



## **EXPRESS NEWS – 09 FEBRUARY 2006**

### **Commonwealth MPAs**

As outlined in the last edition of **Express News**, circulated on the 13 January, this newsletter is now only being conveyed via email. Therefore, if you know someone who would like to receive it please encourage them to provide their email address to us at [tfic@tfic.com.au](mailto:tfic@tfic.com.au), or alternatively you are welcome to copy it and pass it on. It is also available on our website [www.tfic.com.au](http://www.tfic.com.au).

Since the last edition of **Express News**, a number of aspects of the proposed Commonwealth MPA network have become clearer and a significant amount of progress has been made in the development of a response and negotiating position by industry. The purpose of this newsletter is to inform you of the process to date but also to assure you that TFIC and a number of Industry and Government representatives are continuing to work extremely hard on this issue towards a positive outcome for all involved.

#### **Review of past progress:**

As the Commonwealth MPA network proposed for the South-east region affects stakeholders from three states, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria and a number of Commonwealth fisheries – it was agreed that a single coordinated response was the preferred approach rather than each State and/or individual fisheries attempting an independent response and potentially diluting efforts.

Logically the Australian Seafood Industry Council (ASIC), as the National peak industry body, was assigned the task of developing a coordinated response to the proposed

Commonwealth MPA network. A “*South-east MPA Working Group*” comprised of State Government and Industry peak body representatives has been put together to develop and facilitate this response. To feed into this process, a “*Tasmanian Commonwealth MPA Coordinating Group*” was established by TFIC to ensure that Tasmanian stakeholders are properly represented and remain informed of the process being undertaken, a number of port meetings, newsletters and interviews have been undertaken to achieve this.

The “*South-east MPA Working Group*” agreed an essential aspect of responding to the proposed Commonwealth MPA network was to gain an understanding of the impacts that could reasonably be expected to occur if the proposal was to proceed without alteration. To facilitate this, an “*Impact Assessment Project Team*” headed by Professor Colin Buxton, Director of the Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute (TAFI), was assigned the task of developing an independent report that details the potential impacts of the proposed Commonwealth MPA network.

It was also agreed that the “*South-east MPA Working Group*” should develop a number of alternatives to the proposed MPA network that would mitigate any adverse affects on industry, whilst continuing to meet the conservation objectives of the Australian Government, Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH).

### **Where are we now?**

The “*Impact Assessment Project Team*” has put together a draft of the report - “*Regional Impact Assessment for the Marine Protected Areas Proposed for the South East Region*”. The report assesses each MPA individually and outlines the impacts it would have on relevant fisheries by detailing displaced catch from historical catch data. The report also outlines socio-economic implications of the proposed MPAs with data collected from individual fishers and stakeholders through a series of interviews and questionnaires. As the report is in a draft form, no more details are available at this point in time, however it is expected that a final version of the report will be available by the 10 February. It is envisaged that this report will be critical in negotiations with DEH to outline quantifiable impacts of the proposed MPA network as it stands. As a result it is unlikely that a copy of the report will be circulated to stakeholders until after the negotiations take place.

The “*South-east MPA Working Group*” has also outlined a number of alterations to the proposed Commonwealth MPA network. These alterations have been designed to mitigate any adverse impacts on the seafood industry but still meet the conservation objectives that DEH set out to achieve. The alterations have been developed through significant stakeholder consultation and based on the location of historical catch data. Again as these alterations to the proposed MPA network are critical to negotiations with DEH, it is unlikely that a copy of the proposed changes will be circulated.

## **Where to next?**

A delegation from the “*South-east MPA Working Group*” will meet with DEH on Friday 10 February to gain an understanding of how amenable the Australian Government is to negotiating with the seafood industry. DEH will be briefed on the impact assessment report and provided with an understanding of Industry’s preferred options. The outcome of this meeting will direct the next step that the “*South-east MPA Working Group*” takes on behalf of all of its stakeholders in the South-east region.

TFIC is committed to keeping you informed of this process and will circulate further information as it becomes available.

If you have any queries or concerns regarding the above information please contact me at TFIC by email [afebey@tfic.com.au](mailto:afebey@tfic.com.au) or phone the office on 03 6224 2332.

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**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**