

Dear Senator McEwen

Please accept this submission to the inquiry into the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and other legislation Amendment Bill 2008. I regret this club has not had sufficient time to prepare a full submission due to the short period of time. I suggest that future submissions be given at least two months to allow clubs to contact their members and appraise them of the situation.

I write on behalf of the Cairns Bluewater Game Fishing Club Inc, a club affiliated with the Queensland Game Fishing Association and having over 100 members.

The club's greatest concern is the possible infringement of "looking for fish" in a green zone. These words should be removed from the Bill as they have a broad meaning. In Cairns, our green zones are very close to the coast and it is often necessary to traverse these zones en route to the blue zones. Boats will be carrying tackle, rods etc and using GPSs to navigate the reefs. After fishing, we often stop in the green zones on the way back to port for a swim or snorkel to cool off after a hot day on the water. On occasions we may be carrying fish that have been caught outside the green zones. Please ensure all these possibilities are considered.

Another concern is that a criminal conviction may be imposed if caught fishing in a green zone. I have hooked a fish in the blue zone (in a tournament) and been taken (over a 45min fight) very close to a green zone. When fighting a fish it is impossible to determine the border, nor does the angler or boat skipper have the time to enter co-ordinates into the GSP to verify the boat's position. There are no green zone lines on the water!! If I had entered the green zone I consider it would have been a great injustice to have been convicted of a criminal offence. The club does not agree that a fishing conviction should be a criminal offence.

Our club members are committed to fish conversation and practise tag and release. It is very rare that we see boats in green zones – everyone is aware of the restrictions and the need to protect the reef species. Nature protects the reef far better than we can – strong southerly winds prevent most boats going on the northern waters for at least eight months of the year. You can count the number of a member's fishing trips from January to September each year on one hand.

We have very few areas where we can now fish. Give us a break and don't make it any harder. This is a great recreational sport involving the whole family – it gets kids out into the fresh air away from the TV games, and provides bonding opportunities for mum and dad. The fishing industry in Cairns is worth many millions of dollars for tourism. We are the world's leading destination for black marlin – and the majority of these fish are tagged and released. Tackle shops and associated fishing companies are doing it tough – don't make it any worse.

Barbara  
*Barbara Leptig*  
*Secretary*  
*Cairns Bluewater Game Fishing Club Inc*