



NSW COMMERCIAL FISHING STATEMENT OF INTENT

The NSW Liberals and Nationals Government is committed to revitalising the commercial fishing industry in New South Wales.

We have listened to the industry, considered the findings of the *Independent Report into NSW Commercial Fisheries Policy, Management and Administration* and agree that this statement is an important initiative that recognises the economic and social value commercial fishers provide to NSW and the need for a secure operating environment if the industry is to reach its full potential.

As the Minister responsible for fisheries in NSW, I am committed to building a strong, sustainable and economically viable commercial fishing industry. That is why I am committed to delivering the *Commercial Fisheries Reform Program* that I announced in November 2012, as part of the Government's response to the independent report.

The NSW Government is working hard to ensure the community will have the continued opportunity to buy high-quality, fresh NSW seafood that is sustainably harvested from our waters. At the end of the day, community access to local seafood depends on a having a sound, profitable fishing industry.

The NSW commercial fishing industry is part of the social fabric in many coastal towns from Eden to Tweed Heads. While the value of the industry is \$80-90 million annually at the first point of sale – the industry also supports jobs in seafood processing, wholesalers, exporters, the transport sector, as well as supplying fresh seafood to local cooperatives, restaurants and retail outlets.

Commercial fisheries in NSW are going through a critical period of change to improve long term security and viability and some tough decisions need to be made. The NSW Government has committed \$16 million to assist with the structural changes.

The reforms will:

- instil meaning and value in commercial fishing shares, by linking them to resource access;
- set up a framework that enables fishermen to adapt their business structure to suit their individual needs;
- allow businesses to adjust over time to cater for changing environmental conditions and markets; and
- remove unnecessary fishing controls to improve efficiencies.

The NSW Liberals and Nationals Government is reforming management of the entire marine estate. The NSW Government is committed to making scientifically based decisions in conjunction with commercial and recreational fishers and communities for the Marine Estate. Through this new approach of assessing real risk and putting science at the heart of all decisions we will restore confidence for our fishers, water users and all who value the conservation of aquatic biodiversity.

I can confirm a new fisheries resource sharing policy will be developed to balance the needs of competing users in a fair and transparent way, recognising the importance of the commercial fishing industry. The commercial fishing sector will be fully involved in developing this policy. This policy will guide all future negotiations.

The NSW Liberals and Nationals Government is committed to an open and constructive consultation process with industry. This will be assisted by a new peak body for NSW commercial fishers set up by the industry, effective task-based working groups and a new, cross-sector, Ministerial Fisheries Advisory Council.

With the initiatives, outlined in this 'Statement of Intent' and the support of the NSW Liberals and Nationals Government, the NSW fishing industry can be confident that it has a strong future ahead. I have every confidence that the flow on benefits to industry investment, growth and productivity will be enjoyed by commercial fishers and throughout the supply chain for many years to come.

The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP
Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Small Business

31 May 2013