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

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Coalition welcomes tabling of amendments to fix Garrett's mako shark mess

The long overdue tabling of legislation to fix up yet another of Environment Minister Peter Garrett's messes has been welcomed today.

In December, recreational fishers were made aware of a plan by Minister Garrett to ban the fishing of popular game fish, the mako and porbeagle sharks, under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act from 29 January.

This came about due to international action on threatened stocks particularly in the Mediterranean and North Atlantic Ocean, but there was no scientific evidence or data suggesting low stocks in or around Australian waters.

A massive effort by the recreational fishers, in conjunction with the Federal Coalition, saw a grassroots campaign eventually force a backdown by Minister Garrett in January.

On January 25, Minister Garrett said "*the Government will act as a priority, upon the resumption of the Parliament*" to overturn his initial decision to ban the fishing of the three shark species.

Today, the Minister tabled the *Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Recreational Fishing for Mako and Porbeagle Sharks) Bill 2010* which will allow recreational fishermen to legally fish for mako and porbeagle sharks.

Federal Coalition spokesman for Fisheries, Senator Richard Colbeck said while Minister Garrett had not acted as expeditiously as he initially indicated to recreational fishers, the tabling of the amendments to the EPBC Act are finally welcomed.

"I welcome feedback from anyone on these amendments and look forward to having this matter resolved as quickly as possible in Parliament."