

February 25, 2014

COMMERCIAL FISHING INDUSTRY SUPPORTS LIBERALS ON MARINE PARKS

The commercial fishing industry in South Australia is supporting the Liberal Party's "sensible approach" on marine park policy in the lead-up to next month's State Election.

To coincide with the launch of a new video today about how the Weatherill Government's marine park sanctuary zones threaten the livelihoods of local fishers and regional communities, the commercial fishing sector is urging all South Australians to join them when casting their vote on March 15.

Executive Officer of the South Australian Rock Lobster Advisory Council Inc (SARLAC), Justin Phillips, says the commercial fishing industry's future will be shaped by what happens on election day.

"We reject the Labor Government's ill-considered plans and sanctuary zones and urge all South Australians who want a healthy, sustainable seafood industry for generations to come to support the Liberals' marine park policy on March 15," said Mr Phillips.

"We think the Liberal Party has adopted a sensible approach to marine parks and has committed to conserving marine biodiversity without compromising regional communities, seafood exports and the future viability of commercial fisheries across the state."

Mr Phillips says the marine park management plans proposed by the State Government are scientifically flawed, and warns that the proposed "no take" sanctuary zones would have a devastating effect on a range of sectors and generate no real environmental benefit.

"The State Government's marine park plans, and particularly their sanctuary zones, have not been based on any scientific research or any real, identified threats to marine habitats," he said.

"The current plans put in jeopardy the livelihoods of thousands of South Australians and the future of many coastal towns, while the tourism industry will also suffer.

"We support conservation of the marine environment more than anyone - after all, our livelihoods depend on a healthy marine resource for generations to come - but we want real conservation based on real threats and real evidence."

The commercial fishing industry in South Australia generates close to \$2 billion of activity for the state and is the economic mainstay of many regional coastal communities.

"Worryingly, the proposed marine parks and sanctuary zones will result in a reduced supply of fresh, sustainably harvested seafood and an increase in imports to meet local demand," said Mr Phillips.



“Australian fisheries are already recognised globally for world-class sustainable seafood production. In South Australia alone, we spend millions of dollars every year in research, management and policing to ensure fishing opportunities are sustained for current and future generations.

“We simply cannot understand the State Government’s proposals and are therefore advocating a change of plans, and if not, a change of Government.”

For more information or to watch the new video featuring South Australian commercial fishers, visit www.soundsfishy.org.au.

FURTHER INFORMATION: Please contact:

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