

14 May 2019

Ms Jane Lovell
Chief Executive Officer
Seafood Industry Australia
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Dear Ms Lovell,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the views of the Coalition on important issues facing your members. A response to your questions is attached.

This election will have real consequences for Australia's economy and our future.

Despite global headwinds, our economy is strong. This year, for the first time in more than a decade, the Government will deliver a Budget surplus.

A stronger economy means we can deliver on our plans to:

1. Create 1.25 million more jobs over the next five years.
2. Maintain budget surpluses and pay down debt.
3. Deliver tax relief to encourage and reward hard working Australians.
4. Guarantee increased investments for schools, hospitals and roads.
5. Keep Australians safe and our borders secure.

The alternative at this election is Mr Shorten. Labor's risky agenda includes billions of dollars of higher taxes – on retirees, housing, incomes, investments, family businesses, electricity and more.

Thank you for communicating our response to your members.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Hirst
Federal Director

MORRISON GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE SEAFOOD INDUSTRY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA

Security of Access to Resources and Fishing Rights

Marine Parks

The Morrison Government is committed to the Commonwealth's current marine park management plans which were implemented in 2018 following an extensive consultation and scientific process. The Plans were informed by an independent review, public forums and more than 130,000 written submissions, and were passed by Parliament.

Our world class network of marine parks covers 36 per cent of our oceans, well above the United Nations' benchmark of 10 per cent. The new management plans for Australian Marine Parks strike the right balance between environmental, economic and social objectives.

The new management plans have significantly reduced the impact on stakeholders from that proposed by Labor in 2012. The economic impact on commercial fishers was reduced from \$8.2 million to \$4.1 million.

The Coalition is supporting the transition of fishers to the new plans with a \$35 million package. The package includes direct assistance to commercial fishers and grants to help communities and industry engage in marine park management. We remain committed to delivering this package.

In comparison to the Coalition, Tony Burke is one of the biggest risks to sensible management of Australia's marine areas. He has publicly indicated that he intends to take Australia back to Labor's 2012 Marine Park plans, stating: "*Labor will restore and save the marine parks in full, in full.*" (Labor's National Conference, 2018).

These lock-outs are a threat to jobs, industry and a whole way of life for commercial and recreational fishers right around Australia, yet this is exactly what Labor has committed to if elected. Labor would cause irreversible financial and emotional damage to fishing industry and communities.

Labor has recent form when it comes to attacking our fishers, as we've seen with the Western Australian Labor Government's assault on the fishing rights of local rock lobster fishers.

Fishing families in Australia have a clear choice at this election: a Coalition Government that has a track record of protecting fishing rights and securing access for fishers, or Labor, the Greens and Tony Burke who are committed to dragging Australia back to their marine park lock-outs.

Enhance Public Perception, social licence and Community Acceptance

The Coalition is committed to assisting all sectors of our fishing industry (wild catch, aquaculture, recreational and Indigenous) to improve their public perception, social licence and community acceptance.

We have committed to this through our ongoing support of the National Fishing Advisory Council. NFAC has selected improving social licence to operate as one of their priority areas of work and has established a number of actions to progress this work including through:

- round table discussions across the sectors;
- establishing a forum to develop an 'our fishery' concept;
- developing surveys to better understand community perceptions; and
- developing kiosks to provide a point for feedback for fishers across the sectors.

Biosecurity

Australia's pest and disease free status underpins our international reputation and export trade.

The Coalition injected an additional \$313 million to build a smarter and stronger biosecurity system to further protect us against unwanted pests, weeds and diseases.

And we strengthened our border protection against pests, weeds and diseases by delivering a new Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity with state and territory governments.

The Coalition remains committed to finalising an aquatic emergency animal disease response agreement so that there are arrangements in place for governments and industry to share the responsibilities and costs for responding to aquatic emergency animal disease outbreaks.

The agreement would provide a mechanism focused on risk mitigation and improved biosecurity outcomes through shared decision making, cost sharing and clarified roles and responsibilities.

Improve Mental Health in the Australian Seafood Industry

The Coalition acknowledges recent work of the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation that highlighted the levels of psychological distress among fishers. Studies have shown a range of factors including chronic job insecurity has led to poor levels of mental health and high rates of suicide among Australian commercial fishers.

A re-elected Morrison Government will invest \$600,000 over two years to support a trial of a mental health trusted advocate program for the fisheries sector. Up to 10 advocates will be established in eight communities across the country. Advocates will be supported with training in mental health first aid or counselling to assist them in their role.

This will provide soft entry points to mental health services to reduce barriers and stigma. They will be the linkage between fishers and the wider mental health support network.

Facilitate Improved Resource and Consultation with the Petroleum Industry

The Coalition is committed to recognising and supporting the joint initiatives of SIA and APPEA. On 16 November last year SIA and APPEA held their inaugural 'Seafood and Petroleum Industries Regional Workshop'. This event was attended and supported by Senator the Hon. Richard Colbeck. The Coalition acknowledges the very good joint work that has been done to date by the two sectors and supports this work going forward.

Many of the Australian petroleum industry's offshore activities occur in the same place where fishing occurs. Our oceans are a shared resource and Australians rely on government, fishers and the oil and gas industry working together in the interest of current and future generations.

The Coalition government remains committed to encouraging collaboration between the fishing and petroleum sectors to improve certainty about the management of environmental impacts. We believe that issues between the two industries are best addressed in the cooperative space between the two industries.

The Coalition is committed to supporting a sustainable fishing industry and protecting the marine environment. We are also committed to encouraging the investment in, and development of, Australia's offshore petroleum resources. Our aim is to ensure sustainable practices by all marine users, now and into the future.

The Coalition will continue to invest in scientific research, which is establishing a strong evidence base for decisions on seismic surveys. We will also remain actively engaged with international regulators, the scientific research community, universities and the petroleum industry to promote and encourage collaborative research that directly addresses key research questions related to seismic survey and petroleum impacts on fisheries and aquaculture.

The Coalition is committed to leveraging the National Fishing Advisory Council to help develop a *Commonwealth Resource Sharing Framework* for sharing of fisheries resources across the fisheries sectors and fishing jurisdictions.

The Coalition's work through the National Fishing Advisory Council, and our consideration of resource sharing issues in this forum, will provide the opportunity to also consider resource sharing between the fishing and oil and gas industries.

Commit to Maintaining the Fuel Tax Credits

The Morrison Government is committed to maintaining the existing fuel tax credit arrangements.

Actively assist the Development of the Australian Seafood Industry

Forward planning for the seafood industry

The Coalition is committed to assisting in the development of the Seafood Industry. One of the key ways we will achieve this is through ongoing engagement with the industry through the National Fishing Advisory Council (NFAC).

As part of this work NFAC will assist government to develop a *National Fishing Plan* and a *Commonwealth Resource Sharing Framework* to help harmonise fisheries management around the country.

Removing red tape for the fisheries sector

The Coalition has a track record of simplifying cross-jurisdictional fisheries management to increase efficiency.

Most Australian fisheries are managed by the states, the Northern Territory or the Commonwealth – depending on location. In some cases, management is shared under Offshore Constitutional Settlement (OCS) arrangements.

The Coalition has worked hard with the states and the Northern Territory to minimise the regulatory burden under some OCS arrangements, negotiating responsibility back to single jurisdictions where appropriate. For example, we successfully transitioned the Western Australian Southern Demersal Gillnet and Longline Fishery to single jurisdiction management in 2018.

The Morrison Government is committed to continuing to implement simpler fisheries management. We will work with Queensland and the Northern Territory to move a number of fisheries away from joint management to single jurisdiction.

The Morrison Government will also continue to work with AFMA to identify and implement red tape reduction initiatives.

Further developing export trade

Through our trade agenda and the delivery of trade agreements, tariffs are coming down, making our exports more competitive.

A re-elected Morrison Government will prioritise the conclusion of a free trade agreement with the European Union, the implementation of the India Economic Strategy and the expansion of the Trans Pacific Partnership.

Other market-opening opportunities include a free trade deal with the United Kingdom when they are ready to do so and a trade agreement with the four-nation Pacific Alliance.

The 2019-20 Budget provided an additional \$60 million for Export Market Development Grants (EMDG) to allow small and medium businesses to capitalise on international

opportunities. It provided an additional \$29.4 million investment to back Australia's agricultural export trade.

The Liberal and Nationals Government also committed \$6.6 million over four years to make it easier for Australian exporters to report any non-tariff barriers they experience, and for Australian Government departments to take action to have them addressed. In 2018 the Government released the Non-Tariff Barriers Action Plan and the Non-Tariff Barriers website (www.tradebarriers.dfat.gov.au) which acts as a simple and easy to use portal for businesses and industry to report their non-tariff barriers.

By contrast, Labor did not start and finish one free trade agreement when last in government, and ripped \$100 million out of the EMDG. Under Bill Shorten, Labor is giving trade unions an effective veto over trade agreements, refusing to honour agreements already signed by the Liberal and Nationals Government with Indonesia, Peru and Hong Kong and will try to renegotiate existing FTAs, including the ones they signed, thus threatening the gains and certainty Australian exporters have secured under those agreements.

Mental health program

A re-elected Morrison Government will invest \$600,000 over two years to support a trial of a mental health trusted advocate program for the fisheries sector to support the industry. Up to 10 advocates will be established in eight communities across the country. Advocates will be supported with training in mental health first aid or counselling to assist them in their role.

This will provide soft entry points to mental health services to reduce barriers and stigma. They will be the linkage between fishers and the wider mental health support network.

Maintain funding for the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC)

The Coalition Government remains committed to supporting recreational and commercial fisheries research, development and extension work commissioned by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation.

The Australian Government invests around \$1.1 billion a year in rural research and development through the rural research and development corporations, Cooperative Research Centres, the CSIRO, universities, the research and development Tax Incentive and other programs.

Together with rural industries, in 2017-18 we invested over \$800 million in the rural research and development corporations. Over \$300 million of this was government funding that matches eligible research and development expenditure.

The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation spent \$26 million on research, development and extension expenditure in 2017-18.

The Coalition Government is committed to continuing to support this investment.