



- MEDIA RELEASE -
SENATOR THE HON. ERIC ABETZ
Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation

DAFF06/36A

5 May 2006

Final Marine Protected Areas: A win-win for fishers and for conservation

The final network of South East Region Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) announced today are a win-win for fishers and for conservation, the Minister for Fisheries and Conservation, Senator Eric Abetz, said today.

“As a result of stakeholder consultation, more than 20 changes have been made to the draft boundaries proposed in December 2005,” the Minister said.

“This final proposed network reduces the impact on the fishing industry by more than 90 per cent from the original proposal, while increasing the protected areas by over 20 per cent.

“The MPA area has actually been *increased* by 24 per cent to about 226,000km² — an area equivalent to more than three times the size of Tasmania.

“Significantly, the impact on the scallop industry has been entirely removed.”

The Minister said that this outcome proved that only the Howard Government can be trusted to effectively balance jobs and conservation.

“I have always said that I believed a sensible, balanced outcome between jobs and conservation could be achieved,” he said.

“We did it in forestry with the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement.

“Any fair and objective observer would have to agree we have now also achieved it in the south east oceans.”

The Minister praised the work of former Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries, Senator Richard Colbeck, Braddon MHR Mark Baker, Bass MHR Michael Ferguson, the Tasmanian State Parliamentary Liberal Party, and all his Federal colleagues who advocated strongly on behalf of local fishers.

“These people know that conservation and the legitimate human need to sustainably harvest our resources can co-exist,” the Minister said.

He also thanked all those who had contributed to the consultation process, particularly Professor Colin Buxton of the Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute, whose scientific input was invaluable.

Fishers impacted by the creation of the MPA network may be able to obtain assistance under the \$220m *Securing Our Fishing Future* package, including if they are eligible to participate in the fishing concession buyout currently being conducted by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

Ends

Media inquiries: Brad Stansfield 0419 884 666