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“MEDIA RELEASE”

PFA Condemns AFTA's Agenda to Deny NSW Community Access to Local Seafood

The Professional Fishermen's Association of New South Wales (PFA) expressed their disgust and concern regarding the recent ABC's Landline Report titled "*Fishing for votes: The political power of recreational fishing*" featuring on Sunday 20th November 2016.

Executive Officer of the PFA, Tricia Beatty said today "within the program, it was obvious that the Australian Fishing Trade Association (AFTA) had no interest in the science that demonstrates our professional fishing industries as sustainable. That their agenda would drive political propaganda and use this to pressure the Government into designating sustainable fishing grounds solely for the use of 8-10% of the community."

This tactic has already proved successful in Victoria and Queensland in closing and denying this public resource to the community and designating it solely for a leisure pursuit. Mr Allan Hansard, Chief Executive of the AFTA is quoted as stating that "net fishing in New South Wales would be targeted next year after the Reforms in the professional fishing sector were completed". This would centre on the Hawkesbury River, the Central Coast and in Shoalhaven.

"Already PFA members have expressed their fear that they will invest in the purchase of additional shares through the Reform to then face area closure and restricted access of historical fishing grounds. Already 33 productive NSW rivers are exclusively designated for recreational fishing to the detriment of the supply of local seafood. AFTA's sole agenda to increase recreational fishers is based on the need to increase recreational fishing tackle and gear sales – not to safeguard the communities' best interests," said Ms Beatty

"Our fishing industry is central to many regional NSW communities and it is important that we are recognised for our important contributions. Looking beyond the economic data has ratified our vital role that we play in other areas of community life. Professional fishers, for example, are regularly involved in on-water search and rescue activities and community fund raising activities. Seafood is central to many cultural celebrations such as Christmas and Lunar New Year. And fishing and long standing fishing families are part of the cultural heritage of many communities across NSW," said Ms Beatty.

Looking at the interdependence between sectors, and beyond simple economic measures to consider broader social and cultural aspects of the industry provides important insights. And what we stand to lose if we don't safeguard this sector and its historical fishing grounds," said Ms Beatty.

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