



The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP
Minister for Primary Industries
Assistant Minister for Tourism and Major Events

MEDIA RELEASE

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MORE TIME FOR COMMERCIAL FISHERIES REFORM

NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, has announced that the independent Structural Adjustment Review Committee (SARC) will be given more time to tailor options and consult with industry on the Commercial Fisheries Reform Program.

Ms Hodgkinson said the NSW Government has heard the concerns of commercial and recreational fishers, and Members of Parliament, in relation to some of the options recently put out for public consultation.

“The timeline was ambitious and, while the delay is unfortunate, we are committed to getting this reform right. That is why I have agreed to a request from the independent SARC for more time,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“Chair of the independent SARC, Mr Ian Cartwright, has requested more time to carefully examine the options papers and more than 750 submissions which were received.

“SARC will now carefully go through the submissions and will then undertake further targeted consultation with industry on a range of refined options.

“I acknowledge the strong concern shown from some parts of the commercial fishing industry towards the options papers and I recognise that there are others in the industry that will be unhappy with this delay.

“This is a reform for the long term and it is important we get it right.”

Ms Hodgkinson said a three-year cap on commercial fisheries management charges will also be put in place, to reduce the financial burden on shareholders.

“This cap was a recommendation of the independent SARC and will provide some temporary certainty and stability as the reform program proceeds,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“The \$14 million the NSW Government has allocated to the structural adjustment package, including exit grants, will be quarantined until the reform is finalised.

“The NSW Government is also considering engaging an independent consultant to analyse the reform package, particularly relating to share linkage, for the consideration of the independent SARC.

“The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government is committed to ensuring the long-term viability and sustainability of our commercial fishing industry and following through on this much-needed reform.”

Mr Cartwright said the additional time will allow the committee to further engage with industry, through a range of avenues including the working groups, and to refine recommendations.

“The SARC will now look carefully at options that are, as far as possible, tailored to the circumstances of fisheries and share classes,” Mr Cartwright said.

Professional Fishermen’s Association executive officer, Tricia Beatty, said: “We welcome the Minister’s decision to allow more time, in response to industry’s concerns”.

Sydney Fish Market general manager, Bryan Skepper, said: “Time must be taken to ensure the objectives of the proposed reform are achieved”.

“Namely the long-term viability of the industry, improved strength and value of shareholders’ access rights and improved opportunities and flexibility to tailor their access,” he said.