

Labor Senators' additional comments

1.1 Labor listened to the ongoing concerns from the Tasmanian community and across the country and proposed this inquiry in August 2015 to examine the environmental, social and economic impacts of large-capacity factory trawlers in Australia's marine jurisdiction. The reference was opposed by Liberal and National Coalition Senators.

1.2 In government, Labor ensured appropriate consideration was given to the impact of large-capacity factory trawlers on Australia's fisheries by amending the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). Our amendment guaranteed Australia's waters were adequately protected from risks associated with the use of large-capacity factory trawlers.

1.3 In September 2012, the then Labor Government used these powers to ban the operation of the FV *Margiris*, while an assessment of its impact was undertaken. Labor established an independent expert panel to provide an objective judgment of the environmental impacts of this trawling activity. This ban applied to vessels of similar size and capacity to the original large-capacity factory trawler only, and included vessels that received or processed fish, not just trawler vessels. The ban was opposed by the Liberal and National Coalition when in Opposition.

1.4 A sunset clause in the original amendments enacted in 2012 means that no further bans can be placed on new large-capacity factory trawlers hoping to fish Australian waters. To ensure that further bans are possible, in early 2014, Labor introduced legislation into the Senate to remove the sunset clause. Under Labor's plan, all future large-capacity factory trawlers could be thoroughly assessed using the most up-to-date science, thereby protecting our oceans and our recreational fishing spots. To date, the Abbott and Turnbull Liberal National Coalition Governments have refused to work with Labor on this important issue.

1.5 Labor is particularly concerned about the potential for localised depletion and its environmental and recreational impact. Labor recognises the importance of Australian waters to recreational fishers, the commercial fishing industry and the tourism industry, and for its conservation value. Labor is committed to adequately protecting Australian waters from the risks of overfishing and from the use of large-capacity factory trawlers.

1.6 Labor remains committed to preventing the operation of all large-capacity factory trawlers in Australian waters, unless a thorough assessment against the most up-to-date science can verify such operations will not undermine small pelagic fisheries and recreational fishing spots.

Senator Anne Urquhart
Senator for Tasmania

Senator Carol Brown
Senator for Tasmania

Senator Anthony Chisholm
Senator for Queensland

Senator Sam Dastyari
Senator for New South Wales