



Katrina Hodgkinson MP

Minister for Primary Industries

Minister for Small Business

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 14 November 2012

LONG OVERDUE REFORM OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

Minister for Primary Industries Katrina Hodgkinson today announced the most significant reforms of the commercial fishing industry in NSW history.

Ms Hodgkinson said the Commercial Fisheries Reform Program will ensure the industry has long-term viability and sustainability of the State's fisheries resources.

"A lack of investment, ageing commercial fishing fleets, too many fishers through poorly allocated fishing rights, and excessive red tape has stifled the industry," Ms Hodgkinson said.

"With 85 per cent of seafood sold in NSW being imported, these new changes are needed to ensure that there is a continued availability of fresh, local seafood."

The key reforms include:

- linking shares in each fishery to either catch or fishing effort, meeting the original intention of share management as outlined when the former NSW Liberals & Nationals Government enacted the *Fisheries Management Act* in 1994;
- restoring confidence in decision-making processes through the establishment of a Ministerial Fisheries Advisory Council (MFAC), Peak Industry Body, and other improved consultative arrangements;
- an initial fee increase from July 2013, moving towards fees based on resource access;
- providing a way for some fishers to exit the industry and others to set-up their businesses for the future through the allocation of a \$16 million structural adjustment package; and
- removing unnecessary fishing controls and improving the general management of fisheries resources in NSW, which has hindered efficiency for far too long.

The NSW Government's reforms have been developed in response to the Independent Report into *NSW Commercial Fisheries Policy, Management and Administration*, and all 22 recommendations have been broadly adopted.

"A number of legislative changes will be made next year to implement the reforms," Ms Hodgkinson said.

“I’m also pleased to announce the appointment of a dedicated Industry Liaison Manager, Mr Dallas D’Silva. Mr D’Silva will be an important link between industry and the Department of Primary Industries during this reform process.

“These long overdue reforms follow 16 years of Labor’s policy reversals and failure to implement recommendations from several reports.

“The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government understands the significance of the State’s commercial fishing industry and is not shying away from the tough decisions necessary to revitalise the industry,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

The NSW Government’s detailed response to the report’s recommendations can be accessed online: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/commercial/reform

MEDIA: Kerri Griffiths 0417 905 119