

MEDIA RELEASE

Garrett must address Mako Shark concerns this week or risk 1,000s of Australian fishers and boaters blockading Canberra

National Spokesperson for the Boating and Fishing Council of Australia (BFCA) Dean Logan today indicated that after months of failed negotiations thousands of Australian recreational fishers and boaters are set to drive to Canberra and blockade Parliament House if the Minister for the Environment Peter Garrett does not make key decisions this week.

The most immediate concern – amongst others - is the listing of the Short and Long Fin Mako and Porbeagle Shark as a protect species under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act* (EPBC Act).

The EPBC Act requires that species, included in an Appendix to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), must be added to the list of migratory species under the Act. The three shark species were listed on Appendix II of the CMS in December 2008.

Mr Logan elaborated, "This has been handled appallingly. Appendix II of the CMS clearly states that:

"Migratory species that need or would significantly benefit from international co-operation are listed in Appendix II of the Convention." (<http://www.cms.int/about/intro.htm>)

"Instead the Rudd Government, as of 29 January 2010 – in 5 days, will make it a Federal offence under Part 13 of the EPBC Act to kill, injure or take either species, even if it is by mistake.

"The most logical step is for the Rudd Government to announce this week that the EPBC Act will be amended, as soon as Parliament resumes in February, to provide the Federal Government the necessarily discretionary power it needs to make decisions like these based on science and commonsense.

"The species in question are not threatened in Australian waters, the decision is not based on science nor is it in the national interest. Moreover, the decision does not comply with or follow the clear intent of the CMS."

The Boating and Fishing Council of Australia is Australia's most powerful unified representative alliance for the marine, recreational fishing, outboard and boating sectors. Established to address a continual disregard at the federal level toward boating and recreational fishing interests, the Council's combined membership equals 100,000's of working family votes and billions of revenue for the Australian economy.

Logan concluded, "We proactively seek strong dialogue with all Governments to develop policies that work with local communities and industry to protect the bio-diversity of our unique marine environment.

"However, the Rudd Government has made a number of hastily made unilateral decisions with no consultation and Australian fishers, boaters and their respective sectors, are furious.

"We have always given the Government the opportunity to engage with industry prior to decisions being made. It is now up to Peter Garrett to change his leadership style or risk a historical backlash of angry fishers and boaters. This week is pivotal for the Rudd Government," ended Mr. Logan.

END - Media can contact Dean Logan (National Spokesperson) on 0403 195 798

Boating and Fishing Council of Australia - Canberra

