

Joint Broome Tourism Letter of Support for a Sanctuary zone in Roebuck Bay Marine Park

Hon Colin Barnett
Premier; Minister for State Development: Science
1 Parliament Place
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Cc: Hon Albert Jacob, Minister for Environment

Re: Roebuck Bay Marine Park and Marine Sanctuary

Dear Premier,

Broome tourism operators would like to welcome the previous announcement from state government to remove commercial gillnets from Roebuck Bay and the development of the Roebuck Bay marine park. This will have great benefits for tourism, fishing and the environment. We would also like to address the issue of a sanctuary zone within the Bay. It is our opinion that including a marine sanctuary in the right place in the Bay would have many benefits to the local economy and boost regional tourism.

If a sanctuary zone was placed in an area of the bay that promoted and sustained the unique wildlife of the area, tourism could see many prolonged economic benefits. A sanctuary zone gives a clear indication to tourists of the importance of the area and becomes a very powerful marketing tool for the promotion of Roebuck Bay to the rest of the world. The southern Fingers, an area in the isolated eastern shores of Roebuck Bay, is an ideal location for a sanctuary zone, as it is pristine, experiences very low fishing pressure and remains as one of the most important breeding and nursery areas for marine life in the region.

Tourism accounts for around 64% of the local economy and most tourists use Broome as a base before venturing further north into the Kimberley. The potential exists for new businesses to develop in Broome to capture more value into the local Broome economy, particularly around the promotion of the iconic Snubfin dolphins. Roebuck Bay is the home of the largest population of Snubfin dolphins left in the world and is the easiest and most reliable place to view such a rare and beautiful mammal. The Snubfin dolphin could be a powerful marketing brand for Roebuck ecotourism. A sanctuary zone will protect a vital food source for Snubfins and ensure the health of this population. Monkey Mia in Shark bay has seen continued growth in Dolphin based tourism with over 100,000 visitors/year and is a good example of what can happen though the promotion of the Roebuck Snubfins.

Dugong's, turtles, crabs, fish, shorebirds and sea snakes also abound in this area and add to the attraction of tours. The creek systems in the Fingers are narrow with dense overhead mangrove canopies. This means ecotourism operators can get tourists up close and personal with the spectacular mangrove forest and showcase the unique biodiversity of the area.

Fishing based tourism will also enjoy large benefits. Currently there are three fishing charter operators who primarily target Roebuck Bay. However, with the removal of commercial gillnets and through the introduction of a sanctuary zone in the key breeding and nursery area of the Fingers, recreational fishing is likely to significantly improve. Boat hire businesses, tackle shops, service stations and boat shops will all see increasing retail trade. A good example of this comes from the rezoning of the Moreton bay marine park in Queensland, where sanctuary zones were expanded from 0.5% to 16% and this contributed to an increase in economic benefits to recreational fishers of up to \$2.5 million/year (Pascoe et al 2014).

There are many examples within Western Australia of the successful blend of world class marine parks and world class tourism. Ningaloo and Exmouth have seen a huge growth in tourism numbers with whale shark viewing, turtle watching, snorkelling, diving and glass bottom boat tours all expanding. Abrolhos Islands, Rottnest Island, Busselton Jetty and Margaret River have all enjoyed booming fishing and ecotourism and all are within marine parks or other marine areas with marine sanctuaries.

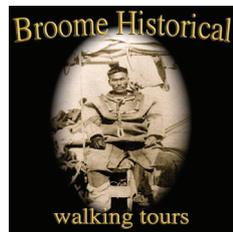
Broome's economy primarily relies on tourism and the introduction of a marine sanctuary zone in the southern fingers area of Roebuck Bay will help to strengthen the Broome tourism brand and boost the local economy. It is significant to have a marine sanctuary zone proposal that is actively supported by a broad range of Broome businesses and residents. We encourage you to carefully consider the case for including a marine sanctuary zone in the southern fingers area of Roebuck Bay in the upcoming draft indicative management plan for the Roebuck Bay Marine Park.

Yours Sincerely

The undersigned tourism businesses of Broome



Valerie Douglas - Owner



Wil Thomas - Owner



George Swann - Owner



Wendy Price - Owner



Greg Quicke



Andrew Guidera



Mandy Soymonoff - Warden



Nigel and Helen Gaunt - Owners



Calvin and Laura Clarke - Owners



Greg Davey - Owner



Leslie Baxter - Owner



Daniel Pethick - Owner



**Karen White
- Resort manager**



**Belinda Dwyer and
Richard Young - Owners**



**Ross Forbes-Stephen
- Resort Manager**



Alison Bird - Owner



Rick and Julie Buist - Owners



**Intombi -
Ryan and Amy Risinger**