

Proposal to prepare six draft management plans for 44 Australian Marine Parks

Make a submission

Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water

Response received at:

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Response ID:

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- 1 Do you agree to the Privacy Collection Statement?
Yes
- 2 Confirm that you have read and understand this privacy notice.
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- 3 Please indicate how and if you want your submission published.
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North Queensland Conservation Council
- 5 Confirm that you have read and understand this declaration.
Yes
- 6 First name
Crystal
- 7 Last name

Falknau

8 Email

coordinator@nqcc.org.au

9 Who are you answering on behalf of?

Organisation

10 Organisation name

North Queensland Conservation Council

11 What sector best describes you or your organisation?

Conservation (including environmental NGOs)

12 What state or territory do you live in?

Queensland

13 Postcode

4810

14 Which Australian Marine Park network/s does your submission relate to?

Coral Sea Marine Park

15 Does your submission relate to the entire network/s selected or to specific park/s within those network/s?

Not answered

16 North Network Marine Parks

Not answered

- 17 North-west Network Marine Parks
Not answered
- 18 South-west Network Marine Parks
Not answered
- 19 Temperate East Network Marine Parks
Not answered
- 20 Would you like to upload a submission document?
Yes
- 21 Have you removed any identifying information from your submission?
Not answered
- 22 Upload a submission
Coral Sea Marine Park NQCC submission.pdf
- 23 Upload a submission
Not answered
- 24 Upload supporting file
Not answered
- 25 Upload supporting file
Not answered
- 26 Do you have any comments relating to the zoning and assigned IUCN categories for the selected network or marine park?
NQCC strongly supports a substantial increase in highly protected Marine National Park Zones (IUCN Category II), restoring and improving protections reduced in 2018. Zoning should deliver a comprehensive, adequate, representative and ecologically

connected network, prioritising under-protected reefs, cays, seamounts, troughs and deep-water habitats. Particular consideration should be given to the areas identified in our submission. All changes affecting Boot and Ashmore Reefs must respect the aspirations of the Mer Traditional Owners.

27 Do you have any comments relating to values and/or pressures within the selected network or marine park?

NQCC supports recognition of the Coral Sea's globally significant biodiversity, ecological connectivity, climate resilience, cultural values and importance to North Queensland communities. The values and pressures descriptions should better reflect climate change, marine heatwaves, coral bleaching, habitat damage, industrial fishing, shipping pollution, marine pest introductions and illegal fishing. Traditional Owner knowledge, rights and enduring connections to Sea Country should be explicitly recognised.

28 Would you like to provide comments relating to allowable activities and use of the selected network or marine park?

Yes

29 Which allowable activities would you like to comment on?

Commercial fishing

Research and monitoring

Mining operations (including exploration)

Commercial aquaculture

Recreational use (includes fishing)

30 Provide your comments about the selected activities.

NQCC supports non-extractive, low-impact activities, including research, education, diving, snorkelling, boating and nature-based tourism. Some recreational fishing access may be appropriate in specified areas, provided it does not undermine comprehensive, adequate and representative protection. Mineral exploration and extraction, bottom and mid-water trawling, purse-seine netting, demersal longlining and sea cucumber harvesting should be prohibited throughout the park. Stronger safeguards against shipping pollution, marine pests and illegal fishing are also needed.

31 Do you have any comments relating to management arrangements (including programs) under the current management plan for your selected network/s?

NQCC considers effective management, surveillance and compliance essential to achieving conservation outcomes, particularly given the Coral Sea's remoteness. We call for increased investment in illegal fishing enforcement, scientific and cultural monitoring, transparent reporting, interagency cooperation and adaptive management. Traditional Owners, scientists, regional organisations, tourism operators, fishers and other users must have meaningful opportunities to contribute to implementation and ongoing review.

32 Do you have any other comments you would like us to consider?

The review is an important opportunity to restore and improve protections reduced in 2018 and address mounting climate and industrial pressures. NQCC supports long-term, adequately resourced management that protects the Coral Sea's globally significant values while recognising compatible, low-impact uses. Appropriate structural adjustment assistance should be provided to commercial fishing operators demonstrably affected by conservation measures.

33 Do you have any other comments on the design and the future management of marine parks in the network?

Marine park design should prioritise ecological comprehensiveness, adequacy, representation and connectivity, including connections between the Coral Sea, Great Barrier Reef and neighbouring Pacific ecosystems. Management must be developed in genuine partnership with Traditional Owners, respect their rights and self-determined aspirations for Sea Country, and incorporate cultural knowledge alongside science. Long-term funding, robust monitoring, transparent reporting and adaptive management are essential to delivering meaningful conservation outcomes.