



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Industry unite to reject current reform

In an all-time first, the Professional Fishermen's Association (PFA) and the Australian Marine Alliance (AMA) have joined forces in NSW to highlight that regardless of the outcome of the March election, industry has become disenfranchised from the Government's reform which has caused stress and anxiety throughout the industry.

CEO of Australian Marine Alliance, Dane Van Der Neut advised that "The process was flawed from the start and is not supported by industry. Our industry is angry with the government's inability to ensure that the department adequately consulted and, more importantly, actually listen to industry instead of pushing a process that has ended in a complete failure to deliver what was originally discussed. Our Working Groups met many times with the Department and pointed out these failing and yet still the Department ignored the advice and put forward unworkable options.

Tricia Beatty Executive Officer of the PFA said, "The objective of the Reform Program was economic viability for the industry, unfortunately though, the Government's solution placed the burden on the fishers who are active and viable.

Dane Van Der Neut agreed, "What was proposed by the Department was completely unworkable and saw the majority of our industry walk away at the lack of understanding that the Department demonstrated. The industry as a whole has been faced with too much uncertainty for too long with no faith in the Department's ability to deliver a reform that will not cause unacceptable hardship."

Tricia Beatty stated, "We were promised an alternative to the original proposals but have seen no Plan B and no industry consultation. The working groups have not been approached, nor any further public meetings. We have seen nothing. Instead things have been delayed until after an election that leaves industry feeling extremely stressed and concerned about what we are facing in the near future.

Tricia Beatty stated, “In May last year the public consultation phase of the reform ended and we still have not seen a summary of the public submissions. We have been promised this report but, still nearly 10 months after the submission were due, no report has been produced. Where is it? Why has it taken so long?”

Dane Van Der Neut said, “We call on leaders to review the actual impact of the reform process, placed on the table, on our fisheries and the inability this reform process has in achieving fair economic viability and sustainability outcomes without destroying livelihoods.

“We should be able to develop a package that delivers on all fronts, economic, social and environmental, whilst allowing those who wish to exit to do so with dignity without affecting those left who are already deemed viable and fishing sustainably. There also needs to be a rebalance where seafood consumers are addressed in the process and therefore able to access affordable, wild caught sustainable seafood. For some reason NSW seafood consumers have been completely neglected throughout the whole process.

“In summary, both the PFA and AMA highlight that the majority of industry in NSW has lost faith in the Government and its DPI Managers due to this reform and that the Government needs to be held accountable for this.”

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