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MEDIA RELEASE

Abbott Government delivers on marine conservation promise

The Australian Marine Alliance (AMA) today congratulated the Federal Environment Minister Greg Hunt on delivering a key policy commitment by announcing late yesterday a review of the Commonwealth Marine Bio-regional Planning Process (MBPP), premised on an independent scientific review and the establishment of Bioregional Advisory Panels.

Dean Logan AMA CEO, "This is an outstanding outcome for industry and regional communities as the Commonwealth marine environment is afforded the scientific independence, structural rigor and respect it deserves."

The AMA is the largest cross-sector industry group in Australia representing hundreds of commercial fishermen, key aqua culture entities, tens of thousands of recreational anglers, every international manufacturer of outboard engines in the world and over 820 marine / industry based dealer groups. The AMA first started addressing this process 7 years ago and successfully secured the foundation for yesterday's decision with an announcement from the then Opposition Leader, Tony Abbott, at the Brisbane Boat Show on 24th August 2012.

"The contrasting nature of this decision in terms of Ministerial leadership and policy sophistication is staggering. For example:

- Labor's solution to marine conservation and sustainability, under the leadership of Tony Burke, was to provide industry and environmental groups with a pack of colouring in pencils and ask them to shade in areas of the marine environment they wanted protected.
 - o **The Coalition established an independent scientific panel.**
- Labor dismantled, without notice, key consultative groups where industry was afforded an opportunity to input into the MBPP.
 - o **The Coalition established Bioregional Advisory Panels and by doing so empowered stakeholders to be apart of the process.**

- Key recreational fishing leaders accompanied Tony Burke on a claytons consultation process to sell a flawed message, process and outcome.
 - o **The Coalition consistently and robustly sought direct advice from key stakeholders like the AMA.**
- When industry challenged the likes of Tony Burke and WA Senator Glenn Sterle, they led with their glass jaw and shut down all communication.
 - o **When industry challenged Greg Hunt, the Minister engaged in the debate directly by always returning emails and seeking advice over the phone sometimes at 7am in the morning or 10pm at night.**
- When industry sought advice from Labor Advisers, Ministers and Senators ordered them not to respond.
 - o **Coalition Advisers on the other hand have been constantly engaged and extremely professional.**

Mr Logan concluded, “The AMA is no-doubt thrilled with this announcement and remains committed to supporting the process in the interests of implementing strong marine / fisheries / environmental based policy that is based on robust peer reviewed science.

“Senator Colbeck, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, must also be congratulated for his roll. In fact, I believe the idea of establishing Bioregional Advisory Panels was first suggested by Senator Colbeck as far back as 2006.

“The environment is the big winner from this announcement.

“It puts an end to the back room grubby deals made in smoke filled rooms, and proves that the environment always comes off second best when the predominate focus is not on science driven policy, but rather preference deals prior to elections.”

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