



MEDIA RELEASE

'DOOM AND GLOOM' ANTI-FISH CAMPAIGN FORCES POOR POLICY ON AUSTRALIA'S FISHERIES

Australians are being misled about the state of our fisheries, with NGOs pushing a barrage of anti-fishing rhetoric not based on sound science, according to eminent marine scientist Dr Ray Hilborn (Professor in the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences, University of Washington).

Dr Hilborn said the relentless anti-fishing campaign has led to government imposed restrictions on fishing, making Australians more reliant on imported seafood.

He questions the motives of NGOs in perpetuating myths about the sustainability of Australian fisheries, and says they are out of touch with recent global developments and in denial of fisheries management outcomes in Australia, which are among the best managed in the world.

'Australia is subject to a relentless anti-fishing campaign that is causing doom and gloom myths from misrepresentations of overseas examples of inadequate fisheries management. I believe NGOs need the public to believe fisheries are in poor shape to boost their fundraising,' Dr Hilborn said.

Dr Hilborn is conducting a series of briefings for industry stakeholders and politicians in Sydney and Canberra on his visit to Australia this week; where he is releasing a paper titled 'Australian Seafood Consumers misled by prophets of gloom and doom'.

'Australia did not always have its current enviable record in fisheries management, but addressed the generic overfishing problem forcefully. Destructive fishing practices and continued overfishing are no longer significant problems. The great majority of fished stocks are in very good shape and, even more importantly for long-term sustainability, the situation continues to improve,' he said.

'Australians have excellent reasons to have faith in their fisheries management and to consume Australian seafood with confidence and enthusiasm. It's difficult to understand why the Australian public is not rejoicing in the success of its fisheries management and why Australians believe they need to implement additional, alternative restrictions on fishing, such as more fishing closures in marine parks.

'With such restrictions, Australia is effectively exporting responsibility for the sustainable management of the world's fish stock to countries with a far inferior record for sustainability,' he said.

Dr Hilborn's visit, which is being sponsored by the Sydney Fish Market, coincides with the Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke's proposal for a one million square kilometre marine park in the

Coral Sea which includes a complete ban on trawling, with additional restrictions on commercial fishing and a complete no take zone for amateur and professional fishermen in the green zone component.

Managing Director of the Sydney Fish Market, Grahame Turk, welcomes Dr Hilborn's visit which will offer a respected voice of reason to an important issue affecting all Australians.

'Dr Hilborn's paper de-bunks myths which serve to lock up fishing resources, affecting our national prosperity and making us reliant on international fish resources that are not as effectively managed as our own,' Mr Turk said.

'We support reasonable debate founded on thorough, scientific analysis as Dr Hilborn advocates. We object to those hijacking Australians into believing extreme, ill-founded rhetoric on the issue.'

Dr Hilborn will be in Australia this week from 27 February – 2 March. He will be launching his paper on Wednesday, 29 February in Canberra at Parliament House, taking questions from Members of Parliament, Senators and media.

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**DR HILBORN IS AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEWS THROUGHOUT THIS WEEK.
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