



MEDIA RELEASE

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Marine Parks - Net Gain for SA?



The viability of the South Australian Northern Zone Rock Lobster Fishery is now in question following last Friday's release of revised marine parks sanctuary zones.

While the revised proposal saw a reduction in the total number of 'no-take' zones, their placement has encompassed some of the most viable SA rock lobster fishing grounds.

President of the South Australian Northern Zone Rock Lobster Fishermen's Association Inc (SANZRLFA), Mr Trent Gregory, said that the cumulative impact on the fishery could be up to 55 tonnes of catch per season which, if it was to be bought out on the open market, would have a value in vicinity of \$18 million.

"For a fishery with a total quota of 310 tonnes, it will have a huge impact," said Mr Gregory.

"We stand to lose another eight to ten vessels from our current fleet of around 45 boats which will mean a significant loss of export revenue and employment in regional SA."

The problem is further compounded by the impending release of the Federal Government's separate South-west Marine Region final marine park zoning in Commonwealth waters, the outcome of which could further devastate the industry.

Mr Gregory said he was unsure how the State Government could adhere to its commitment of no more than a 5% economic impact on the commercial fishing industry while also funding proper management, monitoring, research, assessment and reporting required for a meaningful and effective network of marine parks.

"We're not aware of any allocated funding for either management of marine parks or compensation of displaced commercial fishers," Mr Gregory said.

"I'm worried that we'll end up with feel-good 'paper parks' that don't deliver any real conservation benefit at the expense of viable, sustainable, export industries that generate significant economic output for regional South Australia.

"If there won't be a net gain for SA we need to take a different approach - we hope that the Government is listening as we head towards the public consultation phase of this process.

"These sanctuary zones won't protect against climate change, run-off from the land, commercial shipping incidents, they'll simply exclude commercial fishing.

"The approach is wrong, if we're talking about fishing closures these shouldn't be managed under the Marine Parks Act, we have a Fisheries Act for that and it's a different conversation which of course we're willing to have.

"We've always supported conservation of marine biodiversity, and we want a meaningful marine parks network to do that, but it seems like we've still got a way to go at present."

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