



Website: www.marinelife.org
E: moremarineparks@gmail.com
Facebook: Tasmanians for Marine Parks
Instagram: [Tasmanians_for_Marine_Parks](#)

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By email

sarah.lovell@parliament.tas.gov.au

janie.finlay@parliament.tas.gov.au

Hon. Sarah Lovell

Hon. Janie Finlay

Parliament House

Hobart Tas 7000

Dear Sarah and Janie,

RE: Clarifying the State Opposition's view on the High Seas Treaty and new marine protected areas

Key Points

- State and Commonwealth Ministers have recently committed to conserve 30% of Australia's marine areas by 2030 in line with the targets in the High Seas Treaty.
- The above statement appears contrary to the State Government's former position of a "moratorium" on the creation of new marine parks.
- It is apparent that the Tasmanian Government will do nothing itself towards the fulfillment of that promise. This makes the commitment practically meaningless.
- It's time that voters heard the State ALP position on this issue.

Details

I am writing to you on behalf of Tasmanians for Marine Parks, a campaign of Marine Life Network Inc.

Thank you for meeting with members of our organization last year. There have been some further developments since that time that you should be aware of.

Recently, the Australian Government has endorsed the “High Seas Treaty” and has also created a large new marine park at Macquarie Island.

The new State commitments

State and Commonwealth Ministers have recently committed to conserve 30% of Australia’s marine areas by 2030 in line with the targets in the High Seas Treaty.

In a joint communique issued by Commonwealth, State and Territory Environment Ministers on 21 October 2022, it was agreed that, *“In recognition of the scale and urgency of environmental challenges, ministers agreed: 1. To work collectively [our emphasis] to achieve a national target to protect and conserve 30% of Australia’s landmass and 30% of Australia’s marine areas by 2030.”*

The previous commitment of the Gutwein and Hodgman Governments was to a “moratorium” on the creation of new marine parks. This was renewed as late as February 2021, and has been restated again.

We asked the Minister to tell us how and when this promise will be given meaningful effect in inshore State waters. His reply is attached.

Without adequately protecting Tasmanian inshore waters as well, any promise to support a marine protected areas system is meaningless. The Government’s position appears cynical, and it appears to be taking no practical measures to advance this long overdue change.

Detail on the High Seas Treaty

“Effective conservation and management of at least 30% of the world’s lands, inland waters, coastal areas and oceans, with emphasis on areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functioning and services. The GBF[“Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework”] prioritizes ecologically-representative, well-connected and equitably-governed systems of protected areas and other effective area based conservation, recognizing indigenous and traditional territories and practices.

Currently 17% and 10% of the world’s terrestrial and marine areas respectively are under protection.“

This treaty goes further than just setting targets for marine protected areas including:

- Having restoration completed or underway on at least 30% of degraded terrestrial, inland waters, and coastal and marine ecosystems

- Reduce to near zero the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity
- Mobilize by 2030 at least \$200 billion per year in domestic and international biodiversity-related funding from all sources – public and private.
- Prevent the introduction of priority invasive alien species, and reduce by at least half the introduction and establishment of other known or potential invasive alien species, and eradicate or control invasive alien species on islands and other priority sites.

Australia has committed as a global citizen to ‘ecological representation’ across its MPA network¹. This is far from reality – MPAs are not evenly distributed around our coastline, leaving the majority of ecosystem types and bioregions without effective protection.

The UN warns, “Without such action, there will be a further acceleration in the global rate of species extinction, which is already at least tens to hundreds of times higher than it has averaged over the past 10 million years.”²

The ALP’s role

We had hoped for a move away from the acrimony of past environmental debates and we need a Government willing to bring people to the discussion table on this issue, facilitating a respectful conversation that balances the needs of all stakeholders in Tasmania.

However, we also note that the ALP does not have a stated position on even how it intends to approach this issue, although it appears to be ALP policy to advance this issue nationally.

We understand that the party here is in administration, and in opposition, but it's time that the State ALP had a clear position to put to its supporters. The State Government has at least made its lax oppositional position reasonably clear. We understand that prior to the last aborted State Conference that ALP branches had proposed an updated approach to marine conservation and marine protected areas.

For our part, we will continue to attempt to raise this issue with the media and affected parties. What is needed now is a consultative process to get people together. We are happy to meet with you to further discuss this, or provide further information.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue.



Mike Jacques

Coordinator Tasmanians for Marine Parks/Marine Life Network Inc.

0418263721

¹ Aichi Target 11, Convention of Biological Diversity)

² [221219-CBD-PressRelease-COP15-Final_0.pdf](#)

Copy of the joint communique can be found at

<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/about/news/stay-informed/communiques#environment-ministers-meeting>

Government response attached.