

October 27, 2009

Senator Anne McEwen, Chair
Senate Environment, Communications and the Arts Legislation Committee
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Senator McEwen,

I am writing on behalf of the Pew Environment Group in relation to the Supplementary Budget Estimates by the Senate Environment, Communications and the Arts Legislation Committee held on October 20, 2009.

During questioning about the Coral Sea, the following statements were made in relation to an article in *Fishing News International* (Vol.48 No.10). Below are two excerpts, one from page 47 and the other from page 88, from the Proof Committee Hansard for Tuesday, October 20.

Senator BOSWELL—The minister might be aware of this, but Ms Zethoven has been distributing around the parliament photos of big fish being pulled up in a reference to the Coral Sea. These photos were given to me by Senator Macdonald. I do not think he would mind me using his name. I understand that they were given to him in a lobbying exercise by Ms Zethoven to point out what sort of catch would be taken in the Coral Sea. Last night at AFMA I asked if they had seen these photos. They had. I asked them where these fish were being taken from and it was not anywhere near the Coral Sea; it was 80 kilometres east of Brisbane. I am not sure that people who distribute that should be on any advisory committee. I will therefore be seeking an explanation from Dr Reichelt.

Ms Kruk—I would ask that you provide us with a copy of that. That is not a brochure I am familiar with.

Senator BOSWELL—It is not a brochure; this is a cutting out of a fishing magazine that is being distributed around in support of Ms Zethoven's views on the Coral Sea, but these fish were never near the Coral Sea. They came from 80 kilometres east of Brisbane. So you would have to question why someone should be on an advisory committee.

The first quoted speaker in the second extract is Mr Stephen Oxley, the Acting First Assistant Secretary of the Marine Division of the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts:

“Mr Oxley—It is what appears to be the front page of a publication called the *Fishing News International* and it has a picture of two very large fish hanging up, having been caught, with a headline of ‘Look what I found’.

Senator BOSWELL—Those fish were caught, according to AFMA, 80 kilometres east of Brisbane at a seamount there. I do not want to put words into Senator Macdonald's mouth, but I understand that was being passed around the Senate as a reason not to fish in the Coral Sea. It is no good asking you if you have not seen it, but it does raise some questions about Pew. This was not presented to me so I cannot say categorically that was what happened, but I understand from Senator Macdonald that is what did happen. Are there any plans to make this a no-take zone?”

Over the past two years, the Pew Environment Group, working within a coalition of other conservation organisations, has spoken to many federal Senators in support of a fully protected marine reserve in the Coral Sea. We have also communicated by mail and email to many Senators' offices. In none of these communications has Pew distributed any copies of

Fishing News International or any photo extracts from the publication, to Senators or their staff.

I therefore respectfully request that in its official record of the Supplementary Budget Estimates on October 20, 2009, the Committee notes that Pew neither circulated *Fishing News International* or any photo extracts from the publication to any Senators or their staff (or any federal elected representatives) nor indicated the fish referred to in the article were from the Coral Sea.

I would also be most grateful if this correction could be sent to senior government officials who are noted in the Hansard as being present during this section of the proceedings (namely, Ms. Robyn Kruk and all officials from the Marine Division present at the Committee).

Yours sincerely,



Imogen Zethoven AO
Director, Coral Sea Campaign
Pew Environment Group