



SENATOR THE HON RICHARD COLBECK

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

21 December 2009

Message from the Federal Coalition spokesman for Fisheries, Senator Richard Colbeck to meeting of recreational fishermen Shellharbour Workers Club, New South Wales

The Federal Coalition strongly supports fishermen in their fight to stop Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett's proposal to ban fishing of mako and porbeagle sharks.

This ban will cause major damage to coastal communities.

Minister Garrett's plan will prevent game fishing clubs holding shark fishing competitions and charter operators will lose business. And it will come at a significant cost to bait and tackle stores.

Many fishing families spend hundreds if not thousands of dollars preparing their boats and buying reels and other fishing equipment. Should the ban go ahead, this will be money down the drain."

Game fishing clubs, game fishing charter operators and local fishermen have been kept in the dark about Minister Garrett's controversial and highly damaging proposal.

Minister Garrett's decision making process is just like his dancing style.

It is completely **disjointed** from the broader community, totally **uncoordinated** from any consultation and only **aligned with fringe elements**.

On Friday, Minister Garrett released a statement saying "*would be **very unlikely** to affect catch and release fishing*" – words of scant comfort or clarification for the fishing industry.

The only thing Minister Garrett could be sure about was the science. He stated that "globally many populations of mako sharks were depleted, however there was no evidence suggesting that Australian populations are similarly threatened." He is mounting a case against his own crazy plan!

The Federal Coalition is asking as many people as possible to sign the national petition calling on the Rudd Government and Minister Garrett to:

1. postpone any decision to implement any no-take policy on shortfin mako, longfin mako and porbeagle sharks beyond this fishing season;
2. begin a genuine consultation process involving both the recreational and commercial fishing sectors, including game fishing clubs;

3. publish and explain, as part of the consultative process, the science relating to any shark fishing ban proposals including the status of the species in Australian waters; and
4. develop, with input and feedback from both the recreational and commercial fishing sectors, credible protocols for the management of the fishery prior to any bans being implemented.

I am working with local members including the Federal Member for Gilmore Joanna Gash, and the NSW State Shadow Minister Duncan Gay to help fight Minister Garrett's mako shark ban plan.

Should you need any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Tel: 03 6424 5960

Fax: 03 6423 5244

senator.colbeck@aph.gov.au