



The Hon Julia Gillard MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

10 October, 2011

Dear Prime Minister,

We write as an independent group of global leaders who have joined together to use our collective influence and experience, supported by science and data, to promote ocean conservation, pursue the protection of the ocean's habitat and wildlife, and preserve its ecosystems and species biodiversity.

We direct your attention to the globally significant marine bioregional planning process being implemented by your government, culminating in the imminent release of a draft plan to protect the Coral Sea. This provides your government with an opportunity to create the world's largest no-take marine reserve - one that extends from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park to the limit of Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone - and effectively protects the Coral Sea's spectacular marine life, including whales, turtles, sharks, tuna, billfish, and its critical habitats.

After winning the TED prize, founding Ocean Elder Dr. Sylvia Earle identified a number of Hope Spots around the world that are critical to the health of the ocean, Earth's blue heart. Included is Australia's Coral Sea, an exceptionally healthy tropical ocean ecosystem.

We are deeply concerned about the fate of the world's reefs, given the combined impact of sea temperature rise, ocean acidification, and overfishing. Your government is showing great leadership by introducing a carbon tax to reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions. However, coral reefs need all the help they can get. Time to save them is quickly running out. We urge you to fully protect the reefs of the Coral Sea.

A high level of protection for marine ecosystems is vital as no-take marine reserves maintain or restore healthy biodiversity, provide a carbon sink, generate life-giving oxygen, preserve critical habitat, and allow low-impact activities like ecotourism to thrive. They are good for the ocean, which means they are good for humanity.

Establishing the Coral Sea as a fully protected area adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park would be an extraordinary gift to all humanity and to the Earth, for all time. The world stands to benefit from your leadership. Your leadership in supporting this initiative will make a world of difference and a difference for the world.

Yours sincerely,

p.p. Gigi Brisson
Founder, OceanElders

for Ocean Elders:

Sir Richard Branson
Founder, Virgin Group

Jackson Browne
Musician

Jean-Michel Cousteau
Chairman, Ocean Futures Society

Dr. Sylvia Earle
Oceanographer

Graeme Kelleher AO

Sven Lindblad
Founder, Lindblad Expeditions

Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan

Ted Turner
Chairman, Turner Enterprises, Inc.

Captain Don Walsh USN (Ret), PhD
Oceanographer

cc: the Hon Tony Burke MP, Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

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