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## **PFA Welcomes NSW Government's Stand for Commercial fishing**

The Professional Fishermen's Association (PFA) welcomes the recent statement from the NSW Government of their support of a sustainable and viable commercial fishing industry for NSW. At the opening of the new Fisheries Office at Coffs Harbour, the Hon. Katrina Hodgkinson, Minister for Fisheries announced the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government's Statement of Intent. The statement emphasised the Government's "commitment to revitalising the commercial fishing industry in NSW".

Tricia Beatty, Executive Office for the PFA said "the statement provides assurance to the industry that the NSW Government is committed to building a strong, sustainable and economically viable commercial fishing industry."

"Our industry is currently going through a significant industry restructure and many within the industry are concerned about their futures within it. At this critical time in our industry, we welcome the government's announcement that they believe our industry has a strong future ahead," Ms Beatty said.

The NSW wild harvest commercial fishing industry is a dynamic network of skilled businesses. Commercial fishers, wholesalers, processors and retailers, work together with the restaurant and catering industry to supply fresh seafood to communities across the State, as well as to interstate and overseas markets.

The wild harvest commercial fishing managed under NSW jurisdiction is a vibrant industry that is worth more than \$90 million dollars at first point of sale. The industry underpins the economy of many coastal towns providing wealth and employment in places, and at times of the year, where there is little other economic activity. The health benefits of seafood are well known and the industry is rising to the challenge of ensuring that fresh seafood is available not just along the coast, but throughout NSW.

The NSW commercial fisheries are carefully managed. The industry has recognised the challenges in making fisheries sustainable and has led many of the changes introduced to improve environmental performance. The NSW fishing industry is primarily made up of small family businesses that rely on high levels of local knowledge and skills learnt over many generations. These businesses use some of the most environmentally sound technology available, such as world leading by-catch reduction devices, and operate under stringent controls regarding their fishing times, seasons and equipment. The industry is constantly striving to improve its environmental performance and contributes millions of dollars each year to research and compliance programs.

"We welcome the minister's statement that she has every confidence that the flow on benefits to industry investment, growth and productivity will be enjoyed by commercial fishers and through the supply chain for many years to come," Ms Beatty said.

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