



## **NSW AMSA Position Statement on Marine Protected Areas and No-take Marine Sanctuaries MAY 2008**

### **1. Purpose**

The Australian Marine Sciences Association (AMSA) is Australia's largest professional association of marine scientists with over 900 members nationally and 122 members of the New South Wales' branch.

This Position Statement has been produced to state the views of the New South Wales branch of AMSA about:

- the future of Marine Parks in New South Wales
- the need for no-take Marine Sanctuaries to be an essential component of all Marine Parks in New South Wales
- the weight of scientific evidence that justifies the use of Marine Parks and no-take Marine Sanctuaries as a management tool for biodiversity conservation

The New South Wales branch of AMSA is concerned about the lack of progress in fully implementing a State-wide system of Marine Parks in New South Wales and the lack of scientific rigour in recent public debates about the merit of Marine Parks in New South Wales.

The views expressed in this Position Statement are consistent with the position of the national body of AMSA in its Position Statement on Marine Protected Areas (2002)<sup>1</sup>, and the position statements delivered by organizations of marine scientists throughout the world, including the American Association for the Advancement of the Sciences Scientific Consensus Statement on Marine Reserves and Marine Protected Areas (2001)<sup>2</sup>, the Scientific Consensus Statement on Marine Ecosystem-Based Management (2005)<sup>3</sup> and the European Scientists' Consensus Statements on Marine Reserves (2007)<sup>4</sup>.

The New South Wales branch of AMSA believes that marine scientists have an important role to play in conservation and sustainable use, by providing the much needed data and rigorous advice required for planning and management.

### **2. Background**

New South Wales covers a breadth of latitudes from sub-tropical, warm temperate to cool temperate. The coastal, estuarine and marine waters of the State include many different habitats such as saltmarsh, mangroves, seagrass, soft-sediment, beaches, rocky reefs, kelp forests, sponge gardens, and coral-dominated reefs. A great diversity of species occur in these habitats. These environments provide great enjoyment to the people of New South Wales and visitors, as well as being a source of income and a treasured way of life for many.

The estuarine and coastal environments of New South Wales are at risk from a range of human activities such as:

- alteration of catchments – resulting in changes to the quality and quantity of water flowing to the sea
- disposal of sewage and other wastes
- commercial and recreational fishing
- coastal development
- port construction

- shipping and recreational boating
- activities leading to the introduction of exotic marine species, and
- activities causing human-induced climate change

### **3. Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)**

MPAs are areas of the sea, estuaries, or coastal waters in which human uses are managed. MPAs vary from large areas zoned for a range of uses (called Marine Parks in New South Wales) to small areas established for a specific purpose (e.g. Aquatic Reserves). Marine Parks include some area zoned as no-take reserves (called Sanctuary Zones in New South Wales) where no extractive activities are permitted. In New South Wales the total area of Sanctuary Zones represents 6.5% of coastal and estuarine waters.

Over 30 years of quantitative research and hundreds of published studies have critically evaluated the effectiveness of no-take marine sanctuaries as a conservation tool. The general consensus from this immense body of work throughout the world is that no-take marine sanctuaries can facilitate long-term conservation of biodiversity, protection for threatened species and improved natural resource management<sup>5</sup>. This body of evidence indicates that the same outcomes will occur in New South Wales.

Establishment of marine sanctuaries is typically accompanied by an increase in the abundance and size of exploited species, increased fecundity of some target species, alteration of ecological processes and marine community structure and increases in catch rates of exploited species in the waters adjacent to the marine sanctuary. Marine sanctuaries also provide:

- opportunities for education and research in natural, undisturbed settings
- improved scientific understanding of marine ecosystems
- the enriched opportunities for non-extractive human recreational activities
- enhanced eco-tourism activity that benefits regional communities

### **4. Our Position**

We, the undersigned marine scientists of New South Wales and elsewhere in Australia, believe that

1. MPAs (and associated sanctuary zones) are an essential management tool for conserving biodiversity and managing human uses of marine and estuarine environments.
2. A complete State-wide system of marine parks is needed in New South Wales to comprehensively represent the marine and estuarine biodiversity of each bioregion;
3. In view of our limited ability to predict changes in human activities and global climate, MPAs are the most suitable means of precautionary conservation of marine and estuarine biodiversity;
4. Critiques of the necessity of MPAs and in particular of sanctuary zones should include rigorous peer-reviewed evidence or empirical data testing null hypotheses, as well as a full consideration of the scientific literature;
5. MPAs should be large enough to meet their conservation objectives;
6. MPAs must be adequately resourced from the start to ensure they are properly managed and to protect them from illegal harvesting;
7. MPAs should include well-designed scientific monitoring programmes that can document ecosystem changes following protection to inform managers and the wider community on their performance.


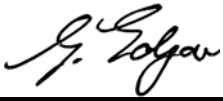
## 5. Signatories

The following scientists have approved this Position Statement:

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Qualification</i>	<i>Institution</i>
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Additional signatories

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This Position Statement has been prepared and proposed, after extensive consultation with NSW AMSA, by:



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<sup>1</sup> AMSA Position Statement on Marine Protected Areas (2002) - <https://www.amsa.asn.au/PDF-files/Submissions/Marine-Protected-Areas.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> American Association for the Advancement of the Sciences Scientific Consensus Statement on Marine Reserves and Marine Protected Areas (2001) - <http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/Consensus/consensus.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> McLeod, K. L., J. Lubchenco, S. R. Palumbi, and A. A. Rosenberg. 2005. Scientific Consensus Statement on Marine Ecosystem-Based Management. Signed by 221 academic scientists and policy experts with relevant expertise and published by the Communication Partnership for Science and the Sea at <http://compassonline.org/?q=EBM>

<sup>4</sup> European Scientists' Consensus Statement on Marine Reserves – [http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/eeem/gsp/mem/marine\\_reserves\\_consensus.pdf](http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/eeem/gsp/mem/marine_reserves_consensus.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> An extensive list of publications relating to marine protected areas can be found at: “A review of benefits of Marine Protected Areas and related zoning considerations” (<http://www.mpa.nsw.gov.au/pdf/A-review-of-benefits-MPAs.pdf>) and “Scientific literature on marine protected areas” (<http://www.mpa.nsw.gov.au/pdf/MPA-literature-listing.pdf>)