

# Queensland Seafood Industry Association

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### QUEENSLAND SEAFOOD INDUSTRY WELCOMES EXTENSION OF DEADLINE FOR GOVERNMENT'S MARINE PARKS PLAN

**THE seafood industry has welcomed a six-month extension of the deadline for the proposed East Marine Bioregion Plan off the Queensland coast.**

Industry spokesman Michael Gardner said today the previous deadline had been unrealistic and the Australian Government had agreed to a six-month extension.

The revised timing means a draft plan will be released in mid 2010 rather than early in the year as planned.

"This is a sensible decision and we very much welcome it," said Mr Gardner, President of the Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA). "There is now a better chance of proper consultation and, as a result, the Government being able to achieve its stated aim of minimising harm to Queensland industries."

Mr Gardner said he had written to the Minister for the Environment, Heritage & the Arts, Peter Garrett, to request a six-month extension and received a positive response today.

"The Australian Government is implementing a network of marine parks, or marine reserves, in five marine bioregions covering the Australian coast. Two of these bioregions, the North and East, between them cover all Commonwealth-controlled waters off the entire Queensland coastline, with the exception of the existing Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

"We want to play a positive role in assisting the Government to implement marine parks with minimal harm to the seafood industry. However, there was simply not enough time under the original deadline to ensure a number of key principles are considered, as well as allowing industry and Government consultation and planning to be done properly.

"The bioregions off Queensland both cover vast areas and the previous time frame did not recognise the massive effort required of an industry association to adequately represent its members and the wider industry participants."

Mr Gardner said the QSIA particularly wanted to see a clear Government policy and framework for displaced fishing effort that minimises the need for effort to be displaced

within marine parks; and recognition that the economic and social values sustainable fisheries provide in both the domestic and export markets is an important factor for many regional and rural communities, who are often highly dependent on the employment generated from the seafood industry.

FURTHER INFORMATION: Michael Gardner, President on 0409 991150

*Note: For further information about the East Marine Bioregional Plan process, go the DEWHA website at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mbp/index.html>*