & species, these are no-take zones but allow tourism, swimming& diving
- **HABITAT PROTECTION ZONES-** allows recreational fishing, tourism, commercial trapping & gathering, but no trawling, netting or hauling
- **GENERAL USE ZONES-** allows recreational & commercial fishing, tourism
- **SPECIAL PURPOSE ZONES-** specific management purposes, marinas, etc.

Why are Sanctuary Zones so important?

They are no-take zones of fully protected waters that can best safeguard vulnerable and endangered marine life. Tourism, boating, snorkelling, diving and swimming can continue but fishing and mining are prohibited to enable fish stocks to replenish.

These are the zones that generate the most benefits for marine wildlife, marine habitats and whole ecosystems. Sanctuary Zones contribute to the health and productivity of the marine environment by providing:

- **protection for habitats** (seagrass meadows, reefs and other ecosystems)
- **protection for juvenile fish habitats and adult breeding grounds**
- **protection and recovery time for threatened species**
- **areas for research and education**
- **opportunities to better appreciate and enjoy the marine world**
- **new opportunities for nature-based tourism and eco-tourism**
- **conservation of cultural heritage.**

Other direct benefits from Sanctuary Zones

They have over time been shown to:

- **increase the number and size of fish populations**
- **increase survival and productivity in resident fish**
- **enable habitat and ecosystem recovery**
- **increase the number of fish and catches in surrounding waters.**



Scientists worldwide advocate that bioregions should, to be effective, have reserves or sanctuaries comprising 30% to 50%; for example, the Manning Shelf Bioregion from Nambucca Heads to Stockton, from which our marine park is derived.

Conservationists campaigning for this Park have considered the available scientific and socio-economic data and recommend Sanctuary Zones of 33% in this Park.

Don't let this Park be a "Claytons"
MAKE IT A 33% SANCTUARY!