

## **NSW SEAFOOD INDUSTRY CALLS FOR SUPPORT LEADING INTO 2019 ELECTIONS**

**13 February 2019**

The Professional Fishermen's Association of NSW (PFA) is calling on the NSW Political Parties to announce their commitment and support of the NSW Seafood Industry. The NSW Seafood Industry is worth over \$500 million to the NSW economy with it also providing essential services to the remote and regional communities of NSW. Findings from the independent UTS "Valuing Coastal Fisheries Project" found:

- 94 per cent of the general public in NSW believes it is important that seafood continues to be produced in NSW
- 96 per cent believe buying local seafood is better for the local community
- 89 per cent of NSW residents expect to eat fresh local seafood when holidaying on the coast, 76 per cent say it is an important part of their coastal visit experience
- 60 per cent of professional fishers have helped out with search and rescue operations in estuaries and coastal waters
- 78 per cent of recreational fishers across the state prefer local bait

Tricia Beatty, Chief Executive Officer for the PFA said "Our seafood industry is an important contributor to the NSW community and seafood loving public. The NSW commercial fisheries are carefully managed. The resource is shared amongst an estimated 800 commercial fishing businesses that catch fish for the whole community to enjoy. The industry has recognised the challenges in making fisheries sustainable and has led many of the changes introduced to improve environmental performance. As stated in the UTS project "The professional fishing industries are an essential ingredient for maintaining the economic, social and cultural richness of coastal communities."

The NSW wild harvest commercial fishing industry is a dynamic network of skilled businesses. Commercial fishers, wholesalers, processors and retailers, work together with the restaurant and catering industry to supply fresh seafood to communities across the State, as well as to interstate and overseas markets. The NSW fishing industry is primarily made up of small family businesses that rely on high levels of local knowledge and skills learnt over many generations. These businesses use some of the most environmentally sound technology available, such as world leading by-catch reduction devices, and operate under stringent controls regarding their fishing times, seasons and equipment. The industry is constantly striving to improve its environmental performance and contributes millions of dollars each year to research and compliance programs.

"As an industry we have been under constant reviews and restructures and subjected to ever changing regulations and environmental conditions. We have been subjected to several years of drought conditions which has had a devastating impact on the species that we harvest and the strict regulations we are subjected to does not allow flexibility to change with the nature of our environment," 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

Late last year, the PFA launched its Strategic Priorities for the industry of which it seeks the following commitments:

- Recognise our industry as an asset and commit to long-term security of access to our traditional fishing grounds;
- formalise a co-management approach to NSW commercial fisheries management and governance
- Development and implementation of co-management harvest strategies that are focused on harvesting at the maximum sustainable yield, full utilisation of harvested product and minimum wastage.
- Adoption of the Hall Consultancy Group Report that identifies the main economic barriers that restricts industry investment into their own businesses.
- Implementation of mandatory and enforceable seafood origin labelling across the seafood supply chain including restaurants and cafes etc
- Prior to adoption of cost recovery policies, there must be an audit and efficiency review of fisheries governance arrangements.
- Reduction of legislative complexities and inefficiencies and centralisation of relevant legislation that applies to the commercial fishing industry
- Develop and formalise industry consultation networks through the industry body to support the Minister's advisory body COMFISH
- Recognition of OceanWatch as the State Marine NRM organisation, and match our NSW industry investment into OceanWatch
- Commitment to stop gas and petroleum exploration in NSW waters and ensure no supporting infrastructure for these activities.
- Initiate an appropriately funded program to enhance and assist the fishermen's cooperatives in NSW, including funding for redevelopment, training and capacity building.
- Work with the PFA and the NSW Fishing Industry Training Council to develop a program targeting schools and career markets to showcase the seafood industry is a career options with many opportunities to expand in.
- Adoption of a marine safety program focused on the commercial fishing industry including provision of a free marine safety kit for those who participate in the program
- Creation of a national centre for seafood quality, safety and value-adding based in Sydney.

"The PFA is eager to learn each party's commitment to the viability and security of our industry and believe that the parties have a responsibility to advise our community of their intentions towards the seafood industry," said Ms Beatty.

For media enquire please contact Tricia Beatty, Chief Executive Officer of the PFA on 0429 303 371 or email [ceo@pfa.com.au](mailto:ceo@pfa.com.au)

*Photos for use attached*