

SUBMISSION No.4

TT 25 & 26 November 2009



Committee secretary
Joint standing Committee on Treaties
Department of Houser of Representatives

Dear Sir

My name is Jason Macs and I am employed as a Plant Manager for a Recycling company in Melbourne. I am also a passionate recreational fisherman and a member of fishnet.com and Fishvictoria.com.

Recreational fishing is very important to me and my family. My wife and I love nothing more than being out on the water spending good quality family time together with our three children who also love nature and the outdoors.

I would like to like to bring to your attention my feelings of anger and despair regarding your department's agreement to list Mako sharks and Porebeagle sharks as migratory species under the EPBC act, affectively banning all forms of fishing for Mako and Porebeagle sharks.

I would like to bring 3 points to your attention, firstly the lack of consultation with Stakeholders, secondly the inappropriate application of this act on Australia, and thirdly the massive financial cost it will have on the southern Australian seaboard recreational fishing industry.

Lack of Consultation:

This decision has been made without any consultation with the stakeholders and the people who really care about the health of this fishery, the fisherman. This was only announced days before Christmas for the ban to apply from the 28th of January.

Doesn't apply to Australian Fish Stocks.

Australians recreational and professional fishermen carefully manage Australia's fish stocks. However Australia has signed up to the CMS, protecting endangered fish stocks around the world, which is the right thing to do, however not all parts of the treaty apply to Australia's sustainable use of our fish stocks. The Mako and Porebeagle sharks are listed in Appendix 2 and state that these species are vulnerable in the Northern Hemisphere, and require management (and management only) to assist in the recovery of the species.

Marine Biologist's and Scientists in Australia and all over the world believe that whilst Mako's are somewhat migratory, there is no interaction or migration between Southern Hemisphere and Northern Hemisphere Mako stocks and in fact there is little if any migration East - West between the Pacific and Atlantic stocks. This is clearly stated by authorities such as Dr Julian Peperall in his book "Fishes of the open Ocean". This is backed up by the Pop Up Satellite tagging program run by the Sardi Organization.

A blanket ban on fishing for these species in our Southern Hemisphere will have no affect on the stocks in the Northern Hemisphere and is an overreaction given the healthy state of Australian fishery.

The AFMA also clearly state that the blanket ban on this species will have NO effect on their mortality within the EBT long line fishing fleet, with their carcasses would just be wastefully dumped at sea.

Under Australia's E.P.B.C. act you can exempt blanket decisions made by the C.M.S if those decisions are not valid in Australia and would be detrimental to Australians.

Given the research outlined above this exemption must be enacted.

Massive cost to Australian Fishing Industry

I believe this decision will be detrimental to not only sport and game fishing but the entire fishing sector in New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia, but in particular will most significantly affect Victoria.

Mako sharks are a prized sport fish and are realistically the only sport fish available to Metropolitan Melbourne and its surrounds. They are encountered in very good numbers in the Bass Straight and are therefore accessible to sporting anglers that have no other sport fishing options. They are an exceptional table fish with very little wastage (80 to 85% edible body weight) and my family all enjoy this healthy occasional addition to our diet. They are significantly cleaner and healthier than the thousands of tonnes of polluted Mekong Catfish that is imported into this country every year.

The Peak recreational fishing bodies such as VR fish and Recfish have released figures proving that there is \$2.7 billion annually accredited to the Victorian economy directly through the sport of recreational fishing and a major part of this is directly spent on sport and game fishing. I personally know of many people in the retail fishing and wholesale industries that are very worried about the effect this decision will have on their livelihoods. Charter operators have bookings taken for Mako fishing trips up until April that will have to be cancelled. Bait and tackle retailers that are estimating this will mean up to a 20% cut in sales in already lean times. A decision like this without warning or any consultation will be devastating for these families.

I firmly believe that the people that make up the Victorian recreational fishing sector are a pro-active group who care strongly for both the environment and the resource that we share and enjoy. There have been over 11500 historical research tags placed in mako sharks by the recreational fisherman at no cost to government or research departments, that proves our case and this future research would be lost with the implementation of a blanket ban such as this.

I feel a blanket ban is a punishment forced upon responsible Australian anglers for the mismanagement of fisheries on the other side of the world, and is completely unjust for Australian's that care for their environment, their fisheries, and care enough to enjoy them responsibly and sustainably.

Whilst I realise that this has not come about due to your actions, you do have the ability to correct this obvious wrong through action. Given the short time frame that has been imposed by this act, I implore you to act swiftly to ensure the continuation of our right to sustainably fish.

Please, I urge you to grant an exemption under section s303A of the EPBC act

Yours sincerely

Jason Macs – and family