



# SENATOR THE HON RICHARD COLBECK

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

## M E D I A R E L E A S E

10 May 2010

### **Rudd Government stalls on mako shark fishing legislation**

- **Government fails to put legislation to overturn mako shark fishing ban on Senate agenda**
- **Labor bows to Greens demands to not prioritise legislation in the Senate**
- **Legislation may not be debated until after election, possibly not until 2011**

Recreational fishermen face the prospect of not being legally able to catch mako sharks until after the next Federal Election following the decision by the Rudd Government to stall debate on legislation to overturn the ban.

It is understood the Government has bowed to demands of the Greens to not prioritise Senate debate for the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Recreational Fishing for Mako and Porbeagle Sharks) Bill 2010 during the current sitting.

Federal Coalition spokesman for Fisheries, Senator Richard Colbeck said this would be a great disappointment for many recreational fishermen around Australia who keenly fished for mako sharks.

"There was no scientific evidence to support a ban on mako shark fishing. Yet Environment Minister Peter Garrett implemented a ban under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act starting from 29 January 2010," Senator Colbeck said.

"Recreational fishermen were not consulted – but fringe green groups were given a seat at the table and the ear of the Minister.

"A massive effort by the recreational fishers, in conjunction with the Federal Coalition, saw a grassroots campaign eventually force a backdown by Minister Garrett in January. Legislation to overturn the Minister's ban was not introduced to Parliament until the 25<sup>th</sup> of February – 3 sitting weeks following his backdown.

"Now the Labor Government has bowed to the demands of the Greens to not prioritise the legislation in the Senate meaning the legislation is still not on the Senate's agenda – and may not be debated until after the June sitting weeks.

"If Mr Rudd calls an election for August or September, that means the legislation may not be debated until after the election and perhaps as late as 2011."

Senator Colbeck said the Federal Coalition had asked the Government to prioritise the legislation and ensure it was passed by the Senate as soon as possible.

"This request was disappointedly not supported by the Government."

On January 25, Minister Garrett said "*the Government will act as a priority, upon the resumption of the Parliament*" to overturn his initial decision to ban the fishing of the three shark species.

"The stalling of the Government on this legislation can therefore be only seen as yet another of the Rudd Government's broken promises.

"Once again, recreational fishermen have been duded by the Rudd Government."