



SENATOR THE HON RICHARD COLBECK

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

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

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Labor MP all at sea on mako fishing ban

A Rudd Government backbencher has been caught out attempting to mislead recreational fishermen about the mako shark fishing ban his government is implementing.

Corangamite Labor MP, Darren Cheeseman, has claimed in today's media that he has successfully lobbied Environment Minister, Peter Garrett's office to change from a complete ban to allowing capture and release.

The reality is, however, far different.

In his last media statement on the issue on 18 December, prior to going on holidays, Minister Garrett merely said the ban:

*"would be **very unlikely** to affect catch and release fishing"* and

*"As catch and release activities, when carried out properly, are **not likely** to have a significant impact on populations of these shark species they equally are unlikely to be subject to enforcement action."*

Federal Coalition spokesman for Fisheries Senator Richard Colbeck said this was not clarification at all. 'Very unlikely' and 'not likely' are ambiguous terms at best and highly misleading at worst.

"What sensible fishermen would be prepared to go fishing on the basis of Mr Garrett saying it would be 'unlikely' you are breaking the law?"

"Minister Garrett has attempted to mislead fishermen with the use of ambiguous terms 'likely' and unlikely' without demonstrating how exactly they will be applied in law.

"Amazingly, Minister Garrett's Labor backbench colleague, Mr Cheeseman has fallen hook, line and sinker for his ambiguous and misleading statement. Either that or Mr Cheeseman is deliberately misleading the fishing public.

"Wisely, fishermen are not falling for this deception. Remember it was Mr Garrett who said prior to coming to government, "once we get in, we will just change it all." Who is to say he will not do the same once the ban is in place? Is it likely or unlikely?"

Minister Garrett's plan to list longfin mako, shortfin mako and porbeagle shark species under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act is planned to take effect from 29 January.

"This plan is opposed by the recreational fishing industry which faces enormous financial losses as a result of the plan. A national petition opposing the ban that I have drafted and distributed across Australia now has in excess of 2500 signatures with many more expected.

"The fishing community's views on Minister Garrett's mako fishing ban are quite clear – unlike Mr Garrett's words."

Senator Colbeck urged all members of the fishing community to ring the Prime Minister's office on 02 6277 7700 now that both the Fisheries Minister Mr Burke and Minister Garrett were refusing to take phone calls on the mako ban issue."