



submissions@marine.nsw.gov.au

HAWKESBURY SHELF MARINE BIOREGION – MARINE PARK PROPOSAL

The Mosman Parks & Bushland Association was formed in 1964 to protect threatened bushland in Mosman. Since then the association has continued to work for the protection of parks, bushland and the natural environment for the benefit of current and future generations.

The Association fully supports the proposals contained in the discussion paper for the enhancement of marine diversity in the bioregion of the Hawkesbury Shelf including the proposal to establish a Marine Park. Marine biodiversity including fish for food is vitally important for future generations.

The general points made in the discussion paper regarding management of the marine estate to improve water quality, to reduce pollution, to control damaging development and to enhance habitat in coastal and wetland areas are basic to the whole proposal for a park that will improve marine biodiversity and are supported by The Mosman Parks & Bushland Association.

The Marine Park proposal supports continued enjoyment of the region as a multi-use area. Swimming, scuba diving, snorkelling, kayaking, boating, commercial and recreational fishing and special Aboriginal uses for cultural purposes are all accommodated. Indeed, the discussion paper has bent over backwards to ensure that these activities and their benefits are minimally impacted.

The controversial aspect of the Marine Park appears to stem from the proposal to create sanctuaries and conservation zones in which **some** activities such as fishing will be prevented or restricted. Sanctuary zones in marine parks have been shown to limit the decline in fish numbers and fish size. Established marine parks in NSW have broad support in the fishing community and that support increases over time.

This makes the vehemence of the opposition to the proposal for **this** marine park all the more surprising. The torrent of abuse against the park's proponents seems to be coming from a community who will **benefit** in the long term from protections that will produce more fish and will enable the continuation of a currently enjoyed pastime. Perhaps further education, which emphasises the success of existing marine sanctuaries and their appreciation by the fishing community, would help to bring about a more long-sighted view. The discussion paper suggests some offsets that would mollify the recreational fishing community. Before sanctuary and conservation zones are ruled out these should be discussed.

Chowder Bay

Of the 25 protected marine sites proposed, Chowder Bay is of particular interest to the Mosman Parks and Bushland Association because of its situation in Mosman.

There are many good reasons that make this area a suitable location for a sanctuary:

- The geological formation
- The proximity of the Sydney Harbour National Park
- The existence of sea grasses
- The position of the Sydney Institute of Marine Science (SIMS) right beside the zone making it a suitable sanctuary for scientific monitoring and for education. SIMS director, Peter Steinberg has welcomed the park. He says that the number of species in the bioregion is extraordinary but that we are still very short of information about what we actually have here.

There are some management protections already in existence in Chowder Bay, but the sanctuary proposal would introduce further restrictions - line fishing (except from the jetty), lobster fishing, collecting marine vegetation and anchoring in sea grass areas.

This Association supports these additional restrictions, noting that swimming, snorkelling, scuba diving, kayaking and Aboriginal cultural use will continue to be permitted.

It is important to note that the jetty will be excluded from the proposed sanctuary. Line fishing from the jetty will still be allowed.

In conclusion, The Mosman Parks & Bushland Association welcomes the proposal for a Marine Park, noting that although the 25 sites proposed for further protection cover a very small part of the bioregion, it is a start. Much preliminary discussion has preceded the proposal. The result will be a park with fairly few modifications to current usage. If the people of Sydney and from Newcastle to Wollongong are to continue to enjoy a beautiful marine environment now and into the future, we recommend its adoption.



Kate Eccles
President
21.9.2018