



Josh Wilson MP

Shadow Assistant Minister for the Environment

Veronica Papacosta
Seafood Industry Australia

Michael Starkey
Australian Fishing Trade Association

Neil Patchett
Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation

Russell Conway
Boating Industry Association

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Dear representatives,

Thank you for your joint letter in relation to Federal Labor's position on Commonwealth marine parks. In my role assisting Ms Butler as Labor's spokesperson for oceans I have been asked to respond.

Labor has always recognised the social, cultural, economic, and community significance of Australia's recreational and commercial fishing sectors, and seafood industry participants. We acknowledge your organisations as key stakeholder groups in respect of Australia's sustainable management of its diverse and extensive freshwater and saltwater environment – and we know that you are practically and philosophically committed to protecting Australia's biodiversity.

Labor acknowledges the vital role you played in working with us in government to design the national marine park network. This was a remarkable achievement of which we can all be proud. While in the lead-up to the 2019 election we believed there was scope to consider adjustments to marine park zoning, we accept that since that time the network has been delivered in a settled form. We agree that certainty in park management is critical and so we don't intend to revisit that matter outside of the statutory review processes.

As you and your members know better than most, our oceans and the biodiversity they support are under increasing pressure, including from plastic pollution and climate change, and it is vital we keep pursuing effective protection and restoration efforts. To that end, Labor supports the government's recent announcement of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Christmas Island marine parks, and a Labor government will ensure the statutory review processes of the national marine parks network are carried out in a timely and consultative manner, with any changes considered on the basis of science and stakeholder consultation. We will provide \$4 million to small states and territory governments, such as the Northern Territory, to address existing capacity shortcomings in managing state marine parks. We will be proactive in helping to develop the global treaty on marine plastic pollution that was recently agreed at UNEA 5.2.

I am sure you appreciate that Labor has consistently opposed the operation of foreign 'super trawlers' that would undermine the health of Australia's commercial and recreational fisheries, and we will give consideration in government to a framework that addresses the importation of seafood from fisheries in our region that involve illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing practices, noting this already occurs in the US and EU.

We are mindful of the harm caused by invasive marine species and have been critical of the government's failure to include any Australian marine species in its flawed Threatened Species Strategy 2015-2020.

Once again, thank you for your advocacy, and I look forward to working with you in future.

Yours sincerely,

Josh Wilson MP
Shadow Assistant Minister for the Environment