



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

# Recreational line fishing at ocean beaches & headlands

## IN MARINE PARKS

### WHY WAS THE AMNESTY IMPLEMENTED?

In 2013, the NSW Government announced its response to the Independent Scientific Audit of Marine Parks. This included placing an amnesty on shore-based recreational line fishing restrictions from ocean beaches and headlands in mainland marine park sanctuary zones, except at Burrewarra Point in Batemans Marine Park. The amnesty remained in place while an assessment of the impact of these activities was undertaken by the independent Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel (Knowledge Panel).

The Knowledge Panel has since completed its task and provided the assessment to the Marine Estate Management Authority (the Authority), which subsequently provided advice to the Minister for Primary Industries and the Minister for the Environment

### HOW WAS THE KNOWLEDGE PANEL ASSESSMENT COMPLETED?

The Knowledge Panel used a threat and risk based approach that included an assessment of a range of economic, social and environmental factors.

The Panel informed its identification of threats

and risks to social and economic factors through two consultation processes:



1. interviews with coastal users, e.g. surfers, recreational and commercial fishers, spear fishers, passive users, divers, snorkelers, kayakers and coastal community groups within several marine parks in July 2013
2. two online surveys to better understand stakeholder views on the future management of these areas, including a targeted survey of recreational fishing licence holders and a website survey open to the general public from 22 July to 18 August 2013. A total of 6,607 people responded to these surveys.

The identification of threats and risks to environmental factors, including threatened

species and fish communities, was supported by available scientific information and expert opinion. The value of the no-take areas for use as scientific reference sites was also considered.

Without making a specific recommendation, the Knowledge Panel reported that there was a scientific evidence base to support the lifting of the amnesty at between 12 and 23 sites.

## WHY DOES THE NSW GOVERNMENT'S DECISION DIFFER FROM THE AUTHORITY'S ADVICE?

The information provided by the Knowledge Panel and the advice of the Authority were key inputs to the NSW Government's decision. The decision strongly reflects the evidence base provided in the Knowledge Panel's assessment report. However, it was also informed by a decision within NSW Government to implement an enhanced monitoring and research program to support future management decisions across the marine estate, and by further consideration of social values.

## WHY IS THE NSW GOVERNMENT CHANGING 10 MARINE PARK SANCTUARY ZONES TO ALLOW SHORE-BASED RECREATIONAL LINE FISHING?

The advice from the Knowledge Panel and the Authority confirmed that shore-based recreational line fishing was a low risk activity at 10 marine park sanctuary zones.

The Government's decision is about getting the balance right and the proposed rezoning is considered to be mutually beneficial in allowing recreational fishing opportunities and conserving the marine environment.

## WHY WAS THE AMNESTY LIFTED IMMEDIATELY AT 20 MARINE PARK SANCTUARY ZONES?

The decision to remove the amnesty was made following consideration of the Knowledge Panel's assessment and by further consideration of social values and use conflicts at some sites.

These areas of sanctuary zone will return to a more undisturbed and natural state to be enjoyed for recreational activities such as snorkelling and diving as well as for use as scientific reference sites and educational purposes. In some areas this will also reduce the risk of harm or injury to threatened fish or seabirds.

## HOW WAS THE AMNESTY LIFTED AT THE 20 MARINE PARK SANCTUARY ZONES?

The amnesty ceased at these 20 sites and was communicated to communities at each marine park and also more broadly in a range of ways. An advisory period of six months was in place to allow recreational fishers to learn about the new arrangements.



## WHY NOT JUST LEAVE THE AMNESTY IN PLACE PERMANENTLY AT THE 10 SITES THAT ARE RECOMMENDED TO BE KEPT OPEN TO FISHING?

The amnesty was never intended to be a long term solution. The appropriate mechanism to implement outcomes of the ocean beaches and headlands assessment was to amend the management rules at the relevant marine parks. This is a statutory process that involved community consultation on the draft management rules. Advice from local marine park advisory committees was also considered.

## HOW WAS PUBLIC COMMENT ON REZONING TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT?

The Minister for Primary Industries and the Minister for the Environment were required to consider submissions on the draft management rules received during the public exhibition period from 1 September to 13 November 2015.

Over 6,500 submissions were received and carefully considered as part of the process. These submissions did not, however, provide any substantive new site-specific evidence to support keeping the sites as sanctuary zones.

## HOW WILL THE NSW GOVERNMENT'S REZONING PROPOSAL BE IMPLEMENTED?

Implementing the outcomes of the NSW Government's decision required amendments to management rules for marine parks, which are set out in marine estate regulations.

Amendments to management rules have rezoned 10 sites from sanctuary zones to habitat protection zones that allow only shore-based recreational line fishing. The areas to be rezoned will extend 100 metres from the shore.



## WHAT WILL HAPPEN WITH SPEARFISHING?

Spearfishing is not part of the amnesty, which only applies to shore-based recreational line fishing. The Knowledge Panel's assessment considered the potential impact of allowing spearfishing activities within the areas subject to the amnesty. However, at this stage there are no plans to allow spearfishing in these areas. This issue will be considered further in developing new management plans for marine parks.

## WHY DON'T THE RECOMMENDATIONS EXTEND TO FISHING FROM BOATS OR COMMERCIAL FISHING?

Similar to the situation for spearfishing, the amnesty and assessment were primarily focussed on recreational shore-based line fishing. Any changes to zones to allow additional types of fishing such as boat-based recreational fishing and commercial fishing will be considered further in developing new management plans for marine parks.

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOLITARY ISLANDS AND BATEMANS MARINE PARKS GIVEN THE MANAGEMENT PLANNING PILOTS PROPOSED FOR THESE PARKS?

The Knowledge Panel's assessment report noted that the recommendations could be superseded by forthcoming reviews of marine park management arrangements. In particular, the management of marine parks and zones is to be reviewed in relation to new objectives set by the NSW Government.

All of the issues identified in the assessment will be revisited, albeit in a broader geographical and activity context. This will occur during the Solitary Islands and Batemans marine park pilots and then rolled out to all other marine parks.



## WHAT IS THE ENHANCED MONITORING AND RESEARCH PROGRAM?

The Department of Primary Industries has collected information during aerial surveys to assess patterns of recreational fishing and other recreational activities in marine parks. This information will be one input into the development of new management plans for marine parks. A Marine Integrated Monitoring Program is also being developed for the broader marine estate.

## MORE INFORMATION

- The [NSW marine estate website](#) includes links to key documents. These include:
- Ocean Beaches & Headlands Fact sheet
- Ocean Beaches & Headlands FAQ
- Summary of Submissions: Ocean Beaches and Headlands Assessment 2018
- Current management rules (regulation)
- Assessment report (Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel)
- Summary report (Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel)

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