



THE HON JOEL FITZGIBBON MP

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

REF: MNMC2013-03259

Mr Grahame Turk
Chair
National Seafood Industry Alliance
PO Box 9022
DEAKIN ACT 2600

Grahame,
Dear Mr Turk

Thank you for your letter of 24 May 2013 to the Hon. Julia Gillard MP, former Prime Minister, requesting the Australian Labor Party's position on a number of policy matters relating to the seafood industry in Australia. Your letter has been forwarded to me as I am the minister responsible for the bulk of the matters you raised. I regret the delay in responding.

The Rudd Government will release detailed policies in due course. In response to your questions I draw your attention to our existing policy and the recent statement made by the former Fisheries Minister to Parliament in response to the Fisheries Management Review conducted by Mr David Borthwick AO PSM. The review report and ministerial statement is available at: www.daff.gov.au/fisheriesreview.

The Rudd Government remains committed to the productive, profitable and sustainable management of Commonwealth fisheries. We want the best system we can have, but it needs to be fit for purpose, cost effective and not unnecessarily burdensome for industry. The government also believes that all users should be able to expect healthy fisheries, managed appropriately in a manner that earns the community's confidence and serves the needs of generations to come.

In broadly accepting Mr Borthwick's recommendations, the government indicated that it has committed to consultation on a wide range of potential reforms. I am currently consulting with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry on a way forward for this process. I encourage the National Seafood Industry Alliance to participate in the public consultation process.

In the Fisheries Management Review, Mr Borthwick recommended that future aquaculture in Commonwealth waters should be administered by the States and, as necessary, that the fisheries acts be amended to accommodate this. In broadly accepting Mr Borthwick's recommendations, the government noted that any decisions involving devolution of Commonwealth powers in respect to aquaculture to the States will need to be well thought through and appropriately discussed with affected parties. When the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry consults on this issue I have asked that they approach your association to ensure you have every opportunity to make a submission.

The high standard of Commonwealth-managed fisheries means they are well placed to meet the requirements of rigorous independent environmental standards. Decisions about third-party environmental certification schemes are a matter for businesses depending on their particular needs and market expectations for seafood. I note that the 2011 Review of Food Labelling Law and Policy found that it could not justify extending country of origin labelling and the associated compliance burden to seafood sold in the food service sector, such as restaurants and cafes. The government continues to support this finding.

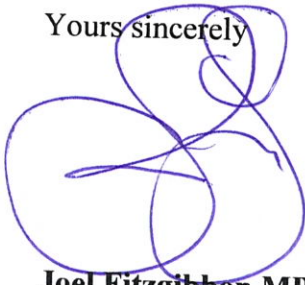
The government also recognises the need for the Australian seafood industry to leverage funding to support marketing. Amendments to the *Primary Industries and Energy Research and Development Act 1989* were introduced in the 2013 winter sitting of Parliament. Regrettably while the amendment was passed through the House of Representatives, the Bill was not able to be considered by the Senate.

The Australian Government remains committed to the development of marine reserves through the marine bioregional planning process to support the conservation and sustainable use of Australia's marine environment. The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities is the lead agency on marine bioregional planning issues and determines the gear types that are permitted within each zone of the marine reserves. As the Commonwealth marine reserves management plans are outside my portfolio responsibilities, I have copied this letter to the Hon. Mark Butler MP, as the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Water.

As the fuel levy rebate is also outside my portfolio responsibilities, I have copied this letter to the Hon. Chris Bowen MP, as the Treasurer, for his consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to outline the government's current position on these matters. I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



Joel Fitzgibbon MP

2 August 2013

cc. the Treasurer, the Hon. Chris Bowen MP
the Hon. Mark Butler MP, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Water