

PFA Response to Reform Announcement *MEDIA STATEMENT*

1st June 2016

Yesterday's announcement by the Minister for Primary Industry, Hon Niall Blair regarding Commercial Fisheries Business Adjustment Program has received a mixed response from commercial fishers across NSW.

Executive Officer of the Professional Fishermen's Association (PFA), Tricia Beatty said today "There are definite aspects of the Program that we welcome but in essence the linkage decisions still come down to a number of fisheries being required to invest in an unknown future. The Program still has commercial fishers purchasing more shares to remain in their industry – with members fearing for the availability of the shares and their costs, and with little certainty that it will achieve the viability promoted."

"There is a continuing argument between the NSW Government and ourselves about viability and how to achieve this. Our frustration and anger stems from commercial fishers across NSW spending significant time and resources throughout the consultation period trying to resolve these issues with little change in the final linkage decision for some of our fisheries" said Ms Beatty.

"The Minister has certainly listened to many concerns from our fishers and in response has provided a financial package of adjustment that includes improved and additional assistance measures targeted to active fishers that should be supported through the transition period, low interest rate loans with more time to adjust to changes and grants for fishing Cooperatives.

"However, there are still fisheries whose announced linkages still leave strong financial uncertainty and anxiety regarding unknown quota allocations and unknown costs. Fishers that have been linked to quotas are angry about their ability to remain viable under such allocations and the feasibility of investment in their industry. For example, being told that you are moving to a quota fishery where the harvest level or associated costs are not known for a further 2.5 years has caused frustration in fishers who still cannot decide whether to remain or exit the industry," said Ms Beatty.

"The PFA welcomes the positive and proactive measures that the Minister has committed to undertake with the promotion and strengthening of our NSW Seafood Industry through his commitment to introduce a NSW Seafood Labelling Scheme and collaborative promotion of local seafood. However, we are still faced with major industry structural upheaval and anxiety," said Ms Beatty.

"The details are unknown and we will need to work closely with the NSW Government to ensure regulations can be workable. We have already identified some of these concerns with the NSW Government and will endeavour to work with the Minister and DPI Staff to negotiate the details of such a complex and significant program."

**For further media information, please contact:
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PFA providing effective representation on NSW commercial wild harvest fishing to all levels of government and other key stakeholders