



**The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP**  
**Minister for Primary Industries**  
**Minister for Small Business**

**The Hon Robyn Parker MP**  
**Minister for the Environment**  
**Minister for Heritage**

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERT TO LEAD AUDIT OF NSW MARINE PARKS**

Minister for Primary Industries Katrina Hodgkinson and Minister for the Environment Robyn Parker today announced the appointment of Associate Professor Robert Beeton AM from the University of Queensland as Chair of the Independent Scientific Audit of Marine Parks in NSW.

Ms Hodgkinson described Professor Beeton as the ideal person to lead the independent scientific audit which will, among other things, determine the effectiveness of the existing marine park zoning arrangements in NSW.

“This audit was a commitment of the NSW Liberals & Nationals prior to the election,” Katrina Hodgkinson said.

“As Chair of the Independent Scientific Audit of Marine Parks in NSW, Professor Beeton will play a key role in ensuring we strike the right balance between sustainable fishing and conservation of marine biodiversity in our Marine Parks policy.

“From chairing the Australian State of the Environment Committee to being appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for his contribution to Environment and Resource Management, there is no doubt Professor Beeton has the experience and qualifications NSW needs.

“He has worked with governments of all political persuasions and we expect he will be a fiercely independent and non-partisan chair.

“The other members of the Independent Scientific Panel will be appointed next month and will be experts who are known for their achievements in fisheries science, marine biodiversity conservation, and social and economic evaluation,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

Robyn Parker said the audit will ensure that the scientific foundations of the NSW Government’s Marine Parks policy are rigorous, transparent and publicly available.

“The NSW Liberals & Nationals election commitment was to implement a Marine Parks Policy that is based on science, not on politics,” Ms Parker said.

“The independent scientific audit will provide a firm basis for consultation with communities and enable us to develop balanced policies that provide for protection of the marine environment as well as supporting a wide range of other uses including recreational activities.

“I welcome the appointment of Professor Bob Beeton to this important role.

“I know he will carry out his responsibilities with integrity and insight.”

Professor Beeton said the Marine Parks Independent Scientific Panel will review the effectiveness of marine parks in protecting different habitat types and provide recommendations of further action and, if appropriate, alternative management approaches.

“This independent scientific audit will follow a proven and transparent process that ensures the delivery of evidence-based outcomes,” Professor Beeton said.

“All parties will be able to review the evidence and reasoning behind the recommendations we make.”

Professor Beeton’s qualifications in this area have seen him hold many positions including Chair of the Australian State of the Environment 2006 Committee, member of the Environment Protection Council in Queensland and Chair of the Australian Threatened Species Scientific Committee for 10 years until March this year. In 2009, Professor Beeton was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for his contribution to Environment and Resource Management.

Interested parties are invited to provide written submissions addressing one or more of the terms of reference. Submissions must be fully referenced, and will be published online, along with other papers considered by the Audit.

The Terms of Reference of the independent scientific audit are:

- review the domestic and international commitments to conserving marine biodiversity, current actions for meeting these commitments, and the effectiveness of these actions;
- review the scientific data provided to the Panel by NSW Department of Primary Industries and the Office of Environment and Heritage;
- review the degree to which all threats to the varying types of marine environments have been properly identified and prioritised. The Panel will then consider the degree to which the marine parks process is anticipated to address each significant threat.
- review the specific science relating to the effectiveness of marine parks in protecting different habitat types and recommend further action and/or alternative management approaches if necessary;
- recommend ways to increase the cost-effectiveness of marine park zoning arrangements;
- recommend ways to improve inclusion of social and economic impacts into decision-making on marine parks, in particular the design and management of marine parks;
- identify and recommend ways to address the most significant information gaps hindering robust, evidence-based decision-making on marine parks;
- make recommendations on how all current potential threats to the marine environment could be effectively addressed and which bodies or agencies would be most appropriate to address them; and
- make other recommendations as appropriate, related to achieving better management of the NSW marine environment.

The Independent Scientific Audit of Marine Parks is due to be completed by December 31, 2011.