

**PUTTING EVIDENCE BASED SCIENCE BACK INTO
THE MARINE RESERVE DEBATE**

**"The Sustainability of Australian Seafood"
Professor Bob Kearney PhD, DSc, AM**

DATE: Monday December 5, 2011 @ 12.30

VENUE: Cottesloe Surf Club, 87 Marine Pde, Cottesloe.

The WA Fishing Industry Council (WAFIC) has invited Professor Bob Kearney, Emeritus Professor in Fisheries at University of Canberra, to Perth to present an independent perspective on the current Marine Reserves debate at a lunch to be held at the Cottesloe Surf Life Saving Club on Monday 5 December 2011.

The commercial fishing industry acknowledges that there is a place for a network of marine reserves for biodiversity conservation, and has invested substantial resources to engage with the Federal Government's Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities to help create a network that has integrity but minimizes the impact on the economic viability of fishing and fishing communities.

"The industry is disappointed by the emotional, and misleading statements by some in the conservation movement, who continually call for larger marine reserves on the basis that fisheries management in Australia has failed and the only answer is to lock up huge areas of oceans. This argument is without foundation and is contrary to all indicators on the status of Australian commercial fisheries and the ecosystems that supports these fisheries," said WAFIC's CEO, Guy Leyland.

"The Government and anyone seriously involved in the debate acknowledges that marine reserves are not for fisheries management purposes, and yet most of the arguments used are all about fisheries management issues and would encourage Western Australians to believe that our fisheries will collapse without massive marine parks.

"It should never be forgotten that the fishing industry delivers local seafood to the community to help feed our nation and is intricately woven into the social and economic fabric of many of our coastal communities.

"By international standards our industry has a small number of boats and low impact. Australia already imports 70% of the seafood we eat, which further highlights the very limited harvest we take, given the vastness of our oceans.

"The industry will never have the resources to pour into a slick propaganda war such as that currently being mounted by the conservation movement backed by the Pew Foundation, an American group that has millions of dollars at its disposal.

"However there are respected scientists, like Professor Kearney, who want to bring evidence based science to the reserve debate."

FOR COMMENT: Guy Leyland, CEO, WAFIC 0417 907 967

MEDIA INQUIRIES: Jo-Ann Ledger, Ledger Marketing 0419 042 518

Professor Robert Kearney PhD, DSc, AM

Bob Kearney is Emeritus Professor of Fisheries at the University of Canberra. He is Chairman of the Research Committees of the Hermon Slade Foundation and the Australia and Pacific Scientific Foundation.

Previous positions include: Director of the Skipjack and Tuna Programs for the South Pacific Commission, Chief Scientist and Deputy Director of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, Director of the NSW Fisheries Research Institute, Professor of Environmental Sciences and Head of School of Resource, Environmental and Heritage Sciences at the University of Canberra and Chairman of the Board of the WorldFish Center based in Malaysia. His current research interests include assessment of Australia's future supply and demand for seafood and improving the standard of science used to underpin natural resource conservation and allocation including in marine parks and between commercial and recreational fishers.