



CLARENCE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE

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SUBMISSION

Marine Parks

The Clarence Environment Centre has maintained a shop-front in Grafton for over 22 years, and has a proud history of environmental advocacy. The conservation of the Australia's natural environment has always been a priority, and we believe marine habitats to be every bit as important as those on land and must be conserved.

At the same time, as gravity ensures that everything flows downwards and ultimately into the oceans, that those marine ecosystems, which are critical to all other life on earth, are probably at even greater risk than those on land.

This in turn issues challenges that we simply have to face. Around the world fisheries have collapsed as a direct result of over-exploitation and pollution, so the establishment of conservation reserves that protect the full range of marine, and estuarine ecosystems is imperative.

If we wish to reap the bounty that the oceans can provide, we simply have to provide areas where aquatic species can breed. With ever rising numbers of people around the world that are either malnourished or dying of starvation, our leaders can no longer bow to political pressure, particularly from those who believe they have an exclusive right to kill fish for sport, or commercial gain that does not fully utilise the product.

Conservation areas, are not "locked up" wasted resources as some would have us believe. They are breeding grounds that will ensure a food resource for future generations, while providing passive recreation and an opportunity for everyone to marvel at the diversity of life these oceans support. They attract tourism, local and international, something that benefits the Australian economy to a far greater extent than fishing.

Rather than create duplication, the Clarence Environment Centre fully supports the submissions made by the North Coast Environment Council and the Nature Conservation Council.

We thank the Minister for this opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely
John Edwards
Honorary Secretary
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