

Hon Vincent Tarzia MP

Leader of the Opposition

Hon Nicola Centofanti MLC

Shadow Minister for Primary Industries

David Basham MP

Shadow Minister for Environment

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Libs will boost marine habitat restoration

A new Liberal Government will invest \$30 million in a first step towards a visionary *Save Our Seas* plan to guarantee much needed additional investment in shellfish reefs.

The State Liberals are committing to a substantial boost of the number and scale of reefs.

The marine habitat restoration project will establish an additional 50 hectares of limestone shellfish reefs along South Australia's coastline.

The project forms part of a long-term target to restore reef areas to what they were before impacts of historical overharvesting and human extraction during the 20th century.

The project aligns with recommendations from the Federal 'Algal blooms in South Australia' Report.

The Liberals are calling for the Federal Government to immediately fund an additional 200 hectares of large-scale shellfish reefs as part of a much-needed \$500 million fund to support long term marine ecosystem resilience in SA waters identified through the Senate Inquiry.

Leader of the Opposition, Vincent Tarzia, said the investment was needed to unlock a much-needed generational investment in marine recovery and resilience projects in our waters.

"We've seen the devastating impact that the algal bloom has had on marine life, fisheries and coastal communities across South Australia," Mr Tarzia said.

"Our oceans need bold, practical solutions to restore their health, which is why a new Liberal Government, will lead a generational marine restoration project to naturally clean our oceans and rebuild ecosystems.

“This includes giving community groups incentives to re-establish 50 hectares of additional shellfish reefs in South Australia. This will boost jobs, remove nitrogen, accelerate fish stock recovery and filter millions of litres of seawater each day.

“Restored reefs go further than simply attracting fish as regular artificial reefs do, they re-establish a whole ecosystem with complex food webs and are much more efficient at boosting fish stocks which is exactly what’s needed due to the devastating algal bloom.”

Shadow Minister for Primary Industries and Regional South Australia, Nicola Centofanti said the package will ensure South Australia leads the country in science-backed coastal restoration.

“We have a record of success when it comes to restoring marine habitats, including funding a \$1.2 million shellfish reef off the coast of Glenelg North during the former Liberal Government,” Dr Centofanti said.

“Seagrass meadows and shellfish reefs act as natural filters and will not only improve water quality but also reduce the risk of future algal blooms.

“We need practical plans that are backed by science so that we can re-build our marine ecosystems and ensure our coastline is resilient when faced with environmental challenges.

“Healthy fish stocks start with healthy oceans and without well-managed, thriving marine environments we simply cannot sustain the fisheries our community and industries rely on.”

Shadow Minister for Environment and Member for Finniss, David Basham said that whether South Australians are in metropolitan Adelaide or the regions, the effects of the algal bloom have hit hard.

“What we have seen unfold along our coastline has been heartbreaking and shows how important targeted investment is to protect our iconic coastline,” Mr Basham said.

“The decisions we make now have the ability to change the future, and the Liberal Party is committed to doing everything we can to ensure South Australians can continue to enjoy healthy, thriving marine environments.”

“While Labor looks for band-aid solutions and small-scale projects to protect its reputation during this algal bloom crisis, we are focussed on a generational endeavour to ‘save our seas’ for generations to come.”

Only the Liberals have a long-term legacy vision for saving our seas and waterways, with today’s announcement building on a \$10.5 million ‘Go Fish SA’ initiative to re-stock and revive freshwater fishing spots.

We will also continue to push for a Royal Commission into the algal bloom to ensure independent oversight of the management of the crisis.