

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Labor Marine Parks Process - 'A Farce'**

The South Australian Labor Government's recently announced marine parks network has been described by the South Australian Rock Lobster Advisory Council Inc (SARLAC) as a total debacle and farce.

SARLAC Executive Officer, Mr Justin Phillips, said it is clear the Government has been working towards a pre-determined, politically driven and symbolic outcome on this issue and is now hiding behind a token consultation process.

"This is the worst form of Government 'consultation' we have ever seen and unfortunately people, communities and industries have invested huge amounts of time, money and emotional energy to genuinely engage on this issue only to discover the decisions had already been made," Mr Phillips said.

"That the Environment Department claims it was able to review in excess of 8,500 submissions, analyse, compile and submit their advice to the Minister and Cabinet in four weeks clearly demonstrates that submissions were probably not even read and were simply ignored!

"The result is a marine parks network that causes maximum damage to sustainable food production while achieving very little for real marine conservation.

"This is a slap in the face for the many community members who were conned into believing they were engaged in genuine consultation.

"Of course the tax-payer has funded this symbolic process."

Mr Phillips said the promotion of the marine parks process by the Premier as 'one of the most consultative and collaborative seen in South Australia's history on any public policy issue' is either disingenuous or political spin given most feedback provided to the Government has been ignored.

This included ignoring the advice of the Government's own extensive, tax-payer resourced, Local Advisory Group process, ignoring independently commissioned reports on impacts, ignoring interim findings of a Parliamentary Select Committee set up to examine the consultation process and even ignoring economic and social assessments commissioned by the Government itself.

"Statements made by the Premier and Minister Caica in relation to a perceived market advantage for industry, offsets for the impacts of lost commercial production through increased tourism as well as having local communities 'owning' and self-regulating these parks are totally ridiculous. There is no evidence of this whatsoever," said Mr Phillips.

"Such comments reflect a worrying lack of understanding of how business actually works and shows just how out of touch the Government is with reality on these issues.

"We have communities all along the West Coast and Eyre Peninsula, around the Gulfs, on Kangaroo Island and Yorke Peninsula who are angry and outraged with the outcome of this process; there will be no community ownership of these parks."

Mr Phillips said that, at the request of Government, many sectors of the commercial industry had invested significant resources in developing credible alternatives to the current high impact scenario released by Government, only for it to be overlooked.

“It’s now left to regional, coastal communities to deal with the extensive impacts resulting from the loss of sustainable, high-value export industries in their regions which also benefit all South Australians,” Mr Phillips said.

“The lack of trust in the Government and its processes will be significant and long-lasting because of this.”

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