

MP Action Pack cover letter:

Dear Save Our Marine Life supporter

Thank you for registering to call or visit your local MP to let them know how important sanctuaries for marine really are.

Every single call or visit to our MPs will filter back to Environment Minister Tony Burke and give him the courage to create history by announcing ground-breaking sanctuaries in the South West.

Tony Burke has started the process, and draft maps of marine sanctuaries have been put out for public consultation – we're really close to having him announce this landmark environment decision. But we need to make sure he gets it right.

A network of marine sanctuaries in Australia's South West that would do for marine life what saving the Daintree did for the survival of rainforests.

We need you to do just one of two things:

- 1) Phone your local MP, or**
- 2) Meet with your MP – which will get back to Tony Burke in a powerful and convincing way**

We've created a "how to" pack to help you in your discussions with your MP.

Together we can help Tony make a historical decision.

Good luck.

Save our Marine Life Team

MP Action Pack toolkit:

Talking To MPs – Tool Kit

How to Visit a Politician

In Australia, the job of our elected Members of Parliament in the House of Representatives is to represent the interests of everyone in their electorate. They are your voice in Parliament.

We want marine sanctuaries established off the coast of SW Australia to help save our marine life, 90% of which is unique. We want to help encourage diversity in our waters and ensure the survival of our unique marine species.

We've put together this briefing note to help you along.

To be your voice in Parliament, your MP needs to know what you want.

To help tell your MP what you want, follow this easy step-by-step guide.

STEP 1 – How to make a call to register your views or make an appointment

Contact your MP's electorate office. You can call, email or write.

You can find the phone number and address of your MP's electorate on the Save Our Marine Life website.

Your call/email/letter could focus on:

- Outlining that protecting Australia's unique environment is important to you, and you would like to discuss greater protection for marine life in south-west Australia.
- Mention some of the benefits of establishing marine sanctuaries such as:
 - Less than 1% is protected but up to 90% of marine life is unique – a far greater level than is found on the Great Barrier Reef.
 - Our South West waters will be the best region that Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke will make decisions on – improving protection of the marine environment is an election commitment.
 - Two of only three feeding areas in Australia for the rare and endangered Blue Whale are in the South West – the Perth Canyon and near Kangaroo Island in SA.
 - There are 10 iconic feeding and breeding areas for marine life in the South West, including a submerged mountain range over 7000 metres deep that supports deep diving whales, seals, turtles and dolphins.

- Sanctuaries would boost tourism revenue by 20% in the first year they are created, a value injection for the regional economy – an independent economic study by the Allen Consulting Group found this.
- More and bigger fish are found on the edges of sanctuaries – experienced fishers know this.
- Sanctuaries prevent extinctions – world first research by the University of Queensland in 2009 found this.
- Ask your MP for an appointment

Here's a sample letter you could adapt:

Dear MP,

I am writing to you to seek your support and the support of your party for the establishment of marine sanctuaries in Australia's south-west to help better protect our marine life for the benefit of future generations.

Australia has most unique floral and fauna, and in south-west Australian waters, 90% of the marine life is unique – But sadly, only 1% is protected.

Sanctuaries prevent extinction, but they also produce more and bigger fish that will help the fishing industry, while simultaneously boosting tourism and injecting much revenue and jobs in the region.

The science evidence is clear about how to ensure our oceans and marine life remain healthy into the future.

Federal environment minister Tony Burke is inspired by the cause, but as my local MP, I would like to talk to you about the cause and ask for your support in this landmark campaign that will help ensure the future prosperity of the South-West and protect more unique marine life than is found on the Great Barrier Reef.

Yours sincerely

Call your MP's electorate office:

Follow up your email/letter to your MP with a phone call. You will probably speak to the electorate officer or personal assistant. Request a meeting to discuss SW Marine Sanctuaries with your MP.

Mention that you may discuss this important community issue with your local paper/radio/TV.

When your MP appointment is secured, make sure you get written confirmation.

STEP 2 – At your meeting with the MP:

Arrive on time. Take your meeting email confirmation with you. Be prepared – take some information from the Save Our Marine Life website with you.

1. **Time limit** - ask the MP how much time is available for discuss (eg 30 mins)
2. **Introduction** - “Thank you for making time to see me/us. As supporters of the Save Our Marine Life campaign, we are here because we want to see Australia’s unique marine species protected now and into the future.
3. **Tell them where they can find more information about marine life in south-west Australia – give them the website www.saveourmarinelife.org.au to find out more information.**
4. **Explain why it is important to your community** – This helps the economy, tourism, diving and fishing industries. Sanctuaries would boost tourism revenue by 20% in their first year alone, while the biggest and best fish are found just outside of marine sanctuaries.
5. **Ask your MP to support the establishment of the marine sanctuaries** – “I ask you to actively support the establishment of marine sanctuaries in the South-West, because it offers long-term environmental and economic benefits to the region, and will help protect more unique species than is found on the Great Barrier Reef. Here are some things you can do to help show your support:”
 - a. **Sign up as a supporter on the Save Our Marine Life website**
 - b. **Write to the environment minister Tony Burke stating your strong support for establishing marine sanctuaries in the South-West based on the views of the people in your electorate**
 - c. **Give a speech or ask a questions regarding south-west Australian marine sanctuaries in Parliament**

d. Inform your electorate of your support – through local media or at public events.

6. **Request a follow-up meeting** in one month to find out what actions your MP took.
7. **Offer your sincere thanks** for your MP's interest and leave a copy of the seven reasons document.

Handy hints

- Be persistent, polite and positive. Let your MP know that they have the ability to help influence a historical decision that will benefit both marine life and the future prosperity of south-west Australia. This is their chance to make a difference to the community they represent.
- It's important to be truthful, but not to exaggerate. Read through this material carefully and know the facts about why Marine Sanctuaries are so important for the south-west. Don't exaggerate and don't make things up. Remember, the science tells the story.
- Make it clear that issues such as this affect the way you consider your vote.
- Politely tell your MP that as your elected member and voice in Parliament, you expect him/her to represent your views. Remember you are an important person – you live in their electorate and they are there to represent you.

Thanks for taking action so every Australian counts!

Five reasons why we need Tony to make this historical decision.

- 1) Less than 1% is protected but up to 90% of marine life is unique – a far greater level than is found on the Great Barrier Reef.
- 2) Our South West waters will be the best region that Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke will make decisions on – improving protection of the marine environment is an election commitment.
- 3) Two of only three feeding areas in Australia for the rare and endangered Blue Whale are in the South West – the Perth Canyon and near Kangaroo Island in SA.
- 4) There are 10 iconic feeding and breeding areas for marine life in the South West, including a submerged mountain range over

7000 metres deep that supports deep diving whales, seals, turtles and dolphins.

- 5) Sanctuaries would boost tourism revenue by 20% in the first year they are created, a value injection for the regional economy – an independent economic study by the Allen Consulting Group found this.
- 6) More and bigger fish are found on the edges of sanctuaries – experienced fishers know this.
- 7) Sanctuaries prevent extinctions – world first research by the University of Queensland in 2009 found this.