

Dear Editor,

The Tasmanian National Parks Association (TNPA) welcomes the recent announcement by the Australian Government to create a series of marine parks adjacent to Tasmania's coastal waters.

While the proposals that the Commonwealth have made are significant, they fall well short of at least 30% of each marine bioregion being protected. The parks are not of sufficient size, number and closeness to one another to maintain the region's remarkable marine life and ecosystems. Some of the proposed reserves look as if the main objective is to minimise impacts in the fishing industry rather than having biodiversity as the overriding consideration.

In addition the Australian Government must outline what funds and support program it is going to commit to park management along with a strategy for enforcement, compliance and education of the community. As we well know with our Tasmanian marine and land protected areas, simply drawing lines on a map and saying an area is protected does no in itself guarantee protection. It requires government and community commitment and resources.

We particularly support the Bass Basin proposal, adjacent to both the Wilsons Promontory Marine National Park and Tasmania's own Kent Group National Park. This would be an excellent addition to the marine and terrestrial protected area system connecting not only marine protected areas but also the National Parks in two states in one continuous reserved area of sea and land. However for this to really deliver good conservation outcomes significant areas of the Bass Basin proposal need to exclude recreational and commercial fishing not just the commercial fishing industry as currently slated.

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