



# The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP

## Minister for Primary Industries

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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Tuesday 4 November 2014

#### **FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ACT REVISIONS INTRODUCED TO NSW PARLIAMENT**

Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, today introduced the *Fisheries Management Amendment Bill 2014* to the NSW Parliament, to reduce red tape, and allow for improved fisheries management into the future.

Ms Hodgkinson said the Bill will make a range of minor amendments to the *Fisheries Management Act 1994*, which will benefit the commercial, recreational, charter and aboriginal fishing sectors, including:

- introducing the new FishOnline administration system, to provide commercial fishing and charter fishing operators with online access to undertake a range of business-related transactions and reporting requirements;
- relaxing commercial fishing boat licensing requirements, removing the need for all boats to be licensed;
- new ministerial order provisions to facilitate quicker implementation of new or amended bag (or possession) limits;
- new licensing requirements for charter fishing operators, to enable operators to more easily adjust their business operations to better meet the needs of recreational fishing clients;
- establishing a new Aboriginal Fishing Trust Fund, as a transparent accounting mechanism for the receipt and expenditure of any monies for enhancing, maintaining or protecting Aboriginal culture fishing;
- initiate new consultative arrangements which can be created on an 'as needs' basis making processes more efficient; and
- introducing stronger biosecurity provisions to help manage the risks of new declared diseases entering NSW.

Ms Hodgkinson said the Bill will make important changes to ensure the *Fisheries Management Act 2014* reflects modern business practices, while continuing to meet the community's expectations in relation to aquatic resources in NSW.

"This Bill represents the NSW Government's commitment to ensuring the sustainability and appropriate sharing of fisheries resources, and covers all aspects of fisheries management," Ms Hodgkinson said.

"The Bill promotes greater opportunity for fishing operations by including improvements to reduce red tape and convenience in administration, such as relaxation of commercial boat licensing and a new online administration system.

"It is important to note that these amendments are not implementing arrangements under the Commercial Fisheries Reform Program currently under consideration by the independent Structural Adjustment Review Committee.

“Rather, they provide the mechanisms that will allow for the implementation of commercial fishing reforms once the final structure of the reform program has been determined.

“Some amendments are linked to previous reform decisions already made and others will broaden the scope of provisions to accommodate potential choices for future management.”

Ms Hodgkinson said the amendments provide greater effectiveness and efficiencies in resource management and work to further the needs of Aboriginal people in accessing fisheries resources.

“The Bill also provides stronger habitat and biosecurity provisions to better protect our fisheries resources and industries,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“Revision of the Act has been in the making for a number of years, and addresses many issues brought up in stakeholder consultation during that period.

“This Bill addresses long standing needs related to improving the management of our fisheries resources and looks to provide the flexibility for future management.”