



# MARINE RESERVES

## Protecting our marine ecosystems

Unique. Natural. Protected.

Australia has unique marine ecosystems, but they are at risk from climate change, oil and gas exploration & production, overfishing and other challenges. The Greens will reinstate management plans for Australia's world leading network of marine reserves, protecting valuable marine ecosystems for current and future generations.

Australia had in place a world-leading network of marine reserves, before the Abbott-Turnbull Government effectively suspended them.

The Greens will protect Australia's marine habitats by reinstating management plans for our marine reserves at a cost of **\$66 million**, and provide **\$69.5m in compensation** for displaced fisheries. The Greens will also:

- **Provide \$8m in additional funding for coral bleaching research**, to improve our understanding of this critical threat.
- **Boost shark research by \$6m**, to give us a better understanding of key species.
- **Protect sharks from finning at a cost of \$2.5m**, to remove a key threat to sharks.
- **Apply mandatory country of origin seafood labelling** so that Australians can trust where their food is coming from, and
- **Ban supertrawlers**, to prevent further damage to key ecosystems.

### > THREATS TO AUSTRALIA'S MARINE ECOSYSTEMS

Australia's oceans cover more than eight million square kilometres,<sup>1</sup> with habitats from tropical marine to sub-Antarctic, including extensive coral reefs.

Australia's oceans are home to 11 per cent of the world's known marine species, and support over 5,000 species of fish, and about 30 per cent of the world's sharks and rays.<sup>2</sup>

The risks to Australia's marine environments are growing as threats increase. Climate change impacts, overfishing, marine pollution and debris, commercial shipping and offshore oil and gas exploration & production can have devastating impacts on fragile marine ecosystems.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Geoscience Australia, [Oceans and Seas](#).

<sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Australia's biodiversity](#).

<sup>3</sup> World Wildlife Fund for Nature, [Marine threats](#).

### > ATTACKS ON A WORLD CLASS MARINE NETWORK

In 2012, the Australian Government announced the world's largest network of marine reserves.<sup>4</sup> This was an important step in protecting our incredible marine environments. It followed more than a decade of painstaking scientific assessment, and consultation with stakeholders across a wide range of sectors.

In 2013, the Abbott Government suspended management plans for the extended system of marine reserves, before they had even commenced. This left the marine reserves as just lines on maps and vulnerable to damage. Now the Coalition will not release their review of the reserves until after the election. Australia's unique marine ecosystems deserve better protection.

### > ACTION TO PROTECT MARINE ECOSYSTEMS

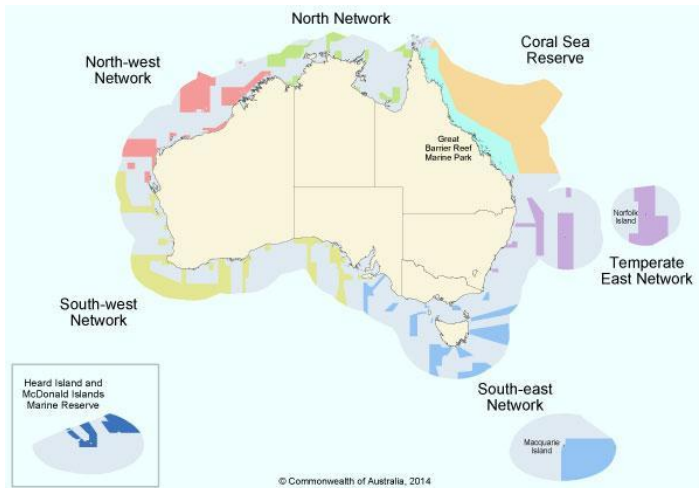
The Greens will make management plans operational immediately right around Australia. This will protect Australia's unique marine ecosystems for future generations, protecting them from overfishing, exploitation and other risks. Reinstating the management plans will cost **\$67 million from 2016-17 to 2019-20**.

### > ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ALL AROUND AUSTRALIA

Reinstating management plans for the network of marine reserves will have a crucial impact for ecosystems and species around Australia. The network covers 3.1 million square kilometres.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> ABC, [World's largest marine reserve network unveiled](#), 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Department of the Environment, [Commonwealth marine reserves – Overview](#).



Department of the Environment, [Commonwealth marine reserves](#).

Among the many areas where increased protection will be available are:

**New South Wales:** Lord Howe Commonwealth Marine Reserve provides protection for an area that is biologically important for protected humpback whales, a major seabird breeding area, and a key location for black cod. The reserve will provide greater protection and connectivity than the two previous reserves. Over 70,000 km<sup>2</sup> will be protected, in which many forms of commercial fishing, aquaculture, mining and oil and gas exploration and development will be prohibited.<sup>6</sup>

**South Australia:** Murat Commonwealth Marine Reserve in the Great Australian Bight covers 938km<sup>2</sup>, and management plans will prohibit recreational and commercial fishing, and any new mining activities. This will provide important protection for threatened Australian sea lion and other species including white sharks, short-tailed shearwaters and Caspian terns.<sup>7</sup>

**Western Australia:** Gascoyne Commonwealth Marine Reserve covers 81,766 km<sup>2</sup>, and reinstating management plans will provide important protection for flatback and hawksbill turtles, and whale sharks.<sup>8</sup>

**Queensland:** Adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef, the Coral Sea region is recognised for its unique environmental values, and diverse array of coral reefs. The Coral Sea Commonwealth Marine Reserve covers 989,842 km<sup>2</sup>, and reinstating management plans in areas that are not fully protected at the

moment will provide important protection for endangered turtles and seabird species.<sup>9</sup>

**Northern Territory:** The Wessel Commonwealth Marine Reserve covers 5,908 km<sup>2</sup>, and will provide greater protection for threatened hawksbill, olive ridley, green and flatback turtles, and other species.<sup>10</sup>

## > A FAIR COMPENSATION PACKAGE

As part of this initiative, the Greens will fund compensation for commercial fishers impacted by the reserve system. This will be in line with the compensation approach taken by the previous Government, at a cost of \$69.5 million.

## > INDEPENDENT ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Currently, the body responsible for managing the health and safety of offshore petroleum activity is also responsible for environmental approvals. This system is flawed and lacks transparency. The Greens will provide stronger environmental protections by ensuring that an appropriately qualified independent body undertakes assessment and regulation of any offshore petroleum activity. This will ensure greater protection for our precious marine ecosystems.

## > BETTER MARINE RESEARCH AND FISHERIES PROTECTION

The Greens will also work to make sure we have a better understanding, and protections of, key parts of our marine ecosystems. We will do this by:

- **Providing \$8m in additional funding for coral bleaching research.** As well as devastating the Great Barrier Reef, coral bleaching has impacted reefs around Australia. The Greens will provide an extra \$2m a year to CSIRO, to improve our understanding of how climate change will impact reefs.
- **Boosting shark research by \$6m.** Sharks are crucial to our marine environments, but there is still much we don't know. Additional funding will be provided to support tagging programs and satellite monitoring.
- **Protecting sharks from finning at a cost of \$2.5m.** Sharks with their fins cut off die a slow and horrible death. The Greens will work with state and territory governments to require all sharks landed to be caught with fins attached, and identify the best way to ban the possession, sale, or trade of shark fins in Australia.
- **Applying mandatory country of origin seafood labelling.** We will introduce mandatory national country of origin labelling for seafood, using Australian

<sup>6</sup> *Temperate East Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network – Management Plan 2014-24*, p. 26.

<sup>7</sup> Department of Environment, '[Murat Commonwealth Marine Reserve](#)'.

<sup>8</sup> [North-West Commonwealth Marine Reserve Management Plan](#), p. 73.

<sup>9</sup> *Coral Sea Commonwealth Marine Reserve – Management Plan 2014-24*, p. 59.

<sup>10</sup> *North Commonwealth Marine Reserve – Management Plan 2014-24*, p. 69.

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Fish Names Standards. There is already a scheme operating in the Northern Territory, and a national scheme will help Australians buy fish that meets the right standards.

- **Banning supertrawlers.** The Greens will stop fishing by supertrawlers such as the *Geelong Star*, which is causing immense environmental damage.

## > COMMITMENT TO PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

The Greens are committed to protecting our world class marine ecosystems. The Coalition has directly attacked environmental protections, tearing away years of work and putting priceless ecosystems at risk. The ALP has supported the Coalition to retrospectively approving offshore petroleum activity that didn't have environmental approvals.<sup>11</sup> The Greens will take real action to protect our marine environment, not only ensuring our marine reserves are made operational but also protecting key species and ecosystems.

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<sup>11</sup> ABC, [Offshore petroleum leases in marine parks extended without proper approval.](#)