



Hon Andrew McNamara MP
Member for Hervey Bay



**Queensland
Government**

**Minister for Sustainability,
Climate Change and Innovation**

Ref: BNE30428-5
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Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie *Neil*,

I refer to your letter dated 27 February 2008 to the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries, concerning the Moreton Bay Marine Park zoning plan review (Petition Number 978-07). As this matter falls within my portfolio, your letter has been forwarded to me for response.

The response to the draft zoning plan for the Moreton Bay Marine Park, which was recently released for public consultation, has been overwhelming. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has received more than 8,000 submissions on the draft zoning plan, including over 6,000 supporting increased protection of the marine park. The EPA is now recording and analysing all the information provided to produce a final zoning plan.

The overarching aim of the draft zoning plan which was released for public comment is to protect the Moreton Bay Marine Park's unique biodiversity and values – while allowing for its sustainable use by all groups, now and into the future. The draft zoning plan was prepared with the utmost technical and scientific rigour and reflects world's best practice in marine reserve design. The draft followed a series of 13 Scientific Guiding Principles provided by an independent Expert Advisory Panel and considered the full range of the Government's regional, national and international conservation obligations.

One of these guiding principles provided by the Expert Advisory Panel was to protect a minimum of 10 percent of each of the marine park's 16 different habitat types in green "no take" zones. The guiding principles also recommended increasing this level of protection for particularly vulnerable habitats. It is important to highlight that under the current zoning plan, 11 of the 16 habitat types are afforded no protection.

The draft zoning plan proposes that 15 percent of the marine park be conserved in green zones. This plan ensures that examples of all of the 16 habitat types are protected. The draft zoning plan also proposes a network of other zone types which together provide a holistic plan for managing the marine park over the next decade.

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The EPA has considered an extensive amount of data and consulted widely to ensure the draft zoning plan has the least possible impact on the wide range of people who use and value Moreton Bay Marine Park. For example, the EPA has analysed more than 15 years of recreational fishing data provided by the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, as well as Australian National Sportsfishing Association tagging records and 6,500 entries to an EPA survey, to successfully minimise the impacts to the recreational fishing community. According to this data, the proposed 15 percent green zones are estimated to have a direct impact on just 5 percent of recreational fishing trips in the marine park.

It has been reported that the proposal prepared by the Moreton Bay Access Alliance (MBAA) uses the same scientific guiding principles as the Government's zoning plan and affords greater protection to the marine park. Indeed the MBAA proposal does show almost 70 percent alignment with the proposed green zones in the draft zoning plan; however, there are also a number of areas where the MBAA proposal falls short.

The MBAA proposal referred to in the E-Petition does not meet the Scientific Guiding Principles established for the review. Under the MBAA proposal, half of the marine park's 16 habitat types have less than the target 10 percent protection in green zone. Three of these habitat types have only three percent protection; therefore providing less than adequate protection for almost one quarter of the marine park's habitats. The proposal suggests green zones in some areas which are not suitable for this zone type, such as shipping channels and mooring areas. It also fails to propose the full range of yellow, light blue and dark blue zones which are essential for a complete zoning plan.

Effective and rigorous consultation has been a cornerstone of this review process from its very inception. The EPA has been working closely with all key stakeholder groups, including the MBAA, and members of the wider public to ensure that all views and opinions are carefully considered during the review. The EPA will continue to work collaboratively to finalise a zoning plan which meets the review's Scientific Guiding Principles while balancing the marine park's current use and its long-term health for all to enjoy and share.

I hope the above information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Andrew McNamara". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

**Andrew McNamara MP
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Climate Change and Innovation**