

Media Release - 27th August 2012

Government 'Not Listening' on Marine Parks

Yesterday's release of draft marine park management plans and impact assessments again shows the Government is not listening to the concerns of regional South Australian's regarding the economic impacts of poorly-designed marine parks.

Chairman of the South Australian Marine Parks Management Alliance (the Alliance), Dr Gary Morgan, said this was a return to the 'bad old days' of Premier Mike Rann when the Government ignored community concerns and pushed through ideological agendas.

"These plans do nothing for marine conservation in South Australia," said Dr Morgan.

"But they will certainly impact negatively on the commercial seafood industry and the regional coastal communities and economies that depend on it.

"There will be a loss of income and employment that these communities simply cannot afford.

"The Government is aware of this but is intent on pushing ahead with what they see as a green-vote winner at the expense of all South Australians."

Dr Morgan noted that South Australia already imports over 70% of its seafood and these marine parks will result in reduced production, reduced exports, and higher prices for local fish for consumers.

"It's well known that the food industry in SA has a special competitive advantage and seafood is an important part of that future - it makes no sense to devastate some of our most sustainable food producers," Dr Morgan said.

"Some of the industries most affected are Rock Lobster and Abalone - globally competitive and the strongest Australian seafood industries in China.

"These industries do no damage to the marine environment - why is the Government sacrificing them? It's completely illogical and very poor public policy.

"The hypocrisy of this is clearly demonstrated by the Government's promotion of oil exploration in South Australian waters, which has proven potential to result in major environmental damage, while at the same time moving to shut down sustainable food producing industries.

"The draft Management Plans are not 'Plans' at all - they contain no details, apart from vague generalisations, of what they are designed to protect, how they will be managed and monitored and most importantly, how the marine parks will be paid for."

An independent study has confirmed that the proposed marine parks will cost more than \$100 million per year over the first five years, a financial burden on every SA taxpayer that is greater than the Carbon Tax.

“Despite these major costs, the Government is unable or unwilling to explain the details of their plans including showing the community the studies that demonstrate their benefits,” Dr Morgan added.

“The fishing industry is a great supporter of marine conservation, but these proposed parks are not about conservation, they are about shoring up a desperate Government at any cost.”

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