



FACT SHEET – Commercial fishing – Socio-economic assessment of proposed Commonwealth marine reserves

Overview

The Australian Government has commissioned the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) to carry out a socio-economic assessment of the proposed marine reserves networks for the North and North-west Marine Regions.

The assessment will look at both the direct and indirect impacts of the proposed networks on the fishing industry, including possible impacts on the communities that rely on these industries for jobs and economic activity.

The assessment will be conducted in parallel with the public consultation process on the draft marine bioregional plans and marine reserves proposals, and will inform the Australian Government's decision on the final marine reserves networks for the two regions.

The assessment will include:

1. Analysis of the value of fishing catch and effort potentially displaced by the proposed reserves;
2. Information about how the proposed reserves would potentially impact on fishing businesses and on regional communities. The assessment will use surveys, case studies and modelling of flow-on impacts; and
3. Analysis of how those impacts could potentially affect local economies in terms of employment and industry activity.

The socio-economic assessment will help the Government decide the final boundaries and zoning of the marine reserves. The Government will consider ABARES' findings, together with the submissions received during the public consultation process.

During the initial period of public consultation, the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities and ABARES will be working with fishing industry representatives to ensure that businesses potentially affected by the proposed reserves are identified for possible follow-up through surveys and interviews.

Industry organisations will also be working with fisheries managers, entitlement holders and fishing businesses to ensure that ABARES gets access to the finest scale, up-to-date fishing data that can be provided. It is important that decisions about the reserve network are based on the best and most accurate assessment of potential impacts on the industry.

Fisheries Adjustment Policy

A *Fisheries adjustment policy* was announced prior to the release of the draft marine bioregional plan and Commonwealth marine reserve network for the South-west region. This policy outlines how commercial fishing operators and fishing-dependent communities will be assisted if they are affected by the creation of Commonwealth marine reserves. The socio-economic assessment will provide the finer scale information needed as one of the inputs to working out which sectors and businesses might be eligible for assistance under this policy. A full copy of the Fisheries Adjustment Policy can be found at www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mbp/about/policy.html