

Keep Australia Fishing Media Release



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Anglers Angry as Burke Rushes Marine Park Lock-Outs

The Gillard Labor Government is treating recreational fishers with contempt by rushing public consultation on its marine park lock-up plans.

Keep Australia Fishing (KAF), the peak national advocacy body representing Australia's 5 million recreational fishers, has criticised Federal Environment Minister, Tony Burke's move to fast-track approval of the contentious marine park plans.

"These new parks will lock Aussie fishos out of 1.3 million square kilometres of ocean," KAF spokesman Jim Harnwell said. "This is the biggest anti-fishing lockout in history but Mr Burke is giving us just 30 days to analyse and respond to the detail of his plans."

KAF says the so-called "consultation" period does not allow enough time for rec fishing groups, most of which are staffed by volunteers, to effectively respond to the proposals.

"We urge Mr Burke to extend the consultation process to at least 90 days so that we and other stakeholder groups can respond effectively to these plans," Harnwell said.

"But if the Minister continues with tokenistic attempts at consultation, then Aussie anglers will be justified in thinking that the Government has no interest in working constructively with us."

Harnwell said Mr Burke's marine park plans "discriminated" against recreational fishers.

"Recreational fishers are the big losers with these marine parks plans. We are the only stakeholder group being unilaterally locked out. Other stakeholders either have unfettered access or are being compensated.

"These final stages of the process offer the last opportunity for Mr Burke and his Government to show that they are fair dinkum about looking after Aussie fishos. So far Mr Burke has gone out of his way to look after the interests of the environmentalists, the dive lobby and the commercial fishing sector. But he's done nothing for us. That needs to change – and change fast. Recreational fishers are sick and tired of being treated with disdain and contempt by politicians."

KAF was formed in 2012 as an independent advocacy organisation representing the interests of Australia's 5 million recreational anglers.

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