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Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries  
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Mr Bob Baldwin  
Chair  
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Dear Mr Baldwin

Thank you for your correspondence of 17 February 2022.

In 2019 the Australian Government committed to deliver more fishing opportunities for all Australians through a \$29 million package that backs our fishers and sensibly manages our oceans. I am pleased to provide you with an update on the delivery status of these initiatives.

The Australian Government has developed a **Commonwealth Fisheries Resource Sharing Framework** that outlines the rules for sharing resources across the fishing sectors and between the Commonwealth and other Australian jurisdictions. This framework was officially launched on 23 December 2020 and can be accessed on the department's website ([awe.gov.au/agriculture-land/fisheries/domestic/resource-sharing](http://awe.gov.au/agriculture-land/fisheries/domestic/resource-sharing)).

A **National Fisheries Plan** will be released in early 2022 that will deliver a shared vision and strategic framework for Australian governments to drive sustainable growth of the Australian fishing, aquaculture and seafood sectors between now and 2030. The National Fisheries Plan has been developed in close consultation with recreational, commercial, Indigenous and aquaculture fishing representatives and I am seeking the endorsement of each state and territory to ensure our fisheries management priorities are nationally aligned.

Work is continuing to improve, maintain or build new boating, marine rescue, fishing and camping facilities under the **\$20 million Recreational Fishing and Camping Facilities Program**. The funding has been dispersed amongst all of the states and territories, with approximately \$3.4 million spent to date to fund 34 projects including construction and upgrades to boat ramps, fish cleaning stations and adjacent amenities. States and territories are in the process of finalising their projects lists for this year which will expend the remaining program funds and enable several additional infrastructure projects to be completed.

A range of projects have commenced to restore marine and estuarine fisheries habitats under the **\$8 million Fisheries Habitat Restoration Program**. This program is being delivered by land service providers under the National Landcare Program in collaboration with local fishing clubs. Twenty-eight project agreements have been made with service providers from across Australia to support the delivery of projects to remove or modify barriers to fish passage, rehabilitation of riparian areas with structures to provide additional habitat, removal of exotic vegetation from waterways and bank stabilisation. Approximately \$7.9 million has been allocated to projects and funding will be provided over the life of the projects to June 2023.

The **\$400,000 fishing representative capacity building program** is helping commercial, recreational, and Indigenous fishing representatives improve their ability to engage with Commonwealth and national fisheries advisory bodies. Fishwell Consulting Pty Ltd has been engaged to design and deliver stakeholder-specific capacity building programs. Despite delays and disruptions in hosting national workshops due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, the program continues to deliver on its objectives through smaller-scale virtual workshops. An online portal with educational materials is also due to go live in early 2022. This program will continue to deliver capacity building tools until June 2023 to ensure that all relevant sectors can maximise their contribution to fisheries decision making.

A fisheries sector mental health trusted advocate program trial has been rolled out under a **\$600,000 commitment for mental health initiatives**. The Australian Government provided these funds to Seafood Industry Australia (SIA) who has developed and delivered a package of mental health initiatives for the seafood community marketed as the 'Stay Afloat' pilot program. SIA supported by Women in Seafood Australasia established Mental Health Support Coordinators in Lakes Entrance, Darwin and Newcastle. SIA arranged training and community mental health awareness activities, including providing communication on availability of mental health services and managing community resilience grants for those in the seafood industry. With approximately \$550,000 spent on this initiative to date the Stay Afloat pilot program has been extended to 31 October 2022, continuing valuable work improving the mental health and wellness of the Australian seafood industry.

Complementary to our 2019 election commitments, the Government has delivered on a range of additional initiatives over the past three years, including:

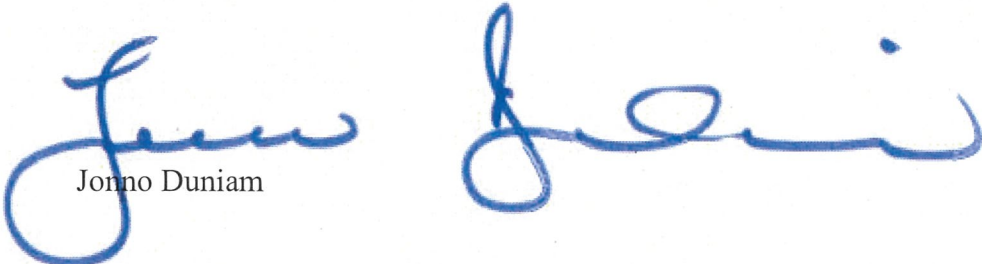
- A \$900,000 extension of the highly successful Tuna Champions stewardship program;
- Providing \$4 million to Seafood Industry Australia for the delivery of the 'Eat Seafood Australia' campaign, and an additional \$2 million to take that brand overseas to promote Australian seafood in new and expanding markets;
- Supporting Commonwealth fishers during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic through waiving \$10.3 million in Australian Fisheries Management Authority levies;
- Establishing the International Freight Assistance Mechanism (IFAM) to provide Australian seafood and aquaculture producers with access to international markets in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and extending support to 30 June 2022;
- Investing \$20.1 million into leading edge data integration monitoring and artificial intelligence to reduce regulatory burden and increase productivity through AFMA's E-Fish and electronic monitoring; and
- Of the \$100 million Oceans Leadership Package, \$18 million to protect iconic marine species, reduce bycatch and improve the sustainability of our fisheries and stimulate investment in our oceans.

Notably, the Government also implemented the Southern Bluefin Tuna resource sharing arrangement, which for the first time sets aside a proportion of the Commonwealth's sustainable catch for the recreational sector. This was a significant achievement, resolving a two-decade old issue and providing certainty to recreational fishers.

The implementation of these initiatives is helping to support more opportunities for all Australians to engage positively and sustainably in our diverse fisheries. I acknowledge the significant contribution of the recreational fishing sector to local economies, and the social benefits it provides to the Australian community. The Morrison Government is committed to supporting our recreational fishing sector to ensure that Australians can continue to enjoy this great Australian pastime.

I look forward to engaging with you more closely as we near the 2022 election.

Yours sincerely



Jonno Duniam