



Media Release

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Conservation Movement and Tourism Industry unite to protect Moreton Bay

In response to an attempt by three Labor backbenchers to weaken protection measures in Moreton Bay Marine Park this week, a coalition of groups has united to call for greater protection of the Park.

Today, seven leading conservation organisations joined with the Queensland Tourism Industry Council and Tangalooma Island Resort to call on the state government to significantly increase the number of Marine National Park zones, or 'green zones' proposed for protection.

In a document released today titled '**The 10 Missing Jewels of Moreton Bay**' the coalition identified **10 special places** in Moreton Bay which should be included in Marine National Park Zones but which had failed to make it into the draft Zoning Plan.

Craig Bohm, Campaigns Director at the Australian Marine Conservation Society said, "Today we call on Minister McNamara to secure these **10 Missing Jewels** in Marine National Parks zones."

"The protection currently on offer (less than 15% green zone protection) is simply not enough and in the majority of submissions, the public called for at least 30% protection. Protecting these 'jewels' would significantly raise the protection of Moreton Bay Marine Park," Bohm said.

The 10 places identified by the coalition are: the Eastern Banks, Manta Ray Bommies (off Point Lookout), the wider Flinders Reef Complex, Peel Island (south), Myora Reef and Wanga Wallen Banks (Stradbroke Island), Ormiston, Waterloo Bay – south (Lota), Green Island – east, Bird and Goat Island and China Wall (east of Moreton Island). These places represent the precious seagrass meadows, rocky reefs, coral gardens and sandy shoals which are critical to the survival of our threatened wildlife such as turtles and dugongs.

Daniel Gschwind Chief Executive of the Queensland Tourism Industry Council said, "Moreton Bay is a precious tourism asset with immense economic potential. Greater protection of Moreton Bay will only add to its value. We found this on the Great Barrier Reef which generates over \$5.2 billion for the economy. This is why we support the protection of these 10 special places in Moreton Bay."

Toby Hutcheon, Executive Director of the Queensland Conservation Council concluded, "It is bizarre that a few Labor backbenchers scramble to represent a few vocal fishing interests in Moreton Bay when clearly the wider public, tourism groups and bayside residents expect environmental protection. Let's now see if the Labor Government is up to the task."

The conservation groups supporting the document include the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS), National Parks Association of Queensland (NPAQ), Queensland Conservation Council (QCC), The Wilderness Society (TWS), Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland (WPSQ) and WWF Australia.

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Facts

- Over 8000 submissions were received by the Queensland Government in response to the Moreton Bay review.
- Over 6000 submissions indicated that Moreton Bay needed a far greater level of protection
- Over half of all formal submissions called for *at least* 30% protection of Moreton Bay Marine Park in Marine National Park Zones
- Every week, hundreds of additional submissions are sent to the EPA in support of *at least* 30% protection of Moreton Bay Marine Park, most of these from tourists who visit the Park.
- A coalition of six prominent University of Queensland marine scientists called for 30-50% protection in their submissions on Moreton Bay to the Queensland Government.
- Each year 200 turtles die in Moreton Bay Marine Park due to human impacts.
- The loggerhead turtle, a Moreton Bay resident, is listed as 'critically endangered' and according to the EPA faces extinction in Queensland in the next 40 years unless significant steps are taken to protect them.
- Scientific surveys indicate that dolphins and dugongs occur in the greatest numbers over the Eastern Banks.