



NSW's PFA Strongly Support the Trip Limit Arrangements for the NSW State Fishers

Members of the Professional Fishermen's Association (PFA) of NSW are delighted to advise that the NSW commercial trawl fishing fleet is a sustainable and productive fishery. The NSW Government and industry have worked together to ensure sustainability and arrangements introduced on the 3rd of May 2013 would have continued this tradition.

Ms Beatty, the new Executive Officer for the PFA, advised that "the arrangements are about a fair and equitable use of a sustainable resource."

Recent claims from SETFIA are completely unfounded and disturbing in their accusations. There are safeguards in place to ensure that the resource is not over exploited through the use of trigger controls and strong management strategies.

NSW fishermen were subjected to trip limits due to the Commonwealth's concern regarding the enforceability of their own quota. Specifically concerns regarding dual licences (those that hold both Commonwealth and State licences) harvesting their allocation in Commonwealth waters but misreporting it to state waters. The change made to the trip limits by NSW Fisheries was to remove this requirement from those with only state licences as the issue was not relevant to these operators.

NSW fishery has stricter input controls on this fishery in comparison. We have more conservative minimum size limits of 33cm for flathead (in comparison with the Commonwealth's 28 min size limit; larger mesh sizes in our trawl nets, and significant area closed to fishing – for example the Batemans Marine Park closed significant productive grounds for our fishers). In addition, more than half of the trawlers were bought out through the marine parks.

Tricia Beatty, Executive Officer of the PFA expressed her strong disappointment that panic merchants had jumped into the issue without trying to get the facts straight.

"I am also disappointed that claims that NSW Fisheries should have spoken to SETFIA as the Commonwealth does not consult with our industry association on changes made to their arrangements. Instead we rely on our strong communication with NSW Fisheries to inform us of any proposed changes by the Commonwealth," said Ms Beatty.

The recently proposed reduction of the recreational bag limit is a completely separate issue. As stated in the review paper, the proposed reduction is about bag limits being "excessive". The latest scientific surveys show that the bag limits for these commonly caught species are rarely reached by most recreational fishers (less than 1% of fishing trips). The review states a need to introduce more effective limits, not more sustainable limits.

"Let me make this very clear, this fishery is a sustainably fishery and these arrangements will in no way jeopardise this, but will ensure a more equitable and fair use of the resource.

"I am disappointed in those outside the system crying foul and having a knee jerk reaction without coming to us or NSW Fisheries to properly discuss the perceived risks involved and the justification for this decision," added Ms Beatty.

“At a time in our history where industry should be standing together in ensuring sustainable management of our resources in a fair and equitable arrangement, it is disappointing that another industry body has leapt in making strong and unfounded accusations. It appears this is more about concerns over the value of Quota units rather than any question of sustainability,” said Ms Beatty.

For more information contact Ms Tricia Beatty mob 0429 303 371 or eo@pfai.com.au or Richard Bagnato, PFA industry representative on mob 0439 343 465.