



AUSTRALIAN RECREATIONAL  
FISHING FOUNDATION

## Media Release – 4 June 2013

### Marine Parks - Government Loses Support of Australian Recreational Fishers

The Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation (ARFF) representing the key national and state recreational fishing organisations announced today that the Federal Government has lost support of Australia’s recreational fishing community on their Marine Park Policy.

Managing Director of ARFF Allan Hansard said, “The decision for ARFF to withdraw support from the Government on the Marine Park Policy was not made lightly. However, this is the only course of action given the Government has ignored Australia’s largest stakeholder group affected by the Marine Park process, the recreational fishing community.

“What has exacerbated the issue has been Environment Minister Burke’s fast tracking of the management plan process, we suspect to meet a political agenda. That has resulted in the Marine Park process failing every principle required for good public policy. This is particularly the case given the Marine Park process is the largest reservation process in Australian history. In our opinion fast tracking the process has jeopardised the enduring environmental outcomes all Australian’s are seeking from the Marine Park process.

“The first principle is transparency. When the Minister cannot tell recreational fishers, the largest stakeholder group, why they will be locked out of 1.3 million square kilometres of Australian oceans yet divers, large scale tourist operations, bulk cargo carriers and defence activities will still be allowed in these areas, then there is a serious problem with transparency in the process.

“The second principle is genuine consultation. Minister Burke states that there were more than 250 stakeholder meetings during the process. We respectfully request Minister Burke to answer how many of these meetings actually took place during the critical management plan development process? How many one to one or group stakeholder meetings did his Department conducted while developing the critical management plans for the Marine Park process? Our count is none!

“And just how many of those 750,000 people that participated in the process that the Minister talks about were actually foreign tick and flick submissions. In our book, tick and flick submissions are no replacement for face-to-face consultation and engagement with genuine Australian stakeholders.

“The third principle is science based decision making. Throughout the process recreational fishers have not seen any science supporting why they should be banned from Marine National Parks. In addition, the Marine Park process did not assess the economic or social impact of banning recreational fishers from the 1.3 million square kilometres of Marine National Parks. As a result, the recreational fishing community will not be receiving compensation for economic or opportunity loss.

“Minister Burke has continually stated the Marine Park process has been thorough and won’t affect recreational fishers. Australia’s peak National and key State Organisations representing recreational fishers disagree.

“To this end ARFF supports the Coalition’s disallowance motion on the Marine Park process and we urge all Members of Parliament to ask the Government to take back the management regulations and conduct a proper stakeholder process to develop them - one based on science rather than politics.

“The Government wishes the Marine Park process to be a lasting legacy. All recreational fishers agree with this. But let’s make sure this is a legacy that is durable and one we can all be proud of, not one that is aimed at achieving short-term political outcomes.”

Recreational Fishing Marine Park Video: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xgpuVft\\_YY0&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xgpuVft_YY0&feature=youtu.be)

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