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Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

M E D I A R E L E A S E

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Fishermen must beware of Garrett's mako fishing laws

Recreational anglers fishing for mako sharks are being warned that despite a 'backdown' by the Federal Government on a ban on the fishing of the species, severe restrictions will begin tomorrow.

Federal Coalition spokesman for Fisheries Senator Richard Colbeck said from tomorrow (January 29) **no recreational fishermen is allowed to catch and take mako sharks** in Commonwealth waters.

This is due to Minister Garrett authorising the listing of longfin mako, shortfin mako and porbeagle shark species under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

Senator Colbeck said while catch and release fishing of these sharks was "unlikely to be subject to enforcement action" according to Minister Garrett, there was great confusion among fishermen about how this would be applied, where and when.

"As raised by recreational fishermen at recent public meetings, there are real and logistical problems that arise from the enactment of the listing of the shark species.

"Fishermen are confused about which rules apply in State waters (200 metres – 3 nautical miles) and which rules apply in Commonwealth waters (3nm – 200nm) and how the no-take rules can be applied.

"What happens if a fisherman catches a mako in State waters and then travels out to Commonwealth waters?"

"With this dog's breakfast created by the Federal Government, recreational fishermen will be very unsure about returning shore with a mako shark. Fishermen failing to comply with the new mako fishing rules may be fined up to \$11,000."

Senator Colbeck said he had urgently written to Minister Garrett seeking immediate advice on the protocols for mako shark fishing from tomorrow up until legislation is amended to fix the situation.

"Fishermen are desperate to know their rights from tomorrow.

"In particular, game fishing clubs are completely in the dark over the fate of upcoming shark fishing competitions including the *St Helens Game Fishing Classic* in Tasmania, the *Victorian Game Fishing Championship* at San Remo in Victoria and the *Shellharbour Game Fishing Tournament* in New South Wales.

"Minister Garrett must immediately provide answers to event organisers about whether or not they will be able to proceed with their tournaments under the new rules.

"These are important regional events that bring in significant income for local communities.