

# Zoning in Moreton Bay Marine Park: Strategies and Lessons Learned

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Moreton Bay Marine Park is immediately offshore Brisbane, the capital of Queensland – Australia's third most populous state. The marine park is 3400 km<sup>2</sup>. Approximately 2.7 million people live in coastal communities immediately adjacent to the marine park and the area has one of the fastest growing urban populations in Australia.

Moreton Bay is an "overlap" zone where both tropical and temperate species mix, many of which are unique to the area. Over 1000 species of fish share the waters with six of the world's seven species of sea turtle. It has 120 coral species and a number of rare and endangered species including the grey nurse shark and humpback whales, and is home to the largest population of dugong adjacent to any capital city in the world.

Moreton Bay is one of the most heavily fished areas in the state. It has significant commercial and recreational fisheries, with just 3% of the State's coastline but over 35% of the state's fish catch. Being adjacent to a capital city the islands and waters of the bay are also very important for commercial tourism activities, commercial shipping, aquaculture and a range of recreational activities such as boating and diving.

The marine park was declared in 1993 and first zoned in 1997. In 2007 a new zoning plan came into effect after two years of consultation with stakeholders. The objectives of the re-zoning plan were to protect biodiversity within the marine park and increase the resilience of the marine park against the effects of climate change. 16 major habitat types were identified. The framework for the new zones was based on a set of scientific guiding principles, based on world's best practice in marine reserve design and developed by an independent scientific steering committee.

The level of protective zoning i.e. no-take zones in Moreton Bay Marine Park was increased from 0.5% to 16%. New regulations were put in place to increase protection of dugong and turtles. The new zoning plan is far more complex than the initial plan. In order to achieve maximum compliance from stakeholders a range of strategies were introduced to enhance stakeholder understanding and acceptance of new regulations.



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