

# **The Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW**

## **"Promoting Sustainable Fishing"**

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## **New Marine Parks threaten average Australians**

"The Sydney Marine Park proposed by the National Parks Association (NPA), is a typical example of a minority group, holding the silent majority to ransom," said Malcolm Poole of the Recreational Fishing Alliance (RFA). "The attitude of such groups these days is to shut everyone out, lock it up and throw away the key," he said.

If the coastal area from Avoca to Wollongong and Sydney Harbour is declared a Marine Park with zones that ban fishing, then many Sydney-siders who love spending a day on the water with their kids catching a few fish will be greatly disadvantaged. Those people who wish to go fishing will have to travel further a field, leading to more risk with their families safety, not to mention the added green-house impacts. This is also relevant to the other areas the NPA has identified along the NSW coast.

This NSW Labor Government has a history of 'wheeling & dealing' in votes by listening to some minority groups and disregarding the wishes of the majority of voters. It is these actions that have seen so many political changes in recent years, and The Premier, Nathan Rees needs to sit up and take notice.

Anglers have always been regarded as true conservationists when it comes to the aquatic environment. Before the birth of any green groups, all fishers were lobbying for responsible fishing rules and changes to some unsustainable fishing practices. Since 2001 some \$80 million worth of fishing licence funds have been used to assist NSW Fisheries management, provide research, restore fish habitat, fix pollution problems, remove weirs and fish barriers and provide a greater education and fishing awareness than any government agency in Australia. The best we can see from other so called conservation groups is blanket closures to vast areas where average Australians are excluded.

"The evidence to date is quite clear," said Mr. Poole, "Sydney Harbour is in very good health considering it is surrounded by so many millions of people. Marine parks will do nothing to enhance this situation. The biggest danger to Sydney Harbour is from pollution and bad decisions, be it leaching dioxins or dumped rubbish carried in storm water runoff.

The NPA would be better served if they joined the RFA in demanding the NSW Government provide solutions", he said. The NPA has been silent on the Desalination and Port Expansion issues in neighbouring Botany Bay which Mr. Poole goes on to say " is quite ironic, here we have environmental vandalism at its worst, yet this is when we need the green groups to help us. In fact recreational anglers have been left high and dry by Green Groups as they battle the NSW Government on these issues."

The Alliance believes that Government and independent surveys must be completed identifying all marine habitats, prior to any proposed park being declared in an area. This then needs to be supported with thorough research, establishing a baseline for each particular habitat. Once completed open stakeholder consultation must be conducted, identifying any problem areas and seeking outcomes for improved management or protection. Other studies, monitoring and modelling will be required on the socio – economic issues, the impacts of effort shift, and potential compensation associated with any proposals before the implementation of proposed zoning or management plans.

The RFA is calling for an immediate moratorium on the expansion, alteration or creation of any marine parks until suitable research can identify if there is a real need to exclude the public or certain groups from any parts of the marine environment.

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**The RFA of NSW- "PROMOTING SAFE AND ENJOYABLE FISHING"**  
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