

To Senator McEwen, Chair
Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts

Dear Senator McEwen,

Please accept this submission to the inquiry into the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2008.

I am a recreational fisherman with five kids and fifteen grandchildren and I want to be able to continue to take them fishing. My main pastime is fishing and I am a member of two fishing clubs.

I was annoyed with the excessive amount of marine parks when they came in years ago and the underhanded way it occurred. I am all for conservation but the barrier reef is not anywhere near extinction and even if global warming is true and happening, it will not save the reef.

Criminal Convictions

This is the most stupid thing I have ever heard. These people have all sorts of problems getting jobs, visas and insurance, from fishing, or supposedly fishing, in a prohibited zone! There was a mistake in making the law, and 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.

Criminals accused of assault, thieving, drink driving and many other crimes get away with no record. FISHING !!! 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 frisk fishermen and women than the police even have with terrorist suspects. You would be giving incredible powers to a body that is out of control, just for a few fish that may be caught? Have you thought of the danger you are putting the individuals in that have to carry out these stupid laws? This is out of balance and needs to be totally removed.

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

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 tries to take away basic legal rights of defence. It says if you are in a 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 convictions 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 license for life for one offence every 3.3 years? This is excessive and needs to be removed from the Act.

Precautionary Principle

This is a major problem. This Bill doesn't listen to the umpire so let's go around the umpire by calling it something else. We complained that the green zones were not based on science and wanted to make sure they didn't take those areas and all the liars did was ask where fish were caught. That's how they made up the green zones. No science was used at all because they had none. This shows how underhanded it was. 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 so 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 Australians who like fishing are ignored. This is only an anti fishing law - nothing else is affected, yet. The reef is the most under fished reef in the world - less now since 2002 due to fuel prices, fear of fishing in the wrong area and the ever increasing amount of time when it is impossible to get to the reef due to adverse weather. To remove some of the perceived fishing pressure, stop the export of live reef fish.

They won't be happy until we are all vegetarians. Piece by piece, GBRMPA is working its way to total closure of the park. Fishing first, and then what?, the tourist industry.

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.

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

This Bill is dangerous for all of Australia. All the other EPA and marine parks follow the lead of GBRMPA like lost sheep. It will cover the whole country eventually.

The last lot of zoning cost the government over \$250m. What will this cost to our economy and our lifestyle?

Bob Avery