



## **MEDIA RELEASE 20/05/2006**

### **MARINE PARK SANCTUARY ZONES DISCUSSED WITH MINISTERS**

During the last few weeks representatives of the Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW have met with the Hon Ian Macdonald, responsible for the Great Lakes, and the Hon Bob Debus, responsible for Batemans Bay, Marine Parks. These ministers oversee the governments Marine Parks process in New South Wales and welcomed the discussions.

Malcolm Poole, the Chairman of the Recreational Fishing Alliance stated, that whilst the meetings showed many common areas for change, it was still going to be a big challenge to make other changes required, allowing safe and equitable use of each park by all users, as well as balancing habitat protection through various zonings.

He went onto say we all acknowledge that the Marine Park Act 1997 aims to conserve marine bio-diversity and marine habitats, but it also allows for ongoing sustainable use of the parks resources by the NSW public, which include recreational and commercial fishers.

The Alliance believes there exists little independent or qualified research supporting the Governments and Conservation movement claim to lock up between 0-50 % of each park in sanctuary zones. The recently released Draft Zoning Plan for the Great Lakes Marine Park has claimed approx. 21,000 hectares or 21% designated to sanctuary zones and it is clear that we are all fighting over the same the marine habitat 'turf'.

'Critical habitat areas' are those areas of structure that attract all forms of marine life, just like the Australian coastline is to us. It is areas like weedy bays & inlets, underwater reef, rocky shore line, islands, canyons and large shoals – sanctuary zones must also include the 'bare regions' too!.

The items covered surrounded the many growing concerns of recreational fishers and included;

- the value of, and protection to their Recreational Fishing Havens within a park,
- safe access in all weather conditions and ongoing use for all users in all park areas,
- consideration of use, or additional infrastructure elsewhere to cope with any 'shift of effort' from final zonings, such as boat ramps and cleaning tables
- marine park regulations and compliance management of park areas
- the use of more special purpose zones, considering various types of closure options, habitat enhancement via artificial reefs or even multi use zones, such as the current Grey Nurse Shark zones that allow a mix of fishing activities like trolling and lure casting that does not interact with the sharks
- the 5 year park review process, government must commit research funding, and any amendments must be based on researched scientific evidence for that park.

The Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW is optimistic that the above issues will be considered and that reducing the impact to recreational anglers will be high on both Ministers agendas when the representatives of the Alliance again meet with both Ministers in the coming weeks.

**Authorised by Malcolm Poole, Chairman Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW.**

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