



Commonwealth Fisheries Association

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MEDIA RELEASE

Commonwealth fishing industry concerns over South West marine park proposal

Today's release of the *South West Marine Bioregional Plan* by the Hon Tony Burke, Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, is the start of an important process that will consider how the natural resources of the marine environment are valued by the Australian community.

"The release of the draft South-West Plan provides the first opportunity for the fishing industry to see the proposed boundaries and zonings of the marine reserve, including where multiple use areas are likely to be situated. We have initial concerns at the significant areas proposed for complete fishing closures" said Trixi Madon, CEO Commonwealth Fisheries Association.

"All current marine industries, including fishing, will be impacted to varying degrees. We now have 90 days to carefully assess the impacts of these boundaries and zones on the fishing industry and the sustainable production of fish resources."

"A major focus for our association will be to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the potential impact of the draft zones, and the provision of advice on alternative options where they are needed that will minimise the impact on the fishing industry, the regional communities they support, and the supply of healthy seafood to the Australian community and export markets, as well as achieving marine conservation objectives." Ms Madon went on to say.

"We will be working closely with our members, the Western Australia and South Australian fishing industry and fully engaging in the government's consultation process to achieve the best outcomes from this planning process."

The CFA supports marine biodiversity conservation initiatives that recognise not only the need to meet biodiversity conservation objectives but also to ensure the sustainable future for the eco-system services that the marine environment provides, including fisheries.

Contact:

Trixi Madon, CEO

Ph: 0450 19 0066

About the CFA

- The Commonwealth Fisheries Association (CFA) is the peak industry body representing the interests of fishers in Commonwealth managed fisheries; a significant part of Australia's \$2.2 billion seafood industry.
- Commonwealth fisheries are a recognized valuable natural asset for the Australian community and make an important contribution to both the national and local economies. The fishing industry supports valuable jobs and infrastructure, particularly in regional areas. The fishing industry supports good health in the community by supplying fresh healthy seafood to Australian and overseas consumers.
- Commonwealth wild harvest fisheries are among the best managed and most sustainable in the world. Commonwealth fishers are committed to managing for a sustainable environment. Commonwealth fisheries are regulated under two ecologically sustainable development (ESD) legislative frameworks as well as subject to the *Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy*.
- The CFA is committed to promoting an informed awareness and greater understanding of the commercial fishing industry, its value and contribution to the Australian community.

Background – 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.
- There are a number of marine bioregional and marine reserve planning processes to be undertaken in the coming years. Throughout the 2005-2006 South-East Region MPA planning process, the fishing industry worked with Government and other stakeholders to design an marine reserve network that minimizes the impacts on the fishing industry, meets the needs of the community and achieved Government's stated conservation objectives.
- Commonwealth fisheries in the area of the South-West Bioregion include – Great Australian Bight Trawl, Commonwealth Gillnet Hook and Trap, Small Pelagic Fishery, Southern Bluefin Tuna, Southern Squid Jig, Western Deepwater Trawl and Western Tuna & Billfish.
- Commonwealth fisheries 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.