

Call to Morrison Government for coastal and marine commission

By Brad Farmer

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One of Australia's most prominent conservationists and official “Beach Ambassador” for Tourism Australia, [Brad Farmer](#), is urging the Morrison Government to do more in protecting our coastal resources.

THE FUTURE of Australia’s coast and its marine resources hang in the balance with clear and present dangers to the environment and our way of life.

As the founder of [Surfrider Australia](#), I’m taking this opportunity on the 30th anniversary of the coastal organisation I founded to warn of an ominous forecast if the Federal Government does not take immediate measures. I am calling on the Morrison Government to establish a national coastal commission to enact a federal coastal and marine protection bill.

The evidence is in and it's time to act.

Despite dozens of reports and commissions recommending a whole-of-country approach, Australia still does not have a pragmatic policy framework to manage its most valuable and sustainable resource. Federal and state portfolios cover resources such as fisheries, mining, forests, water and agriculture, yet nothing exists to keep the health of our coastal and marine resources in check.

I believe the vast majority of Australians would endorse a ministry for coastal and marine resources.

It’s urgent and a golden opportunity for Scott Morrison to do something positive and leave a lasting legacy for our ever-growing coastal population and the pressures the asset is facing.

Offshore oil and gas exploration, the decline of the Great Barrier Reef, coastal erosion, inappropriate development and privatisation of beaches, I believe, are the key areas of immediate concern.

On a positive note, reflecting on a lifetime of coastal advocacy, I have witnessed a phenomenal sea change by coastal communities to have greater ownership in the decision-making process at a local level and an even greater love affair of all things beach and aquatic.

Australia has the largest number of beaches in the world of [11,761](#) and the third largest Exclusive Economic Zone (Marine [EEZ](#)) established under the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea ([UNCLOS](#)). Australia is also, by far, the greatest beach-going nation in the world and is widely acknowledged as having the world's [best beaches](#) and coastline.

Australia is just one big beach and it needs our efforts to protect it.

Thank you.

[Brad Farmer](#) *is an Australian advocate, author and conservationist and has been widely published in journals, magazines and newspapers over four decades. You can follow Brad on Twitter [@UR_BradFarmer](#).*