



Commonwealth
Fisheries Association



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MEDIA RELEASE

Industry plans to secure Australian seafood supply

The Commonwealth Fisheries Association, NSW Seafood Industry Council and Queensland Seafood Industry Council, proposals for the Temperate East and Coral Sea Marine Reserve Networks are now available. These plans for the marine environment will meet the Australian community's needs for a sustainable fresh Australian seafood supply.

As the primary supplier of high quality, sustainably caught seafood and marine products, the fishing industry, related businesses, and customers rely on a healthy and productive marine environment; and secure access to well managed fisheries and marine resources.

Reserve closures to fishing of the magnitude proposed by the Government are likely to dramatically impact the supply of high quality sustainably caught fish to Australia's eastern and southern population centres and regions.

The fishing industry supports a wide range of communities and businesses and is a significant employer in regional communities; in fact around 80% of the total value of wild catch seafood production is created during activities throughout the processing and supply chain.

The fishing industry calls for a strong public policy position for Australian wild-catch fisheries that balances the need for good marine conservation outcomes. As an integral part of Australia's maritime history and culture, and a contemporary supplier of high quality seafood and marine products, Australia's commercial fishing industry recognises and actively supports the need for a healthy and diverse marine environment.

Some of the fisheries that will be affected by the government's marine reserves:

- Major suppliers to the Sydney and Melbourne fish markets eg, flathead, morwong, mirror dory.
- Tuna – Australian consumers most demanded seafood.
- Premium deep water Queensland prawns.

There is no doubt that there can be sustainable commercial fishing in the Temperate East and Coral Sea and very significant conservation outcomes for the regions from existing fisheries management arrangements and appropriately designed marine reserve networks. The industry submissions to government demonstrate this balance.

We encourage the public to read the fishing industry submissions available at (www.comfish.com.au) and www.queenslandseafood.com.au to find out more about our marine reserve network proposals.

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About the Commercial Fishing Industry and Marine Bioregional Planning

- The seafood industry is Australia's sixth most valuable food based primary industry. Australia's seafood production is not sufficient to meet growing domestic consumer demand.
- Fisheries in Commonwealth waters are diverse and include numerous species of fin-fish, crustacean and molluscs. Species also range from largely sedentary to those that migrate over large distances.
- It is important that in developing a network of marine reserves industry and government find alternatives to closing access to areas which include important harvesting and migration areas.
- Fishing industry has developed reserve network proposals for all the bioregions.
- Fishing industry refinements to government proposals for the Temperate East, Coral Sea, North, North-west, and South-west networks are added to existing Australian Commonwealth and State marine reserves the total is a staggering **2,896,217 km² of Australia's marine environment covered by marine reserve**. This represents around 30 per cent of Australia's total EEZ, and is greater than the combined land area of Western Australia and Victoria. Expressed another way, **Australia would have almost as much area covered by marine reserves as the rest of the world combined**.
- The seafood industry's submissions to the Government on the proposed marine reserve networks are available at www.comfish.com.au and www.seafoodforaustralia.com.au