

Hi,

My name is Warren Hughes and I am passionate about my fishing and spearfishing. I have lived on an island whilst growing up and have also lived on a boat for 2 years. My family has always had boats and we have always been fishing as a family. I currently have 2 boats and my wife and I are just about to buy a new 6m boat specifically to fish the reefs out from Cairns (where we live). I can still remember fishing with my grandfather catching my first flathead in Melbourne. I can also remember catching my first coral trout out the reef off Cairns in my dad's 17' Haines Hunter that we used to have. I could never sleep the night before a reef trip. Even now, I am still the same.

However, I was very pi*sed off with the whole marine parks shambles when they were updated. So much of the reef was locked up for good. I want to protect the reef and want **science based conservation.**

There are enough fishing regulations in place to protect the fish stocks from overfishing...green zones should not be used to regulate overfishing, **that's what fishing regulations are for.** You can still allow fishing whilst still protecting the reef.

My mate was fishing from an 8 foot tinny with an electric motor in a creek with his wife. The weather was calm so they went out the front and saw a car on the beach...he drove over to the car and it was a fisheries inspector...he asked the inspector if there was any good fishing spots around the area, and the fisheries inspector started filming him and his boat. The end result was him getting a criminal conviction for "allegedly fishing in a green zone"how stupid is that! He wasn't even fishing.

I would like to state that I completely agree with the following:

Criminal Convictions

This is the most unfair and stupid thing I have ever heard. These people were fishing – and from what I read many didn't even catch a fish. These people have all sorts of problems getting jobs visas and insurance - for fishing ! This was a mistake in making the law. If it's a mistake then the government needs to do the honest thing and fix it up. End of all the criminal records and the fines can stay – that's fair.

If it wasn't a mistake then it was on purpose then the people who drafted the laws and pulled the wool over the eyes of the politicians need to be addressed. A criminal record for fishing but no compulsory record for first offenders - even for theft or assault or worse. What are they thinking?

Powers to Inspect

From what I read this law sounds like the fishing inspectors will have more power to search and even frisk fishermen and women that the police even have with terrorist suspects. You would be giving incredible powers to a body that some say are out of control ... just for a few fish? This is out of balance and needs to be dropped.

Definition of fishing

The Act doesn't just ban fishing in a green zone, it bans doing anything like looking for a fish. That means turning on a sounder, which is a responsible act of safety is banned. Again a law that needs to be thrown out. This law was in the previous version – but so what? It's still wrong.

The definition will also ban glass bottomed boats, snorkelling, underwater observatories, and if a whale or dolphin, dugong or turtle surfaces, and you look at them you are done - it means that just looking at the water in a green zone would be illegal.

Legal Defence

As Senator Stephens points out, this act try to take away basic legal rights of defence. It says if you are in green zone you know the boundaries. This Bill takes away basic legal rights and is not fair or right. I ask you to strike out the clauses.

3 strikes and you are out

Three conviction in ten years and a lifetime ban? Again this is out of balance. Can you tell me one other area - like speeding fines where you lose your licence for life for one offence every 3.3 years? This is excessive and needs to be knocked out of the Act.

Precautionary Principle

This is a major problem. This Bill doesn't listen to the umpire. We complained that the green zones were not based on science – all the liars did was ask where we caught fish - saying they wanted to make sure they didn't take those areas - and that's how they made up the green zones. No science at all because they had none.

Then there was a review in 2006 and the GBRMPA was told to use 'transparent science'. But they don't want to listen to the umpire they want a law that says they don't have to use science. Again this clause needs to be struck out.

The goals

The biggest change is the goals. It suddenly changes from sharing and 'wise use' to conservation - a zoo a Museum and ordinary Australian who like fishing can go jump. This is only an anti fishing law - nothing else is effected. The reef is the most under fished reef in the world - less now since 2002.

They wont be happy until we are all vegetarians.

As Australian we have rights that other countries don't. here no one can own a beach or the ocean. But GBRMPA want to own it and lock us out of OUR park. Who voted for them? I didn't vote for an Animal Rights Party.

The Goal as it stands should say - - we need shared responsible wise use nothing less.

This Bill is dangerous for all of Australia . All the other EPA and marine parks follow the lead of GBRMPA. The last lot of zoning cost the government over \$250m. What will this cost our economy and our lifestyle?

Cheers

Warren Hughes