



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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Garrett must read his own review to fix mako mess

Federal Environment Minister must this week announce a postponement of his decision to implement a no-take policy on mako and porbeagle sharks and begin genuine consultation.

The ban, which comes into place in less than 10 days from now (29 January), is strongly opposed by the recreational fishing industry.

A meeting to be held in Torquay on Victoria's Surf Coast will be attended by hundreds of recreational fishermen calling upon Minister Garrett to delay his ban which is not due to the number of sharks in Australian waters, but due to depleted mako stocks in the far-away Mediterranean Sea.

Federal Coalition spokesman for Fisheries Senator Richard Colbeck who addressed the meeting said Minister Garrett should read the review of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (the 'Hawke Review') which he commissioned and which sets out a solution to the current mess.

Under the current EPBC Act, species listed in Appendices I and II of the International Convention for the Conservation of Migratory Species are given the highest level of protection despite only the species on Appendix I being severely threatened.

"Recommendation 17 of the EPBC Act review – handed to Minister Garrett in October – advocates a change where the Act distinguishes between the two appendices," Senator Colbeck said.

"Recreational fishermen will tell you mako shark stocks are not threatened. Even Minister Garrett has admitted there is no scientific data to suggest mako shark stocks are at concerning levels.

"So why is the Minister still refusing to postpone his ban and allow Recommendation 17 of the review to be implemented?"

"A postponement would allow for a genuine consultation process to occur and for a sensible mako shark management plan to be developed."

Senator Colbeck queried why Minister Garrett had told the fishing industry in the middle of last year that he would allow the review to finalise its assessment prior to consideration of adding the sharks to the protected species list.

"Despite this promise, Minister Garrett sneakily then tabled a document in November authorising the banning of mako shark fishing knowing full well the Final Report of the Hawke Review would recommend changes to the listing.

"Minister Garrett demonstrated, once again, he is not to be trusted – and is largely influenced by fringe Green groups who want to shut the door on the fishing industry and throw the keys away."

Senator Colbeck urged all members of the fishing community to sign the mako shark national petition and ring the Prime Minister's office on 02 6277 7700 to ensure the Federal Labor Government got the message loud and clear that the mako shark fishing ban was unacceptable.

Recommendation 17 (refer pages 31 and 128 of the EPBC Act Review final report):

"The Review recommends that the provisions of Part 13 of the Act relating to migratory species listed on Appendix II of the Bonn Convention be reviewed and amended to allow the take of Appendix II migratory species, subject to management arrangements demonstrating that the take would not be detrimental to survival of the species.

Any such amendments should ensure that the Act provides appropriate protection consistent with Australia's international obligations."