



Boating and Fishing Council of Australia

Leading the World in Environmental Stewardship

8 December 2009

MEDIA RELEASE

Garrett's marine environmental policy on the brink of disaster

National Spokesperson for the Boating and Fishing Council of Australia (BFCA) Dean Logan today pointed to the front page article in the **Weekend Australian** (Dec 5-6 *Marine Park Battle of the Coral Sea*) on the Coral Sea as a defining moment for Peter Garrett's environmental leadership of Australia's marine environment.

Mr Logan commented, "The unilateral decision to declare the Coral Sea a Conservation Zone and side with the USA funded Pew Environment Group (a division of The Pew Charitable Trusts), was done without any consultation.

"As a result Peter Garrett has single handedly lost the respect of the entire Australian recreational marine, boating, outboard and fishing sectors and is causing deep divisions within the Australian environmental lobby."

On 20 May 2009 the Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett set a worrying precedent with the unilateral decision declaring the Coral Sea a Conservation Zone with no prior consultation with industry or affected Queensland communities. Significant angst and uncertainty now exists as a direct result of the decision with the international environmental lobby group Pew – with a \$US4bn balance sheet - using the Coral Sea issue to push for the implementation of 'no take' marine policies throughout Australia.

Logan continued, "The BFCA makes no excuses for adopting a strong marine environmental stance, however the appalling Coral Sea decision is a significant issue that effects not only Queenslanders but has major ramifications for other parts of Australia."

Pew have a clear no-negotiation, no-take – and in some instances no-human activity – policy stance and are already using the Coral Sea announcement as a backdrop to run massive campaigns in Western Australia.

Logan went on to say, "Make no mistake that some of Australia's largest companies are watching this very issue with great concern.

"In our view the environment will benefit more through a collaborative co-management approach where both industry and community views are respected and taken into consideration. We have some of the best marine environmental policies in the world for this very reason."

Peter Garrett's Ministerial leadership and judgment is further questioned with the Bio-Regional Planning Process also in complete disarray. The BFCA and the Federal Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage & the Arts have convened a critical meeting this Friday in Canberra to resurrect what is a terminally ill process.

Logan concluded, "Our door is open and we will continue to work with Australian environmental groups to secure a balanced outcome for industry, the community and importantly the environment. We can't however stand by and allow international lobby groups to dictate terms and disrespect decades of hard work by our respective sectors. The sooner Peter Garrett realizes this and starts to work with us the better," concluded Mr Logan.

END - Media can contact Dean Logan (National Spokesperson) on 0403 195 798

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