



THE HON VERITY FIRTH MP

Minister for Women Minister for Science & Medical Research Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer) Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change, Environment & Water (Environment)
In reply please quote: MD07/4599

Mr Jack Tait
pamandjack1@yahoo.com.au

Dear Mr Tait

18 DEC 2007

Thank you for your various further emails expressing concerns about marine parks in NSW. Please also consider this as a reply to your email sent to the Premier, the Hon Morris Iemma MP, on this issue.

Following the meeting you attended in my office, I understand you have had follow-up discussions with my Policy Adviser, Amy Persson, who would have advised you on the current situation with regard to marker buoys, fish trapping in the Clyde River, the Durras boat ramp and various other matters arising from the meeting.

As you may be aware, Dr Brendan Kelaher was recently appointed as the Manager of Batemans Marine Park. I am very pleased about the appointment of Dr Kelaher, who has a strong background in marine biology research and has worked at the Centre for Advanced Study of Ecology and Biodiversity in Chile, the State University of New York and most recently at the University of Technology, Sydney. If you require further information about operational matters in the Marine Park please contact Dr Kelaher on 4476 4800.

In regard to the recent conference paper presented by Professor Kearney, to which you refer, there are many scientists who disagree with these views. There is now broad, world-wide scientific support for marine protected areas as an essential part of realising the benefits of conservation and sustainable use of marine environments. The support from large numbers of marine scientists is demonstrated by several national and international 'consensus statements' that contend that marine protected areas are an essential component of effective marine conservation.

I would also like to point out that marine parks are not solely about preserving fish stocks. They are aimed at preserving and enhancing the whole spectrum of marine life and marine ecosystems. Marine parks and their zoning plans primarily aim to protect representative examples of the full range of biodiversity (the ecosystems, habitats and species), while providing for ongoing sustainable uses. Once this primary aim is met, secondary aims that focus on particular groups or species or habitats, such as threatened species, are then considered.

The establishment and zoning of our six marine parks in NSW has taken place using the best available science, together with an exhaustive process of obtaining community information and views. The NSW Government continues to use science in

the planning and management of our marine parks, and has an ongoing research and monitoring program that will improve marine park management into the future.

Creating marine parks and aquatic reserves is not the only action being pursued to protect and improve marine environments in NSW. Various other mechanisms are in place to support marine conservation generally, and complement marine parks, by tackling the range of threats to our marine environment. Improved commercial fisheries management is one example. Another significant example is the many programs being put in place by Catchment Management Authorities to deal with run-off and sedimentation of our coastal rivers and estuaries.

We are faced with a range of degraded marine environments, increasing populations using coastal waters and resources, and climate change stressing the resilience of our marine ecosystems. In this context, marine parks are an essential part of the overall answer to providing a good quality marine environment for future generations to enjoy.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Verity Firth', with a large, stylized initial 'V'.

Verity Firth