

4.7 Commonwealth marine reserves with no recommended changes

No changes are recommended for 15 CMRs, as it was determined that either:

- a. no sufficiently contentious issues were raised by stakeholders in relation to the reserve (nine CMRs):

North-west: Cartier Island, Carnarvon Canyon, Shark Bay and Montebello CMRs

South-west: Jurien, Murat and Southern Kangaroo Island CMRs

Temperate East: Cod Grounds and Gifford CMRs; or

- b. a better balance of interests for stakeholders impacted by the proclaimed zoning could not be found (six CMRs):

North: Arnhem and Joseph Bonaparte Gulf CMRs

North-west: Roebuck and Eighty Mile Beach CMRs

South-west: Abrolhos and Western Kangaroo Island CMRs.

As outlined in Chapter 2, the BAP assessed the many issues raised by stakeholders against criteria to determine whether the issue translated into either an area of contention that could be addressed by zoning or an area of contention that required a management or policy-based response. For those areas of contention that could be addressed by zoning or management arrangements, options for zoning and/or management arrangements within a reserve were developed and their likely conservation outcomes and socio-economic impacts assessed. The options that provided improved conservation outcomes without increasing socio-economic impacts to an unacceptable level (or improved socio-economic outcomes without unacceptable conservation impacts) were tested with stakeholders that had a direct interest in them.

In order to give interested stakeholders an understanding of the reasoning underlying those outcomes, an overview of the six options that were tested with stakeholders but not progressed to a final recommendation is provided below.

North Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network:

Joseph Bonaparte Gulf Commonwealth Marine Reserve

Some stakeholders stated that there should be increased protection of habitat for turtles and MNPZ protection for the unique carbonate banks in the area, which has high levels of oil and gas prospectivity. Others asked for bottom trawling to be allowed. After considering the implications of various changes, it was decided that a better balance of interests could not be found than that delivered by the proclaimed zoning of the CMR.

Arnhem Commonwealth Marine Reserve

A number of stakeholders raised issues about improving the conservation status of this CMR, continued access for commercial fisheries, potential for impacts from mineral exploration and mining, and concerns about limiting development opportunities for nearby rural and remote communities.

Changes to the zoning in this reserve to increase protection were contemplated; however, once the competing interests involved were considered, an improved outcome could not be reached.

North-west Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network:*Eighty Mile Beach Commonwealth Marine Reserve*

Stakeholders advised that this area was critical to pearl farming as it was the primary source of pearl oysters and an area where seeded oysters were cultivated on benthic racks. The Regional Panel also heard that the area lacked sufficient protection for the habitats of migratory shorebirds and critically endangered sawfish.

The option of changing the zoning in this reserve from MUZ to HPZ was considered and canvassed with stakeholders. The potential impacts on both the oil and gas industry and existing commercial fishing activities were impractical, so this option was not progressed.

Roebuck Commonwealth Marine Reserve

Most of the stakeholder input related to strengthening habitat protection, in part because the CMR is adjacent to and would complement the proposed Roebuck Bay Marine Park (WA). Concerns were raised about the potential restriction of port and shipping activities near the northern boundary of the CMR.

A change in the zoning from MUZ to HPZ was considered for the reserve (except for the area of existing port and shipping activities) and canvassed with stakeholders. This option was not progressed due to the potential impact on the oil and gas industry.

South-west Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network:*Abrolhos Commonwealth Marine Reserve*

The location of the MNPZ just north of the Abrolhos Islands and its impacts on operators in both the North Island Rock Lobster and the West Coast Demersal Scalefish and Mackerel fisheries were raised by commercial fishing stakeholders. The BAP invited industry to propose alternatives to the zoning configuration. However, an arrangement that better balanced the competing interests could not be identified, so no changes to the Abrolhos CMR are recommended.

Western Kangaroo Island Commonwealth Marine Reserve

Concerns raised by the commercial fishing sector about purse seining nets drifting into the MNPZ could not be reconciled with calls for increasing the size of that and other MNPZs in the CMR, due to the ecological importance of the Kangaroo Island Canyon.