

# Queensland Seafood

Industry Association

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Wednesday 20 September 2008

### **PUSH TO BAN FISHING IN CORAL SEA “LUDRICOUS” SAYS SEAFOOD INDUSTRY**

THE seafood industry has described a campaign to have the entire Coral Sea region declared off limits to fishing as ludicrous.

“If there wasn’t an organisation as wealthy as the American-based Pew Group behind the campaign, we would dismiss it out of hand,” industry spokesman Mr Robin Hansen said.

“The fact that they will be pouring huge amounts of money into a media campaign and political lobbying means we have to take it seriously, although how we can match all that American money searching for a cause, I’m not sure.

“Our fishing and on-shore processing are pretty much run as family-based operations and, even though they may turn over a lot of money and employ a lot of people along the coast, there will be no way to match what is obviously a well-planned, well-funded international campaign.

“We will do the best we can to point out that these international greenies are just emotional and over the top. They are obviously searching for a cause and, for now, the Coral Sea is it.”

Mr Hansen, Senior Vice President of the Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA), said the Australian Government was already committed to declaring a Marine Park over the entire region and the local industry would work with Canberra on its implementation.

“The Marine Park will stretch from Torres Strait all the way south into New South Wales and out to the boundary of the Australian 200-mile economic zone.

“However, we expect it will be a multiple-use Marine Park, just like the existing Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, and so will allow some fishing, unlike the Pew demand to ban all fishing. A total fishing ban is just ridiculous.”

Mr Hansen said he was disappointed the campaigners had involved the Battle of the Coral Sea in a proposal that was certain to be controversial and could potentially harm northern Queensland coastal communities where fishing is important.

“For these lobbyists to link the sacrifice of American and Australian sailors and airmen in the Battle of the Coral Sea with an environment campaign is a great shame. What’s next: Anzac Day?”

He said it was also disappointing to see the ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies linked to the campaign.

“This will shred their reputation for objectivity,” he said. “A total fishing ban has no scientific basis, and taking a partisan position like this will completely erode the Centre’s credibility in commenting on other reef-related issues regarding commercial and recreational fishing.”

Mr Hansen said the QSIA was yet to see the full details of the Pew Group’s fishing ban proposal but would study it closely when it became available.

FURTHER INFORMATION: Mr Robin Hansen, 0428 794 992

Note: For further information on the planning work already underway on the Australian Government marine bio-regions project -- including the proposed 2.4 million square kilometres East Marine Region, stretching from Torres Strait to southern New South Wales and out to the boundary of the Australian Exclusive Economic Zone, go to: <http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mbp/index.html>