

Media Release

Thursday 6th March 2014



OceanWatch Australia: Steward of Australia's marine environment

The Australian Government today announced the coming of age for OceanWatch Australia, with recognition as the Natural Resource Management (NRM) Group for Australia's marine environment.

Delivering on a 2013 election promise of further developing Australia's sustainable fishing sector, Minister for Agriculture, Barnaby Joyce, said, "*OceanWatch should be very proud of its achievements, today becoming recognised as the NRM organisation with responsibility for enhancing fish habitats and the marine environment.*"

Executive Chairman of OceanWatch Australia, Brad Warren said, "*Today's recognition by the Australian government is a very welcome development in our 25th year of operation. The funding announced will help OceanWatch transition into our new role, while continuing to work with Australia's seafood producers to promote world's best practice at a grass roots level and raise the profile of the productivity value of healthy fish habitat to sustainable Australian seafood.*"

OceanWatch Australia has worked with the seafood industry since 1989 to deliver a broad range of successful projects to improve sustainability - both environmentally and economically. Projects have also focused on restoring important coastal habitats, and improving water quality in our waterways to ensure our marine environment stays healthy and productive.

The OceanWatch catchphrase *Healthy Catchments = Healthy Oceans* was coined in the early 1990s to reflect the direct connection between land use and the health and productivity of our marine environment.

"Fishermen, like farmers, are in the business of food production, and like farmers, conditions have to be right to enable fishermen to produce their harvest. Seafood is a renewable resource that can provide a valuable contribution to food security indefinitely if we value and care for the natural systems that produce it." Mr Warren said.

Grahame Turk, Chair of the National Seafood Industry Alliance, welcomed today's announcement and said, "Sustainable seafood is not just about the management of our fisheries and aquaculture production, but also must take into account factors impacting the productivity of our natural environment. The NSIA supports the role Oceanwatch has played over many years, and congratulates the Australian government on today's announcement"

Further information: Lowri Pryce at OceanWatch Australia on 02 96602262 or 0434 670785

