



Media Release

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For immediate release: **Concerns over claims regarding the "spill over" effect**

AAG has concerns that the concept known as "spill over" is being used to placate recreational fishers and as justification for sanctuary or no-take zones in marine parks.

Evidence to date is from overseas and the claims made can be disputed. Often cited are the effectiveness of marine protected areas which are generally from highly populated areas that have been subjected to extreme types of destructive fishing, such as Apo Reef in the Phillipines. Another is the study on the marine extension to the Bouddi National Park north of Sydney with claims that it was "found that up to 1340% greater numbers of fish and 63% species richness and greater fish size than in adjacent waters."

AAG President Mr Phil Ingram says "The omission of pertinent facts is one tactic used by sanctuary zone proponents to push their claims. Take Apo Reef where, prior to 1973, the reefs were subject to destructive fishing methods such as dynamite and cyanide forms of reef bombing. And now it's a popular dive site where the fish are heavily fed to enhance the dive experience. At Bouddi there was no "before" study so no direct comparisons can be made. The high percentage quoted is for one species, luderick, and the Bouddi area has always been known by anglers to be an aggregation area for luderick and consistently had higher luderick densities than surrounding areas. And if the increase of 1340% for luderick is accurate - then what's happened to the 'spill-over' effect? They have had 28 years to spill over and this just has not happened!"

Many marine scientists maybe proponents of the spill-over effect, but just as many state their arguments are spurious with little proof that it happens. What is agreed is that sanctuary zones may protect sedentary species or fish that don't move around, and not the surface dwellers or pelagic species. And the claim that fish densities are greater in sanctuary zones is also misleading as, like Bouddi, sanctuary zones tend to be located over areas that are known to have greater fish populations in the first place.

Phil Ingram comments: "Proponents of the "spill-over" effect can only cite from the scientific literature very limited examples in exotic locations and under certain conditions. By extrapolating the spill-over effect to all species in Australian waters is nothing more than a scam to hoodwink the uninformed."

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