



ANSA Update on Commonwealth Marine Reserves – 8.2.2016

Assistant Fisheries Minister, Senator Anne Ruston, recently travelled throughout Qld speaking to recreational fishers seeking their views about the impacts of the proposed Commonwealth marine reserve roll out, particularly implications for the Coral Sea Marine Reserve.

By all accounts the longstanding ANSA position of "no recreational fisher lockouts without justifiable science" was clearly reinforced by all those who had the good fortune to speak with the Senator.

Allan Hansard (ARFF), Brett Cleary (GFAA) and myself met with Environmental Minister Greg Hunt in Canberra last week to reaffirm our "no lock out" position on marine reserves and to remind the government of its pre election commitment to support marine parks based only on appropriate science acknowledging that recreational fishers were not a threat to the marine environment and it was not the Coalition's intention to support a lockout of recreational fishers or restrict the ability of recreational fishers to access local areas. Ongoing consultation with recreational fishers was also promised.

Since coming to power the Coalition did establish Bioregional Advisory panels in those locations where it was proposed new Commonwealth marine reserves would be established - Coral Sea Reserve, Temperate East, South West, North West and North Reserve networks. ANSA together with members of ARFF have consulted regularly with these panels and have consistently argued the case for a better deal for recreational fishers which included no lockouts without justifiable science and a more liberal interpretation of what will or won't be allowed in IUCN 11 green zones which currently impose a ban on all forms of commercial and recreational fishing.

The Advisory panels have now concluded their review process and have made recommendations to the Minister. These recommendations have not yet been made public but our information is that the recommendations are not that different from those proposed when Labor was in power and the current interpretation of IUCN 11 is to stand.

At our recent meeting with Minister Hunt we expressed our disappointment with the reported outcome of the Advisory panel review and appealed to the Minister and the government to reconsider the plight of recreational fishers - especially to re examine the merit of allowing a more flexible interpretation of IUCN 11 in the regulations so that some forms of managed recreational fishing would be permissible in these zones. Minister Hunt did agree to reconsider this option as it was in his words "important that we get the process right".

The final plans for the marine reserves will be released for public consultation in about 3 months time. In the interim we will continue to have constructive dialogue with Minister Hunt and Assistant Minister Ruston.