

NSW Commercial Fishing Community Condemns Labor's Unnecessary Marine Park Proposal

30 September 2014

The NSW commercial fishing community is extremely disturbed to learn that the NSW Labor Party is using the concept of a new Marine Park in Sydney as their election platform.

Tricia Beatty, Executive Officer of the Professional Fishermen's Association of NSW said that "this proposal has the potential to be "devastating" for seafood consumers and for the commercial fishing and marketing sectors of New South Wales."

Opposition Leader John Robertson announced that if the Labor Party is successful when we go to the polls on March 2015 then they would declare a Sydney Marine Park which would extend from Pittwater right down to Port Hacking and take in fishing grounds further south to Wollongong. "This will have significant impact on our industry's ability to provide local fresh prawns, fish, lobsters and crabs to the New South Wales and Australian seafood loving people", said Ms Beatty.

"The current NSW Government is looking to rectify the mistakes of the previous Labor Government's hastily declared Marine Parks and the damage done to regional communities throughout NSW. Some areas of NSW, such as Bateman's Bay, have been severely reduced and families threatened due to the removal of both commercial and recreational fishing from their once economically thriving regions," said Ms Beatty.

"The NSW fishing industry has been suffering under these mistakes and is eagerly awaiting the NSW Government Marine Estate Management Authority's strategy and review of existing arrangements. We understand that the Marine Estate Management Authority is looking at the management of NSW marine resources based on science, threats and risk assessments – not political point scoring. The establishment of any marine park must be based on a sensible approach that includes the assessment of the marine ecosystem as a whole, the benefits of the marine park and the socio-economic impact that these proposals will have on our NSW coastal communities, not political agenda. The Marine Estate Management Authority has committed to conserving marine biodiversity without compromising regional communities - balancing the various needs of our commercial and recreational communities."

"We support conservation of the marine environment more than anyone - after all, our livelihoods depend on a healthy marine resource for generations to come - but we want this conservation based on real threats and real scientific evidence, or not at all." said Ms Beatty.

"Australian fisheries are already recognised globally for world-class sustainable seafood production. In New South Wales alone, we spend millions of dollars every year in research, management and policing to ensure fishing opportunities are sustained for current and future generations."

"We reject the Labor Party's ill-considered proposal and urge all New South Wales people who want a healthy, sustainable seafood industry for generations to come to reject their policy on the March polling day," said Ms Beatty.

For media enquiries please contact Tricia Beatty, Executive Officer of the PFA on 0429 303 371 or email eo@pfai.com.au.

PFA providing effective representation on NSW commercial wild harvest fishing to all levels of government and other key stakeholders