

**Question on Notice  
No. 1501  
Asked on Tuesday, 28 October 2008**

QUESTION:

**MR ENGLISH** asked the Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation (Mr McNamara) —

Will he outline the improved environmental outcomes of the new Moreton Bay Marine Park plan when compared with the previous plan?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Redlands for his question given the crucial role this new zoning plan plays in helping to protect the Moreton Bay Marine Park's unique and precious marine environments.

The new zoning plan is a massive leap forward in conserving these valuable habitats and species, which we are fortunate enough to have on the doorstep of our capital city.

The area protected by marine national park zones, or "green" zones, will increase from less than half a percent to 16 percent. These zones were selected using an extensive amount of research and data, and were individually assessed against a series of 13 Scientific Guiding Principles developed by a scientific Expert Advisory Panel.

In keeping with these principles, one of the main aims of the review was to conserve at least 10 percent of each of the 16 habitat types in Moreton Bay in green zones.

I am very pleased to advise that this new zoning plan protects every one of the 16 different habitat types in a green zone – compared to only 5 habitat types protected under the previous plan.

The new plan achieves at least 10 percent protection for 13 ecosystems found in the marine park. The other three, where 10 percent couldn't be achieved without significantly impacting the community, are protected with over 9 percent of each of these habitats in green zones.

Critical nursery habitats for important recreational and commercially caught fish species – such as mangroves, seagrass and riverine and estuarine habitat – are now all protected with between 20 to 25 percent of each habitat in these zones.

Nearly 20 percent of our seagrass habitat is protected, which is an enormous gain for our threatened turtles and dugong given the previous plan did not protect any of this important habitat in green zones.

In addition, go slow areas for turtles and dugong have been extended and new *go slow areas* have been introduced to reduce the risk of turtles and dugong being struck by boats – which is a major threat to these species in the marine park.

New go slow areas for natural values mirror some of our green zones to protect relatively undisturbed and sensitive habitats from the harmful impacts of boat wash and wake.

Three new no-anchoring areas protect our unique inshore and offshore reefs from damage caused by anchors, which is the first management arrangement of this type to be embedded into a marine park zoning plan.

Recognising that the majority of Moreton Bay Marine Park is an internationally recognised Ramsar site for its bird life, the new zoning plan further protects our shorebirds from unreasonable disturbance by dogs, vessels, aircraft and vehicles.

A number of other initiatives have also been introduced to help protect this important waterway, including improved management of moorings, major works, extraction and disposal of material, dredging and a research accreditation program.

Without doubt it is this comprehensive and innovative range of initiatives that together provide real and significant environmental outcomes for Moreton Bay – and help secure a more solid future for all of those who use and love the marine park.