



Commonwealth
Fisheries Association



**Wildcatch
Fisheries SA**



W A F I C
Western Australian Fishing
Industry Council inc.

MEDIA RELEASE

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Fishing Industry Plan for South-west marine conservation

The Commonwealth, South Australia and Western Australia commercial fishing industries submitted a refined and responsible proposal for the South-west Marine Reserve Network that will not only ensure conservation and protection of the marine environment but will also assure a vibrant fishing industry continues into the future.

The Commonwealth Government's draft proposal for the South-west Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network will significantly affect the fishing industry and safe supply of the seafood that Australian consumers enjoy.

The commercial fishing industry has been and continues to be committed to sustainably sourcing seafood and protecting the marine environment on which our fisheries resources rely. This is the fundamental consideration of all fishing operations. Australia has a record of some of the best managed and most sustainable fisheries in the world many of which are located in the proposed South-west marine reserve network area.

The fishing industry proposed marine reserve network achieves significant conservation outcomes on a national and international scale.

Our proposal would be Australia's largest marine protected area network. Covering an area greater than the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park it would be the third largest (by area) marine protected area in the world. More than 40 per cent of this proposal will be in highly protected zones where no fishing will be

allowed. If declared, the fishing industry's proposal would exceed Australia's international commitment to conserve 10% of coastal and marine areas.

The fishing industry reserve network comprehensively addresses the conservation matters highlighted in the Government's draft proposal for the reserve network for public consultation which closed on Monday, 9 August.

We encourage the public to read the commercial fishing industry submission (www.comfish.com.au) to find out more about how our reserve network proposal will sustain our fishing industry into the future.

As a significant and responsible user of Australia's natural marine resources, the seafood industry remains committed to working with governments and other interested parties to achieve optimum outcomes for the Australian community through the Marine Bioregional and Reserve Network planning processes.

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Background

Australia's commercial fishing and aquaculture industry is worth over \$2 billion annually and employs around 16,000 people (9,700 directly and 6,200 indirectly). The seafood industry provides:

- Regional employment
- Export income
- Cost effective monitoring of the marine environment
- Economic diversification
- Healthy, high quality and sustainably sourced food
- Consumers with the joy of a seafood meal

The South-west (SW) region is vast, with a range of Commonwealth and State fisheries operating from numerous coastal communities and over 40 urban and regional ports and harbours along South Australia and Western Australia's coastline.

Fisheries in the SW region – Commonwealth, South Australia and Western Australia – are the top three gross value of production of wild-catch seafood in Australia. These three jurisdictions are major sources of Australia's highest value seafood exports – Abalone, Rock Lobster, Prawn and Tuna.

Fishing Industry Refined South-west Marine Reserve Network

Coverage

- 354,768 km² of Australia's ocean (an area larger than the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park)
- represents 26.2% of the South-west marine bioregion
- takes Australia's marine reserves to over 14 per cent of Australia's exclusive economic zone.

Protects:

- ALL key ecological features
- 17 of the 18 biological seascapes (as per the Government proposal)
- 15 of the 16 seafloor features (as per the Government proposal)

Minimises socio-economic disruption.

Represents a unified fishing industry position.