

An underwater photograph showing two divers swimming in clear blue water. The diver in the foreground is wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt and red shorts, with a black mask and fins. The diver in the background is wearing a blue and white striped shirt and dark shorts, with a green mask and fins. In the lower right foreground, a large sea turtle with a brown and white patterned shell is swimming over a sandy seabed with some green seagrass.

Community support for marine sanctuaries



SAVE OUR MARINE LIFE

saveourmarinelife.org.au

COMMUNITY CONSENSUS

Australians are enthusiastic supporters of marine sanctuaries, particularly once they have experienced them first hand. They make their support known through surveys, at public events, in the hundreds of thousands of submissions sent during consultation processes, and in their communications with their local MPs.

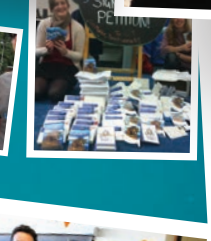
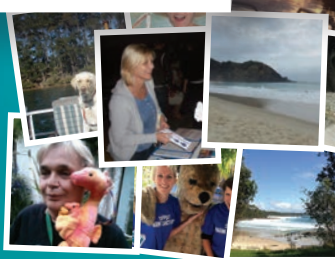
"As an ex professional fisherman, I have seen a lot of damage done. Sanctuaries are essential."

Chris - fisherman



"Sanctuary zones aren't restrictions, they are enhancements."

Ginny - yachting instructor



- Middle Australia is overwhelmingly supportive of sanctuaries, as shown repeatedly in qualitative and quantitative research.
- The vast majority of recreational fishers are overwhelmingly supportive of sanctuaries, with every published scientific and government survey of fishers confirming this fact.
- There is national and international consensus among scientists that sanctuaries benefit marine life and have socio-economic benefits to the community.
- All sides of politics support sanctuaries. Our national network was initiated by the Howard Coalition Government, with the full 60 marine parks finalised by the Gillard Labor Government. Now, despite devastating cuts to sanctuary protection, the Morrison Government has made these parks operational on the water – the world's largest marine parks network.

- Leading up to the 2012 declaration of the national network, more than 750,000 Australians made submissions, showing more than 95% support for sanctuaries.
- More than 175,000 people from all walks of life – fishers, divers, snorkellers, sailors, surfers, business owners, families, even ocean lovers living nowhere near the coast – have joined Save our Marine Life, with a 2014 survey revealing more than one third are recreational fishers.
- Thousands of Australians have joined Divers for Sanctuaries, and the majority of dive businesses in Australia have signed the Dive Industry Statement for Sanctuaries. The dive industry alone contributes an estimated \$4.2 billion to the Australian economy each year.

MIDDLE AUSTRALIA SUPPORTS SANCTUARIES

There is widespread available evidence of the breadth of support, as well as awareness of the benefits of marine sanctuaries.

- Quantitative research (Essential Research 2009) found 77 percent of Australians support 30 percent or more of our oceans being protected from over fishing and other exploitation.
- Across the spectrum from those who never fish to those who fish regularly, more than half of the Australian community believe at least 50 percent and as high as 60 percent or more of our oceans should be protected (Essential Research 2009).
- In two key NSW marine parks – Solitary Islands and Jervis Bay – where local opinion had been mixed particularly during the establishment period, government-commissioned surveys found support for the parks is now high across local communities, with support for sanctuaries at 80 percent or higher (McGregor Tan Research 2008).
- Three years after sanctuary-level protection of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park was increased to 33 percent, a survey of recreational fishers found the majority believed the rezoning was necessary and had little impact on their fishing (Sutton 2009).
- Qualitative research has found widespread concern that so little of Australia's oceans are protected from the impacts of oil and gas drilling, and over-fishing (Essential Research 2008).
- In quantitative research (Essential Research 2009) of people who fish, and those unaligned to environment groups, were asked how much of Australia's oceans should be protected. Few nominated low levels of protection (20 percent or less) and most supported very high levels of protection (50 plus percent).
- Qualitative research in Brisbane and Gladstone (Essential Research 2012) found almost universal agreement that sanctuaries protecting feeding and breeding areas are necessary and beneficial.
- A majority of Brisbane residents agreed that marine protected areas help to sustain fishing and the fishing industry, while in regional areas people nominated enhanced tourism opportunities as a further benefit of marine protected areas (Essential Research 2012).

“We live on the veranda of the world's greatest island. It's our birthright to have a clean ocean, to catch a feed, to interact with nature. And, like any birthright, we have to safeguard it.”

Tim Winton, Author



SAVE OUR MARINE LIFE saveourmarinelife.org.au