



## **Our Members and the Local Commercial Fishery**

Adopting a delicate balance between commercial fishing, community interest and the environment, is one that members of the Professional Fishermen's Association Inc. take very seriously.

Sustainability is the first and foremost issue on the minds of commercial fishers as their livelihoods are reliant on healthy fish stocks and healthy environments into the future. Off-stream impacts can and do have a dramatic impact on habitat and fish populations. Without fish stocks there are no fisheries to manage. Industry driven initiatives like seasonal and permanent closures, improvements in nets, reduced effort, mandatory bycatch reduction devices are just some of the changes introduced and supported by industry.

Commercial fishing has been a part of the NSW society since white settlement and continues today to play an important part of the social and economic fabric of communities along the coastline. Professional fishers play an integral role by supplying sustainable wild harvest local seafood to the community.

A collective voice is extremely important to ensure strong and effective communication between members, the government/s and other community stakeholders. This collective voice is heard through the PFA. There is a wide range of issues that impact on commercial fishing and the PFA is the voice of fishers through many forums.

The PFA does not represent Fishing Co-operatives. It specifically represents its own members which includes members of a range of fishing cooperatives along the coast plus many individual commercial fishers. The PFA was established to maintain professional fisher's rights including access and habitat issues whilst encouraging members to meet their obligations and be proactive in the management of fish resources.

Some of the services provided by the PFA include:

- transparent policy formulation in collaboration with fishers;
- updates to fishers from stakeholder and vice versa;
- distribute information on matters of interest to fishers and matters of potential impact to fishers;
- information on opportunities and developments;
- updates fishers on the latest research and development findings and encourage the adoption of these;
- a forum for negotiating on contentious issues;
- forums and support through initiatives such as the 'Men's Shed' to address psychological, emotional, financial and social issues;
- assistance to access government exceptional circumstances programs;
- media representation for the local fishing industry;
- media advice and assistance with fisher initiatives; and
- representing the industry at all levels of Government including Federal, State and Local.

PFA members are represented by their Executive Officer. The role is diverse though the main focus is to provide a voice for professional fishers to Government (Federal, State, Local) and key stakeholder groups including NSW Fisheries, National Parks, Industry Affiliates and community groups to name a few.

Membership to the PFA is available to any NSW wild harvest commercial fisher. PFA Contact details are 04 2930 3371