



Plan Coordinator  
Ningaloo Marine Park Management Plan  
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Dr Adam Smith  
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Dear Sir

#### **KEY SUBMISSION FROM AUSTRALIAN UNDERWATER FEDERATION**

I am the National Chair of the Australian Underwater Federation (AUF) which represents 700 members and over 20,000 skindivers throughout Australia.

The AUF is writing in response to the draft zoning plans for the Ningaloo Marine Park..

Spearfishing is permitted in habitat protection zones and in general use zones in every other marine park in Qld and NSW including the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. There should be no negative discrimination of spearfishers as is currently proposed in the draft Ningaloo plan.

Marine parks are there to not only protect the biodiversity, through the use of sanctuaries that cover representative areas but are also there to provide for ecologically sustainable methods of fishing, and to provide opportunities for public appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of the marine park. The proposal to restrict spearfishing is not equitable and spearfishing has been shown to be the most ecologically sustainable method of recreational fishing, and has existed as a method of fishing in Australian waters since indigenous fishers started to utilise the oceans and river systems

Communications with the local spearfishing groups, suggest that spearfishing pressure on the west coast is currently minimal (probably about 1% of the take of other recreational fishers), however this should not be a reason to deny future generations of people from utilising spearfishing as a method of fishing when they are in the marine park.

Ningaloo represents a unique location in Australia, where spearfishers from around the world could go on charter to target species such as Spanish mackerel (and three world records have been taken from these waters in recent years). The numbers of fish species actually taken would be low, but the quality for the species taken would be expected to be high, in which case there is the opportunity for repeat business.

In short, the AUF is strongly opposed to the current draft Ningaloo marine park as the proposed restrictions on spearfishing methods and catches are not compatible with equity and ecologically sustainable management. We suggest that the decision makers need to engage with us for more detailed consultation. My telephone number is 0418726584 and email is adamsmith@bigpond.com.au

Yours sincerely

Dr Adam Smith BSc(Hons), MBA, PhD, FAICD, FEIANZ, AFAIM  
Chair Australian Underwater Federation (National)- Spearfishing  
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