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Boating and Fishing Council of Australia

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JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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Mako shark decision galvanizes national recreational fishing and boating unity

National Spokesperson for the Boating and Fishing Council of Australia (BFCA) Dean Logan today welcomed the Rudd Government's commonsense decision this week to make amendments to the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* (EPBC Act) to address the Mako and Porbeagle Shark issue.

Mr Logan commented, "We are very pleased with the final outcome, but the recreational fishing and boating sector is frustrated that the needs of millions of Australians were so easily dismissed. We want to work with the government and hope that we never have to take such strong action in the future.

"The decision will allow the Government to comply with its international obligations, under Appendix II of the CMS, by facilitating what we have always asked for: greater cooperation; early consultation, and; decisions made on sound scientific based research."

The issue was resolved because thousands of Australian fishers and boaters were forced to ring the Prime Minister's office in protest, attend rallies and sign petitions. This has been widely viewed as a major win for grass roots recreational boating and fishing politics. As a result the issue has galvanized a sense of national unity amongst all sectors that has never been seen before.

Logan continued, "The sectors highly value the bio-diversity of our unique marine environment and will support policies where we have been treated as partners in the development.

"However, the Rudd Government has made a number of unilateral decisions like the Coral Sea Conservation Zone, with no consultation.

"Moreover, the largest wholesale policy shift in Commonwealth controlled water - the Marine Bio-Regional Planning Process - still requires major reconsideration of the needs of the recreational fishing and boating industries.

"It is up to Peter Garrett to demonstrate that his is a government for the people and not just the green fundamentalists.

"Our industry is committed to working with Government on policy that is fair and sensible and balances the environment along with social and economic values.

"Strong environmental outcomes that protect our children's heritage can be compatible with sustainable recreational fishing and boating.

"All the Government needs to do is listen and genuinely work with us," concluded Mr. Logan.

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