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MEDIA RELEASE

Australia's tackle industry supports Government's marine reserve plans

The Australian Fishing Trade Association (AFTA), the national organisation representing the suppliers of goods and services to Australia's 5 million recreational fishers has welcomed the release of the latest plans for the Commonwealth Marine Reserve system.

AFTA CEO Allan Hansard said, "These plans are a significant advancement on the plans released by the previous Government that would have seen Australia's recreational fishers locked out of over 1.3 million square kilometres of our seas. This would have had significant negative effects on millions of recreational fishers, hundreds of local communities and thousands of local businesses.

"We are pleased to see the Government's new plans adopt a balanced approach. On one hand they are ensuring our unique marine environment is protected to a world-leading standard, while on the other hand they are ensuring the local communities that support our unique marine environment are also protected.

"We are particularly pleased to see many of Australia's iconic and world-renowned fishing spots will still be accessible to sustainable recreational fishing into the future.

"If the new plans are appropriately implemented and managed with involvement of the recreational fishing sector, we will not only have a marine reserve system that truly and practically protects our marine environment but we will actually see increases in recreational fishing opportunities and growth in local communities and businesses that support our marine environment. This would be a great outcome for all Australians.

"We have seen a lot of scaremongering from the strong anti fishing lobby since the Government released the plans. This is disappointing as their support for large scale 'lock outs' is more about stopping Australia's best-loved leisure/ sporting activity than achieving good marine conservation outcomes.

"We look forward to working with the Government to achieve a marine reserve network worthy of our unique marine environment and one all Australians can be proud of and share in" Mr Hansard concluded.

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