



452-758

Senator the Hon. Joe Ludwig

**Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Senator for Queensland**

REF: MNMC2011-05629

The Hon. John Murphy MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear ~~Mr~~ Murphy

Thank you for your letter of 25 May 2011 forwarding to me a petition submitted to the Standing Committee on Petitions about restrictions on commercial and recreational fishing in Australian waters.

I note that the concerns about marine reserves and potential restrictions on commercial and recreational fishing in waters off New South Wales seem to relate to the state marine park process rather than the Commonwealth marine bioregional planning process.

The Australian Government is committed to a clear and transparent process involving broad consultation and engagement with all stakeholders to help identify areas that are important for commercial and recreational marine users.

The Commonwealth marine bioregional planning process that will determine the marine reserve network for Commonwealth waters (usually three nautical miles from shore) is principally a matter for the Hon. Tony Burke MP, Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water and Population—except for Great Barrier Reef Marine Park matters, which are managed by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

It is expected that those marine users, including commercial, recreational and charter fishers, who could be displaced will be consulted and treated fairly should there be unavoidable impacts as a result of the bioregional planning process. The government's policy also provides for various zoning arrangements, including multiple-use zones, that will allow commercial and recreational fishing activities that are compatible with habitat protection to continue.

Minister Burke recently announced a proposed marine reserve network for Commonwealth waters in the south-west region. The release of the east marine bioregional plan and associated marine reserves is scheduled for later this year. Information on marine bioregional planning and the proposed reserve system is available at www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mbp/index.html.

I have also been advised that areas for further assessment have been identified in the east marine region to gather more information on biological, physical and socioeconomic uses. This process will help to narrow down the areas where marine reserves may be established.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention. I trust you will find this information of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Joe Ludwig

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Senator for Queensland

27 June 2011