



Media Release

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For Immediate Release: **Marine parks science and “foot-in-mouth disease”**

While the equine flu caused havoc for the thoroughbred industry in NSW, another outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease occurred in England. This is a disease that is very difficult to cross over to humans. Not to be confused with the Foot and Mouth disease, the “foot-in-mouth” disease is easily spread amongst humans, especially politicians. One famous quote from the past was Chamberlain’s “There will be peace in our time”. Closer to home was Bob Hawke’s infamous claim “that no child will live in poverty” or John Howard’s “there’s no way that a GST will ever be part of our policy. Never ever, it’s dead” statement of 1995. And who can forget John Hewson’s birthday cake interview with Mike Willessee in 1993?

The “foot-in-mouth” disease hits closer to home with Premier Morris Iemma allegedly making the statement 29th November 2005 that “Like each of the State’s existing marine parks, access to favourite fishing spots in these new marine parks will be fully protected” – a statement he has refused to elaborate on.

With allegations and denials of a Green preference agenda in the State’s marine park issue, where there are claims by recreational fishers of a political agenda for the marine parks rather than being based on rigorous science, we have Emeritus Professor Robert Kearney’s presentation at the Annual Conference of the Australian Society for Fish Biology in Canberra titled “*The Pros and Cons of Marine Protected Areas in NSW: Who’s being hoodwinked?*” This presentation is a damning indictment of the processes used in the Bateman’s Marine Park from a man who holds a PhD in fisheries science, is a Doctor of Science in fisheries science, is a member of the Order of Australia for his contribution to Fisheries Research and sustainable fishing, and is a member of the Australian Biodiversity Advisory Committee. And this indictment can be applied to all marine parks in NSW.

The gist of Professor Kearney’s address is the lack of science presented by the Marine Parks Authority, and in one instance states “for if there is a greater crime in science than manufacturing results, it is doing so and then attributing these results to somebody else.” But even more compelling is his last statement: “The goal of having effective marine parks in NSW based on sound science has been seriously set back. And to date, we fish biologists have sat back and watch it happen.”

AAG President Phil Ingram commented “Statements by various ministers, both past and present, indicates that “foot-in-mouth” disease is ubiquitous in the marine park debate, with their purpose to protect algae readily coming to mind. You would think that the Government would listen to someone with Prof Kearney’s credentials, but instead they will continue making ‘foot-in-mouth’ comments and ride the criticism from the affected stakeholders with the knowledge that those scientists with the knowledge and credentials will not question the statements made nor the science used. A bit like the cross city tunnel and the desalination plant, both of which are further examples of the hoodwinking of the public of NSW.”

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