

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW government goes against the tide of support for the effectiveness of marine protected areas

The NSW government's in principle support for a five-year moratorium on marine protected areas shows again how willing the government is to sell out the environment for its own political gain, according to the Nature Conservation Council of NSW.

The government's decision to support the Shooters' Party's push for an end to the vital protection of the unique aquatic environments and marine life off our coasts is firmly out of step with public opinion and the advice of scientists from around the world.

"Marine species and ecosystems are at risk of degradation by overfishing, pollution, climate change and many other human activities. Marine parks are the most effective way of protecting our oceans and the marine life that call them home," said chief executive officer Pepe Clarke.

"NSW will be left adrift by ignoring the conservation value of marine parks and sanctuary areas. Only last month, more than 245 scientists from 35 countries confirmed their support for the creation of large-scale ocean marine parks as the best way to help fish stocks recover and restore ecosystems.

"Last year a scientific review of 140 studies on 124 marine sanctuaries across 29 countries found marine sanctuaries contributed significantly to an increase in biomass, species richness and organism size.

"NSW has a mere 6.7 per cent of its marine waters designated as fully protected marine sanctuaries. This is far below the minimum long term target of 20% of global marine waters preserved as sanctuaries as set by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

"Local communities have also embraced the benefits of marine parks and sanctuaries. In the latest *Who cares for the environment survey*, an overwhelming 85% of people surveyed said they would like to see some marine areas protected.

"The Nature Conservation Council is calling on the NSW government to heed the views of the community and scientists and withdraw its support for a moratorium on marine protected areas," he said.

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