



The Coalition's Plan for Real Action to
Support Fisheries

**Stand up for Australia.
Stand up for real action.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Coalition recognises the important role fishing plays to hundreds of coastal and river communities in bringing enjoyment to millions of Australians and to the national economy.

The commercial fishing sector has a value of more than \$2.1 billion, making it the sixth largest primary producing sector.¹ In addition, it is estimated that 3.5 million² Australians participate in recreational fishing, spending over \$3 billion each year in charter hire, fishing and boating equipment, travel, accommodation and bait.

The Coalition has a real action plan to combat illegal fishing, provide certainty for commercial and recreational fishers, support important research in aquaculture and promote recreational fishing. The Coalition will:

1. Appoint a Minister with direct responsibility for Fisheries

The Coalition will re-establish separate ministerial responsibilities for fisheries, giving greater focus and representation for Australia's commercial and recreational fishing sectors.

2. Assist the fisheries industry to adapt to climate change

The Coalition will provide **\$5 million** to assess the potential impact of changing ocean environments on the sustainability of fisheries and help individual businesses respond to this challenge.

3. Increase research and development for the fishing sector

The Coalition will increase matching contribution of \$1 for every \$1 raised by industry to \$1.25. It will also fund grants of up to \$50,000 for specialised research, mentoring or further study for scientists concerned with the fisheries sector.

4. Establish an Aquaculture Industry Development Fund

This **\$10 million** fund will invest in industry or sector-wide projects that support the sustainable growth of aquaculture in Australia.

5. Promote a sustainable Australian seafood industry

The Coalition will provide **\$3 million** to industry bodies to promote a sustainable Australian seafood.

6. Consider the Hawke Review of the EPBC Act with specific focus on fisheries and sea issues

The Coalition will review the EPBC Act ensuring its suitability for marine issues.

7. Assist commercial and recreational organisations play a role in developing national maritime safety standards

The Coalition will provide up to **\$100,000** to assist relevant commercial and recreational organisations meet the costs of active participation in these deliberations.

8. Promote the environmental, health and social benefits of recreational fishing

The Coalition will provide **\$1.2 million** for grants of up to \$20,000 to recreational fishing clubs and organisations to promote the benefits of recreational fishing.

1. ABARE Fishery Economic Status Report 2007

2. Fisheries Research Corporation at < <http://www.frdc.com.au/fishingindustry/recreational-sector> >

9. Conduct recreational fishing surveys every five years

The Coalition will collect data on the social and economic impact of recreational fishing as well as obtain catch data to help assess stock levels.

10. Form a Recreational Fishing Ministerial Advisory Council

The Coalition will form an Advisory Council comprising the Minister for Fisheries and the Minister for the Environment along with representatives of the recreational fishing sector.

11. Support a national peak body for recreational fishing and its participation in national consultations on the establishment of marine parks

The Coalition will provide \$500,000 to a national peak body for recreational fishing and investigate longer term funding options.

12. Immediately put on hold the Marine Bioregional Planning process to allow for its restructure

The Coalition will immediately restructure the process to address concerns over Labor's mismanagement of declaring Marine Protected Areas.

13. Provide a fair and balanced Displaced Effort Policy

The Coalition will place responsibility for the displacement policy with a Ministerial panel jointly chaired by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Minister for Environment Protection, Heritage and Arts.

14. Base Marine Protected Areas on science

The Coalition will require peer reviewed scientific evidence of threats to marine biodiversity be made available to all stakeholders, including affected communities and industries, before any decision is made on future Marine Protected Areas (particularly any no-take zone).

15. Establish sensible and balanced Marine Park boundaries and develop management plans in consultation with industry

The Coalition will consult closely with those people and industries that use the marine environment, including the recreational and commercial fishing sectors, to determine Marine Protected Area management plans in accordance with relevant legislation and other regulatory frameworks.

16. Commit to fighting illegal foreign fishing

The Coalition is committed to maintaining all resources currently devoted to patrolling Australia's fishing zones.

HOW LABOR HAS FAILED

Labor has failed to consult with both the commercial fishing industry and recreational fishers on major changes affecting them.

Labor has stripped the national peak body, Recfish of its funding.

Labor banned the fishing of mako and porbeagle sharks and then back-flipped following a national grassroots political campaign by recreational fishers. It banned the fishing of thresher sharks.

Labor failed to tackle illegal foreign fishing in Australia's fishing zones, slashing funding for Southern Ocean patrols³.

Labor threatened massive new no-take marine parks around Australia and it has allowed fringe environmental groups to unilaterally influence policy.

Labor has used the process for declaring Marine Protected Areas to tell stakeholders what will happen. It is a process that has been borrowed from the disastrous implementation of state marine parks in New South Wales.

Labor's failure to properly consult threatens jobs and the livelihood of many small businesses in coastal communities.

Labor's Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has taken a hands-off approach to the Marine Protected Areas process and failed to represent the interests of the commercial and recreational fishing sectors.

Labor has failed to meet its own timeframes for declaring Marine Protected Areas. Timeframes have been altered due to Labor's failure to adequately consult within unrealistic schedules that were politically, rather than practically, motivated.

Labor has also failed to rule out large no-take zones within Marine Protected Areas currently being established across Australia. The fear of no-take zones has caused great uncertainty for businesses directly and indirectly reliant on access to fishing resources.

Labor has also caused great uncertainty amongst stakeholders who will be adversely impacted by potential loss of access to resources within declared marine parks.

3. Australian Customs & Border Protection Service Portfolio Budget Statement 2010-2011 p135.

THE COALITION'S REAL ACTION PLAN FOR COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL FISHING

The Coalition understands the importance of the fisheries industry plays in securing Australia's food base, in generating valuable export income and in creating regional jobs and economic activity.

Recreational fishing provides millions of Australians with a healthy and satisfying weekend and holiday activity.

The Coalition will:

1. **Appoint a Minister for Fisheries**

Upon coming to Government, Labor immediately scrapped the position of a separate Fisheries Minister which existed under the former Coalition Government. Responsibility is now held by the Minister for Agriculture.

The Coalition will re-establish separate ministerial responsibilities for fisheries, giving greater focus and representation for Australia's commercial and recreational fishing sectors.

2. **Provide \$5 million to assist the fisheries industry adapt to climate change**

The Coalition will provide **\$2 million** to assess the potential impact of changing ocean environments on the sustainability of fisheries, for targeted training activities and individually tailored adjustment advice. It will be similar to assistance similar to that provided to farmers under the *Australia's Farming Future* programme.

Training grants of up to \$5500 will be available to eligible fishing business operators for advice and training from recognised professional advisers and registered training organisations. The grant may be used to pay for activities such as financial assessment, planning and legal advice related to adapting to changes in climate.

A total of **\$3 million** will be made available to fishing research bodies to undertake assessments of fisheries and to develop strategies for business adaption to climate change.

3. **Increase research and development for the fishing sector**

Commencing from 1 July 2011, the Coalition will increase the Commonwealth's contribution to research and development through the Fishing Research & Development Corporation (FRDC) from a matching contribution of \$1 for each \$1 raised by industry to \$1.25. This will result in an additional 25% R&D funding from a Coalition Government for the fishing sector over the next three years.

A Coalition Government will also encourage our scientists and researchers to remain in Australia. Grants of up to \$50,000 for specialised research, mentoring or further study for scientists concerned with the fisheries sector will be available through a \$5 million four year pilot programme for primary industry researchers.

4. Establish a Aquaculture Industry Development Fund

This **\$10 million** fund will invest (over five years) in industry or sector-wide projects that support the sustainable growth of aquaculture in Australia. Investment from the Fund will be overseen by an Advisory Board including representatives from the National Aquaculture Council.

The Fund will also include support for the development of a framework for standardisation of environmental assessments across local, State and Federal jurisdictions.

The Fund will include ongoing support for the National Aquaculture Council of \$100,000 annually for three years. In addition, a Coalition Government will ensure an officer within the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is specifically dedicated as secretariat support for the development of the Strategy as well as providing enhanced support on aquaculture policy.

5. Promote a Sustainable Seafood Industry

The Coalition will provide **\$3 million** over four years to industry bodies to promote a sustainable Australian seafood industry.

A portion of this funding will be targeted at obtaining third party certification for sustainable seafood including Ecolabelling certification.

6. Consider the Hawke Review of the EPBC Act to give specific focus on fisheries and sea issues

The Hawke Review of the EPBC Act was completed and handed to the Federal Labor Government in October 2009 with the final report being released in December by the Federal Minister for the Environment. The Government has yet to release its response to the Hawke Review.

The Coalition is aware that in its current form the EPBC Act was designed and modelled on terrestrial assessments and the Act is therefore unsuitable and inadequate for marine issues. There is also a need to provide greater recognition of Australia's world-leading fisheries management regimes.

7. Assist commercial and recreational organisations play a role in developing national maritime safety standards

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority is currently working with Federal and State jurisdictions, through COAG, to develop national maritime safety standards.

Both the recreational and commercial fishing sectors are responsibly committed to the development and implementation of such standards. A Coalition Government will provide up to **\$100,000** to relevant to meet the costs of their active participation in these deliberations.

8. Promote the environmental, health and social benefits of recreational fishing

The Coalition will provide **\$1.2 million** over four years for a Promotion of Recreational Fishing Grants programme.

Grants of up to \$20,000 will be provided to recreational fishing clubs and organisations to help promote the environmental, health and social benefits of recreational fishing. Examples of

promotional activities might include family fishing days or clean-up of local fishing spots.

This funding will be provided from within existing departmental allocations.

9. Conduct recreational fishing surveys every five years

In conjunction with the Fishing Research & Development Corporation (FRDC) and Recfish, the Coalition will collect data on the social and economic impact of recreational fishing as well as obtain catch data to help assess stock levels.

The information will be made available to both policy makers and recreational fishing clubs and representative organisations.

10. Form a Recreational Fishing Ministerial Advisory Council

A Coalition Government will form a Recreational Fishing Ministerial Advisory Council including the Minister for Fisheries and the Minister for the Environment along with representatives of the recreational fishing sector.

11. Support a national peak body for recreational fishing and its participation in national consultations on the establishment of marine parks

The Coalition will provide **\$500,000** to a national peak body for recreational fishing over three years.

The Coalition will also work with recreational fishing stakeholders to investigate long term funding options for the national peak body which should play a role as a key adviser to government departments and agencies on the needs of the recreational fishing sector.

12. Immediately put on hold the marine bioregional planning process to allow for its restructure

The Coalition will take immediate action to restructure the Marine Bioregional Planning Process to address major community and industry concerns with Labor's mismanagement of the process.

During this restructure, a Bioregional Advisory Panel will be appointed for each of the four marine bioregions. These Advisory Panels will provide advice on potential Marine Protected Areas and the design of management plans (including consideration of no-take zones). The Bioregional Advisory Panels will also consult with the community and fishing industry on the restructure of the Marine Bioregional Planning Process.

While continuing a rigorous scientific assessment process, a Coalition Government will suspend consideration of currently published 'Areas for Further Assessment' and will refer the design and locations of proposed boundaries for proposed Marine Protected Areas and no-take zones to the Bioregional Advisory Panels.

Consideration will be given to staging the assessment and consultation process across the four marine bioregions currently under assessment. This will ensure that stakeholders with an interest in multiple marine bioregions are given reasonable opportunity to contribute to consultative processes.

13. Provide a fair and balanced displaced effort policy

The Coalition will establish a Ministerial Panel tasked with oversight of the design, development and consultation of the displacement policy. The Panel will be jointly chaired by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Minister for Environment Protection, Heritage and Arts.

The Coalition's displacement policy will be developed through the four Bioregional Advisory Panels, in consultation and negotiation with affected commercial and recreational industry representatives (including charter operators and onshore related businesses). The displaced effort policy will be informed by socio-economic modelling of the reach of the fishing sector into the community.

The consultation will examine options to reduce the negative economic impacts that would flow from implementation of the draft plan.

As a last resort, if such consultation and negotiation does not reduce impacts below levels that are reasonably compensable, then compensation, structural adjustment or other appropriate measures will be delivered before any constraints on fishing are implemented.

14. Base marine protected areas on science

The Coalition will require peer-reviewed scientific evidence of threats to marine biodiversity to be made available to all stakeholders, including affected communities and industries, before any decision is made on future Marine Protected Areas.

The Coalition will work cooperatively with all impacted communities and industries through the Bioregional Advisory Panels to develop socio-economic impact statements for each proposed Marine Protected Area.

15. Establish sensible and balanced marine park boundaries and develop management plans in consultation with industry

In establishing Marine Protected Areas, the Coalition will consult closely with those people and industries that use the marine environment, including the recreational and commercial fishing sectors, to determine Marine Protected Area management plans in accordance with relevant legislation and other regulatory frameworks.

World-leading and highly rigorous fisheries management regimes are already in place in Australian waters. Significant weight will be given to these existing and effective fisheries management plans when considering assessed areas.

16. Commit to fighting illegal foreign fishing

The Coalition is committed to maintaining all resources currently devoted to patrolling Australia's fishing zones.

It will ensure that resources devoted to patrolling illegal foreign fishing are not diverted to other activities including acting as a floating hotel for asylum seekers. This includes ensuring the Oceanic Viking and/or its replacement is provided with sufficient funding to devote an adequate level of patrol days in Southern waters every financial year.

The Coalition will work closely and cooperatively with industry to ensure our patrol resources are located in the right zones at the right times.

COSTINGS

The Coalition will provide an additional \$15.1 million over the forward estimates for these measures to support fisheries.

This funding will be provided from the nearly \$30 billion in recurrent savings that have been identified by the Coalition over the forward estimates.

These savings are a result of cutting Labor's waste and mismanagement and redirecting funding from inefficient and poorly performing Labor Government programmes.

	2010-11 \$M	2011-12 \$M	2012-13 \$M	2013-14 \$M	TOTAL \$M
Adaptation to climate change	0.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	5.0
Aquaculture Industry Development Fund	0.5	1	2.5	2.5	6.5
Sustainable Australian seafood	-	1	1	1	3
National maritime safety standards	0.1	-	-	-	0.1
Support a national peak body regarding the establishment of marine parks	0.1	0.2	0.2	-	0.5

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