

7th September
Louise Antoniou

Senator McEwen, Chair
Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts
By email to eca.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator McEwen,

Please accept this submission to the inquiry into the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2008.

My name is Louise Antoniou and I live in Victoria. My pastime and my passion is the coast, and I occasionally enjoy the act of fishing. For this reason, I strongly support the health of our coast and studies in biodiversity.

However, although not directly affected by the proposed amendments to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975, I find the amendments unfair, unreasonable and un-Australian. As the GBRMPA is used as a template for other marine parks, I am concerned that this unjust legislation will soon affect Victorian waters.

The area of amendment that I am most concerned about is in regards to the definition of “fishing” – Amendment 9, subsection 3(1). How can one reasonably expect a coastal officer to know that a person has the ‘intent’ to fish? If I am carrying a fish finder on board travelling through a green zone does this mean I have ‘intentions’ of fishing? – absolutely not! This amendment is both extremely ambiguous and unfair.

I also support the amendment 5550 (version 1) proposed by Senator Macdonald and Senator Boswell where people who were previously convicted under Section 38CA have their convictions treated as spent convictions. Receiving a criminal conviction for fishing in a green zone, especially when one is unaware that they are actually breaking the law, is extremely harsh...and not even applied to some of the worst acts, like speeding on our roads and putting other peoples lives at risk.

Senator McEwen, you are scaring people away from our waters. Its time to give the residents of North Qld a ‘fair go’.

Yours Truly,
Louise Antoniou