

# NATIONAL SEAFOOD INDUSTRY ALLIANCE

## PEW REPORT THREAT TO AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL INTEREST Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2010

The recently released Ecology Centre paper from the University of Queensland is riddled with factual errors and confusion, the National Seafood Industry Alliance said today.

The fact that the report is funded by the foreign environment lobby group PEW - which is in turn funded by US oil and gas interests - makes a mockery of the Ecology Centre's claims to be independent and suggests the utmost caution must be taken in considering its recommendations.

Fundamentally, the report ignores the fact that Australian fisheries **are** sustainable and well managed and calls for large expanses of marine area be locked up to preserve fish stocks.

The National Seafood Industry Alliance warns decision makers and the community about taking this report seriously given its significant ramifications for national security, the competitiveness of the economy and the survival of coastal communities.

The report calls for 50% of Australia's marine jurisdiction in the South West to be put into sanctuary zones which would exclude not only commercial and recreational fishing but also defence activities, commercial shipping and oil and gas activities.

"Given the extensive nature of the report's recommended marine closures, it is amazing that the full socio-economic impacts, the impacts on national security and the effects of natural resources management frameworks, such as those for fisheries, have not been sufficiently taken into account" said Anna Cronin, Chair of the National Seafood Industry Alliance and Chief Executive Officer at the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council.

"The report's recommendations do not appear to be based on objective and independent science and it would be imprudent and dangerous for this report to be taken seriously by decision-makers.

"While the fishing industry is pleased by the recent commitment by the Federal Government that it welcomes the views and information provided by all stakeholders in marine planning processes, it is important that substantiated, credible contributions are taken into account rather than flagrantly biased approaches" said Ms Cronin.

Ongoing whole of community dialogue on marine conservation and resource sharing is fundamental to ensuring a sustainable marine environment, healthy communities and a strong Australian economy.

The credibility of the PEW funded report is further undermined by its claims that there are 5 key requirements for marine sanctuaries to be accepted and one of these is "a high level of

independence from government and any research institution...from any major marine industry (such as the oil/gas industry..)”

The National Seafood Industry Alliance suggests that the Government discounts this PEW funded report and continues to engage with stakeholders on the sensible roll- out of marine planning in the South West and the rest of Australia’s marine regions in the interests of all Australians.

## THE FACTS

In a national context:

Australia currently has 9.5% of its entire marine environment (EEZ) set aside in Commonwealth Marine Protected Areas (MPA’s). Once State MPAs are added, this figure jumps to over 12% of Australia’s waters protected out of a total marine area (EEZ) of 8.9 million km<sup>2</sup>, more than 1 million km<sup>2</sup> is set aside in MPAs.

In an international context:

Australia has 5 of the "top 24" world's largest MPAs – Great Barrier Reef (2nd), Commonwealth Macquarie Island (8th), Heard Island and Macdonald Island (16th), Freycinet (18th), and Tasman Fracture (21st). These MPAs are over 30,000 km<sup>2</sup> each.

Australia leads the world in marine environmental protection in sustainable fisheries management.

Just looking at Commonwealth MPA’s, Australia now holds 20% of the world’s total MPA’s in our Exclusive Economic Zone (approx 840,000 km<sup>2</sup> in Australia, out of 4.2 million km<sup>2</sup> globally).

### MEMBERS OF NATIONAL SEAFOOD ALLIANCE

