



The Hon. Sussan Ley MP

Member for Farrer

Minister for the Environment

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A copy has been provided to the Prime Minister the Hon. Scott Morrison MP; Deputy Prime Minister the Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP; Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. David Littleproud MP; and Assistant Minister for Fisheries and Forestry Senator the Hon. Jonno Duniam.

Monday, April 4, 2022

Re: A commitment to the future of Australia's marine parks

Dear Minister Ley,

A joint letter from Seafood Industry Australia (SIA), Australian Fishing Trade Association (AFTA), Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation (ARFF), and the Boating Industry Association (BIA); the peak-bodies representing Australia's commercial and recreational seafood industries, and recreational boat users.

On behalf of the close to six million Australians who rely on our oceans for their livelihoods, recreation and sustenance, ahead of the 2022 Federal Election we write to ask for a commitment from the Liberal-National Coalition (Coalition) to make a commitment to maintain Australia's robust Marine Park network in its current form.

Collectively, our group of representative bodies support and advocate for the Marine Parks management plans, endorsed by the Senate in March 2018. The current plans recognise the conservation, social and economic importance of this vital piece of the Commonwealth estate, and the need for Australia's oceans to be cared for and managed as a shared resource.

As a group, we ask for stability regarding the management of our oceans, and we request an end to the insecurity and instability that has plagued the management of Australia's Commonwealth Marine Parks for more than a decade.

Australia's marine park coverage currently sits at 45 percent of our waters, an area of 744,000 square kilometres, a figure which is well-above the international 'Aichi' target of 10 per cent by 2020, and significantly ahead of the 30 per cent by 2030 target. Our oceans are a shared resource – for professional, recreational, and indigenous fishers, boating public, the community, and the environment, and need to be treated as such.

Following the introduction of the management plans more than five million recreational fishers and boaters have been able to enjoy Australia's oceans, with recognised health, social and economic benefits. While, the more than 13,000 Australians, who are totally reliant on our oceans for their livelihood, and the tens of thousands more who are employed downstream in the post-harvest and retail sectors, have had their futures secured. And, for those who cannot catch seafood themselves, the current management plans are helping Australia's commercial fishers to put more than one billion seafood meals on the table around the world each year.

Just like the broader community, Australia's commercial and recreational seafood industries, and recreational boating public care greatly about the health and sustainability of our oceans and fish-stocks. Our priority is the ocean. We advocate the health, sustainability, and future of our sea. It's our recreational space, livelihood, and the future livelihood of generations to come.

As a collective, we reiterate that the current management plans achieve an acceptable balance between sustainability, and the right of every Australian to catch fish, eat fish, recreate on, and make a living from the ocean. We ask you to support the request of close to six million Australians and pledge the Coalition's commitment to maintaining the current Commonwealth Marine Park management plans in their current form and without change.

Prior to the commencement of the election pre-poll, SIA, AFTA, ARFF and BIA will distribute policy scorecards based on the policy information political parties and independents provide. Should you wish not to advise of your policy, this will be noted as a failure to respond, and it will be up to our members how they interpret.

We look forward to discussing this with you further and welcome the opportunity to meet with you at a time that suits your schedule.

Sincerely,



Veronica Papacosta
CEO
Seafood Industry
Australia



Michal Starkey
President
Australian Fishing
Trade Association



Russel Conway
Chair
Australian
Recreational Fishing
Foundation



Neil Patchett
Co - GM
Boating Industry
Association