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Spearfishers,

The time for action has come. With the Hawkesbury Bioregion Marine Park proposal we are set to lose a great number of very important areas that will be locked up for good. These lockouts will seriously affect our way of life. As breath hold spearfishers this physical limitation restricts most of our diving to headlands and shallow reef in less than 20m of water, which is precisely the areas being targeted.

There is no scientific justification relating to our presence affecting the marine environment at these sites or anywhere along the coastline. MEMA's Threat and Risk Assessment (TARA) list spearfishing as a low or minimal threat to the marine environment. Lockouts should not be considered in this fishery. The real threats to the Hawkesbury Bioregion, such as pollution, runoff and habitat destruction - the top threats in MEMA's risk assessments, are barely being addressed. Our freedom to continue to catch a fish for dinner is at extreme risk. We are not going down without a fight, now is the time to act as all fishers across the state are united as they have never been before.

The USFA as have all the other rec fishing groups such as RFA NSW, ANSA and AFTA to name some of the few associations fighting this ban to fishing have been extremely busy behind the scenes dealing with the decision makers.

Following up from a USFA delegates meeting where a lot of time was spent on the Sydney Marine Parks issue it was great to receive the feedback from among the clubs and from this and ongoing discussions a working document has been prepared for circulation to all USFA NSW clubs and their contacts. There are documents from both USFA and ANSA included in the email that contain the background information you need, as well as all the talking points required as a guide. Also included is an apology from DPI concerning North Harbour.





What can you and your club do:

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1. Get all members, their friends and family to fill in a submission. This is critical and needs to be completed by the 27th of September. We have supplied information to help including why we believe we should not be locked out of each specific site relative to spearfishing. Please write the submission in your own words as any form letters will be discounted. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HawkesburyDP> or just Google "MEMA Sydney marine park"
2. Find and call your local MP and write them a letter. <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/members/pages/all-members.aspx> Use the statements we have provided as part of your personal letters and talking points on the phone. If you have time make an appointment to see them in person.
3. Print off and circulate the attached petition. Get it signed by as many people as possible and return it to PO BOX 521 Coogee NSW 2034.
Note. It must be all original signatures returned, no scanned copies. The petition form is self-explanatory, every completed form helps.
4. Complete a written submission as well on behalf of your club or association and you can post your submission to: Submission on Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion discussion
NSW Marine Estate Management Authority
Locked Bag 1 Nelson Bay NSW 2315

The process wraps up on the 27th September 2018, there is ample time to get busy and actively engage in the process. Make the Protest March too on the 27th.

Any questions or feedback please pass them on to me at mattypoulton@yahoo.com.au

Thank you
Matt Poulton

USFA Marine Parks and Fisheries Delegate

