

# NATIONAL SEAFOOD INDUSTRY ALLIANCE

PO Box 55 Mt Hawthorn WA 6915 T: (08) 9492 8888 F: (08) 9244 2934 E: reception@wafic.org.au

## 2010 FEDERAL ELECTION POLICY STATEMENT

### MEMBERS OF NATIONAL SEAFOOD ALLIANCE



Seafood Industry Victoria Inc.



# NATIONAL SEAFOOD INDUSTRY ALLIANCE 2010 FEDERAL ELECTION POLICY STATEMENT

Australian fisheries are among the best managed in the world and Australia is one of the world's leaders in fisheries management science. The Australian fishing industry (wildcatch, aquaculture and pearling industries) is proud of its credentials in meeting the highest standards of environmental responsibility, management and sustainability.

The National Seafood Industry Alliance was established in 2009 to provide representation of our industries at the Federal level on four key priorities:

- Resource access (including the Commonwealth Government's marine planning processes and the impact of climate change and policy on industry)
- Research, development and extension
- Promoting industry
- Federal cost imposts

The Alliance is asking Federal political parties to make commitments to the following:

- **That they unambiguously support Australian commercial fishing industries as sustainable and as providers of best quality seafood to Australian consumers;**
- **That they celebrate Australian commercial fisheries as the best managed in the world;**
- **That they recognise the excellent environmental management credentials of commercial fishing industries;**
- **That they recognise Australian fisheries as good corporate citizens who make a vital and significant contribution to many of our rural communities; and**
- **Action to prevent the degradation of the marine environment by non fishing activities, such as urban, agricultural runoff to ensure that fish stocks can be sustainably harvested by future generations.**

Our specific priorities are further outlined below:

## RESOURCE ACCESS

### Commonwealth marine planning

Australia has led the world in the establishment of extensive marine protected areas around our coastline and has around one third of the world's marine parks. In regard to the Commonwealth marine planning process, we seek commitments from Federal political parties to ensure that the design and size of the proposed marine plans are based on good science, not well-resourced campaigning.

We seek a clear commitment to robust processes to underpin Commonwealth marine planning including significant opportunities for industry consultation.

**We seek commitments that:**

- **The Commonwealth marine parks will be indisputably representative and will be designed to minimise impacts on economic activity;**
- **The design, size, location and zoning of marine parks will be based on thorough risk assessments on all activities, including the fishing activity;**
- **Industry engagement will be well resourced and industry input will be genuinely reflected in the design and size of the marine parks; and**
- **The design of the parks will minimise the impacts on coastal communities and businesses supporting the seafood industry.**

**In terms of the process, we seek specific commitments that:**

- **the Displacement Policy be unambiguously based on the clear principles submitted by the National Seafood Industry Alliance and recognise not only the displacement of fishing industry activity but also of the businesses supporting the seafood industry;**
- **there be meaningful industry consultation on the Displacement Policy prior to its finalisation;**
- **the displacement policy be released prior to the draft plans;**
- **the deadline for the establishment of Commonwealth marine parks be extended to at least December 2014 to enable far greater industry consultation including a minimum 6 months for consultation after the release of the Draft Plans;**
- **a technical review be undertaken of the Department's work on risk assessments and that an industry workshop be held as a matter of urgency to review the risk assessment issues once the technical review is completed;**
- **the National Seafood Industry Alliance be the over-arching industry reference group on the Commonwealth marine bioregional process;**
- **comprehensive socio-economic analyses will be undertaken;**
- **the Commonwealth will make adequate provisions for funding of thorough industry consultation; and**
- **that there will be clear processes and funding for the ongoing monitoring and implementation of marine parks.**

We seek unambiguous commitments to a just and generous displacement policy in the event that industry activity is restricted or eliminated. The Displacement Policy should include provisions for compensation and adjustment assistance and address the issue of dealing with effort displaced from restricted zones to adjacent areas.

## **RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND EXTENSION (RD&E)**

The fishing, aquaculture and pearling industries owe their development and sustainability to significant investment by industry and government in research and development over many years. Industry has long understood the importance of continuing investment in RD&E to improve sustainability and profitability.

The Alliance has supported the current Productivity Commission inquiry into rural research and development corporations and we note that there is scope to improve the returns to industry and government from the joint substantial investment in RD&E through the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC).

The FRDC has delivered strong results to its commercial, recreational and indigenous stakeholders and we seek a clear commitment that the FRDC remain as a separate entity from other rural R&D corporations and other research agencies.

Industry has made a number of submissions to the Productivity Commission on specific aspects of the FRDC in the context of its inquiry.

The Alliance also seeks a greater emphasis on improving the economic data about the commercial fishing industry. Such data is often out of date and its accuracy is sometimes questionable. As governments make decisions about the future of our industry and its economic and social importance, it is vital that they have access to accurate up to date economic data so that the impacts of decisions are clear.

### **Specifically, we seek commitments to:**

- **Fisheries Research Development and Corporation remain as a separate entity;**
- **commitment and funding for adequate and appropriate economic data to be collected on seafood industry;**
- **continued Commonwealth support for the public good aspect of work undertaken by Fisheries Research Development and Corporation; and**
- **continued support for the current funding model used by Fisheries Research and Development Corporation.**

## **PROMOTING INDUSTRY**

### **Promotional activities**

The commercial fishing industry is at risk from false impressions created by some foreign funded environmental groups. Documentaries which paint Australian fishing as “irresponsible” and “no different” to unsustainable fisheries in other parts of the world undermine our industry’s excellent record on sustainability and environmental management.

We seek commitments from Federal political parties to actively support our industry and to facilitate promotion of industry to the broader community. It is vital that we connect with the community so that we can retain our ‘licence to operate’.

**Specifically, we seek commitments that:**

- **the Primary Industries and Energy Research and Development (PIERD) Act will be amended to enable the FRDC to invest in promotion and marketing activities (from which it is currently precluded); and**
- **the Commonwealth will commit to allocate \$5 million over three years to invest in seafood industry development and promotion on priorities agreed by the NSIA.**

## **Labelling**

The Alliance has developed a clear policy for the mandatory labelling of seafood to ensure that consumers are able to make informed choices about their seafood.

Unfortunately the absence of effective labelling requirements compromises consumer choice and undermines Australian industry.

**Specifically, we seek a commitment to:**

- **remove the current loophole in Country of Origin Labelling by extending country of origin laws for seafood to the restaurant and food service sector.**

## **Federal imposts on industry**

There are many Federal imposts on industry ranging from taxation, industrial relations laws to food labelling. These have direct and indirect impacts on industry's competitiveness, efficiency and costs.

**In terms of specific imposts on the commercial fishing, aquaculture and pearling industries, we seek commitments that:**

- **the political parties will support a flexible approach to industrial relations in the wildcatch and aquaculture industries to enhance productivity and competitiveness;**
- **there will be a risk-based approach to national maritime safety issues and recognition of the differences in commercial fishing from other maritime industries;**
- **the Australian Maritime Safety Authority will establish and resource a coastal advisory committee to ensure commercial fishing is represented in the development of national safety arrangements; and**
- **AQIS will not impose cost arrangements on commercial fishing which would impact on its competitiveness or efficiency.**

## **CONCLUSION**

The Australian fishing industry makes a significant contribution to our national economy, many of our rural communities and to our unique lifestyle.

Many Australian fishing businesses are small, family owned businesses. They have confronted immense challenges in recent years and worked hard to survive.

We seek commitments from Federal political parties that they will publicly commit to the commercial fishing industry and its future and actively ensure its survival.

**The National Seafood Industry Alliance comprises the CEO's or Chair of the following organisations:**

<b>Commonwealth Fisheries Association</b>	<b>Allan Crosthwaite</b>	<b>02 6162 1283</b>
<b>National Aquaculture Council</b>	<b>Justin Fromm</b>	<b>04 1114 6396</b>
<b>New South Wales Seafood Industry Council</b>	<b>Grahame Turk</b>	<b>02 9004 1101</b>
<b>Northern Territory Seafood Council</b>	<b>Katherine Sarneckis</b>	<b>08 8981 5194</b>
<b>Queensland Seafood Industry Association</b>	<b>Winston Harris</b>	<b>07 3262 6855</b>
<b>Seafood Industry Victoria</b>	<b>Ross McGowan</b>	<b>03 9329 5660</b>
<b>Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council</b>	<b>Neil Stump</b>	<b>03 6224 2332</b>
<b>Western Australian Fishing Industry Council</b>	<b>Anna Cronin</b>	<b>08 9492 8813</b>
<b>Wildcatch Fisheries SA</b>	<b>Dr Gary Morgan</b>	<b>08 8303 2784</b>