



## **MEDIA RELEASE – 5 May 2006**

### **SE MPAs – an historical achievement for the environment, community and the industry**

The Australian Seafood Industry Council believes the revised South-east Region Marine Protected Area (MPA) network announced by Government today is an historical and overall positive outcome for the environment, the community and the Fishing Industry.

Over three times the size of Tasmania, the proposed MPAs cover an area of 226,000 square kilometres. Throughout the SE Region MPA planning process, the fishing industry has worked constructively within the consultation process in an attempt to reduce the impacts on commercial fishing, whilst striving to achieve Government's stated conservation objectives.

"The fishing industry has worked tirelessly with Government and other stakeholders to achieve an MPA network that minimizes the impacts on the fishing industry, meets the needs of the community and improves the biodiversity protection of our marine environment" said Bob Pennington, Chair of the Australian Seafood Industry Council.

"The original Government proposal of December last year would have had potentially disastrous impacts on the fishing industry. By uniting and working with other stakeholders and Government, the potentially disastrous impacts on fishermen, related industries and regional communities have been significantly reduced. At the same time, environmental outcomes far superior to the original proposal have been achieved. For example, the network is now over 20 percent larger than the original proposal and over 80 percent of seamounts in the SE Region are protected, providing important refuge areas for deepwater benthic communities and species" Mr Pennington said.

Quantifying and understanding the impacts of the initial MPA system proposed by Government in December 2005 was essential in the process of identifying better alternatives that minimized impacts on industry, but also met or enhanced the conservation objectives. In this regard, the fishing industry applauds the research undertaken by the Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute, lead by Prof Colin Buxton of the University of Tasmania, and the rational way in which the information was used by stakeholders and State and Commonwealth Governments.

The fishing industry stresses that despite the efforts to minimise impacts, the revised SE Region MPA network comes at a cost to industry, with a number of individual fishers being impacted heavily and most being affected in some way. One of the key outstanding issues for the fishing industry remains the question of adjustment assistance for those operators who are adversely impacted by MPAs but wish to remain in the industry.

“The well established principle of compensation to operators whose businesses are impacted by MPAs, causing a reallocation of the resource from fishing entitlements to a broader public good of conservation, will continue to be pursued by the fishing industry. An inequitable precedent will be set if individuals operating in sustainable fisheries have to bear the cost of community outcomes such as the creation of MPAs ” said Mr Pennington.

Concern also remains about how management and compliance of the MPA network will be funded and enforced. The fishing industry will be working closely with Government and other stakeholders to ensure practical and cost effective arrangements are implemented.

*Contact: Mr Bob Pennington (ASIC Chair)*  
*0418 830 241*

*Note: The Australian Seafood Industry Council (ASIC) represents the commercial fishing, aquaculture and post harvest sectors of the Australian seafood industry. ASIC has coordinated the fishing industry’s input to the South-east region MPA process and has been an active stakeholder in responding to the development of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the SE Region since December 2000.*