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REAL ACTION TO PROTECT OUR MARINE ENVIRONMENTS AND FISHING COMMUNITIES

A Coalition government will take immediate action to ensure that future Marine Protected Areas balance environmental preservation with economic growth and strong coastal communities.

The Coalition supports a balanced approach to marine conservation and will immediately put on hold the Marine Bioregional Planning process. We will then restructure this process, in consultation with the community and industry, within the first year of government.

When previously in government, the Coalition began the process of establishing Marine Protected Areas around Australia's coastline. Marine Protected Areas are intended to protect and maintain biologically and culturally significant marine areas.

Since its election, the Rudd-Gillard Government has not adopted a balanced approach to Marine Protected Areas, nor has it engaged in appropriate consultation with the community and the fishing industry.

This has led to unnecessary anxiety and uncertainty in the fishing industry. Many communities will face enormous economic losses unless there is proper and effective consultation on future Marine Protected Areas, particularly in relation to fishing practices in these Areas.

The Coalition will also require future decisions on Marine Protected Areas to consider peer reviewed scientific evidence of threats to marine biodiversity and for this evidence to be made available to all stakeholders, including affected communities and industries.

In establishing Marine Protected Areas, the Coalition will consult closely with those people and industries who use the marine environment, including the recreational and commercial fishing sectors, to determine Marine Protected Area management plans in accordance with relevant legislation and other regulatory frameworks.

The Coalition will take the action necessary to make decisions on Marine Protected Areas fair, considered and balance environmental and cultural preservation and also considers the needs of fishing industries and coastal communities.

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