



The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP

Minister for Primary Industries

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 5 February 2015

ILLEGAL FISHERS TARGETED

Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson today issued a warning to illegal fishers in NSW that if they do the wrong thing - they will be caught.

During a visit to the DPI State-wide Operations and Investigations Group at Ourimbah with Candidate for The Entrance Michael Sharpe on the Central Coast today, Minister Hodgkinson inspected a wide range of seized items used by illegal fishers, including nets, line and traps.

“Illegal fishing in NSW will not be tolerated, and the highly-skilled and dedicated team of fisheries officers continue to ensure that our State’s fishers comply with rules and regulations,” Minister Hodgkinson said.

“The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) fisheries officers issued more than 6000 written warnings and infringement notices last year.

“In 2014, around 49,000 fishers were checked by fisheries officers, with nearly 2300 penalty notices issued, 250 successful prosecutions and 13 jail sentences handed down.

“Most of our fishers respect the resources and fish responsibly, but it was still disappointing to hear of many still doing the wrong thing, including failure to pay the recreational fishing fee, possess undersized fish and possess more than the bag limit,” Minister Hodgkinson said.

Mr Sharpe welcomed the Minister to The Entrance.

“Our local fisheries officers work tirelessly to protect our precious fisheries resource for future generations.

“We want to ensure our local fishers can continue to enjoy fishing for generations to come. These numbers send a very clear message that illegal fishers will be caught and prosecuted to the full extent of the law.”

Minister Hodgkinson said more than 43,000 illegal catches of fish and invertebrates were seized including almost 15,000 cockles and 3,700 abalone.

“Last year the fisheries team seized over 3,500 items of fishing gear and equipment including fishing lines, crab and yabby traps, nets, spears, and even three boats,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“The most serious offences last year included theft of abalone, lobsters and the illegal use of eel traps.”

“Hefty fines and penalties, including imprisonment, are in place to protect our fisheries, and fisheries officers will continue to target those people doing the wrong thing on our waterways.”

To report illegal fishing contact the Fishers Watch Phone Line on 1800 043 536 or visit <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries>.