



The Hon Peter Malinauskas
Premier, South Australia

The Hon Claire Scriven
Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development

Dear Premier and Minister,

Re: Algal Bloom Impacts

On behalf of the Australian Fishing Trade Association (AFTA) Board and our broader membership, I wish to convey our sincere appreciation for your proactive engagement and commitment to the recreational fishing sector, evidenced by the allocation of \$300,000 to the “Let’s Fish SA” campaign. This investment is a significant step towards restoring public confidence in recreational fishing, enabling South Australians to reclaim the enjoyment of catching and consuming their own fish. Furthermore, the Expanded Small Business Support grants—providing up to \$50,000—will deliver crucial relief to industry participants facing financial hardship, and we acknowledge the value of these and other positive measures you have announced.

Following our meeting on 23 October, I wish to clearly reaffirm AFTA’s position on your recent decisions regarding closures and proposed reductions to bag limits, and to present specific requests requiring urgent consideration.

AFTA formally objects to the proposed 50 per cent reduction in bag and boat limits for recreational fishing of Calamari, Garfish, Blue Crab, and King George Whiting within the Spencer Gulf Fishing Zone. Our primary concern is the disproportionate impact these restrictions have on recreational fishers, while commercial operations in the Spencer Gulf largely remain unaffected beyond their existing limits and quotas. You stated the government will continue to monitor Spencer Gulf, AFTA look forward to being amongst those consulted during this period and participate on decisions based on peer reviewed science.

We do not oppose the proposed temporary 50 per cent reduction in bag and boat limits for recreational fishing in the Gulf St Vincent and Kangaroo Island Fishing Zone and agree with the commercial closure in this area due to fish stock levels.

Regarding snapper, it is currently permitted to be taken only in the South-East fishing zone until 30/06/2026. AFTA appreciated the government’s recent increase in snapper bag limits from two to three per person per day, and boat limits from six to nine in this region.

In relation to the West Coast, Spencer Gulf, Gulf St Vincent, and Kangaroo Island fishing zones maintaining snapper closures beyond the current six years is unjustified and appears to be grounded in questionable scientific reasoning.

For these regions, as stated at the meeting, AFTA strongly advocates for the introduction of a seasonal bag limit of one snapper per person for a twelve-week period from December to March, post-spawning. The scientific evidence shared at our meeting indicates a four-year cycle from spawning to recruitment, meaning there has been uninterrupted stock maturation and recruitment for two out of the past six years. We note your forthcoming receipt of the latest stock assessment in November and urge you to act decisively on the evidence, rather than relying solely on advice from PISRSA and SARDI.

In our initial presentation, we highlighted the importance of maximising the value generated per kilogram of fish. The recreational fishing sector in South Australia contributes \$984 million to the economy and supports 9,434 full-time equivalent jobs¹, compared to commercial fishing's \$844 million and 7,389 jobs. Excluding Tuna, Abalone, Lobster, and Aquaculture, the wild catch sector only generates \$227 million and approximately 500 full-time equivalent jobs².

Both recreational and commercial fishing sectors are essential to South Australia's economic health. AFTA calls for balanced and equitable support for both, especially amid the current Algal Bloom crisis, and urges the government to prioritise decision-making that delivers the best value proposition for the state.

Yours sincerely,



The Hon Bob Baldwin
Chair
Australian Fishing Trade Association
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30th October 2025

¹ Source: *FRDC Social and Economic Survey of Recreational Fishers 2018-2021 South Australia*

² Source: *Economic Indicators for the Commercial Fisheries of South Australia, Summary Report 2023/25 for the Dept Primary Industries & Regions.*