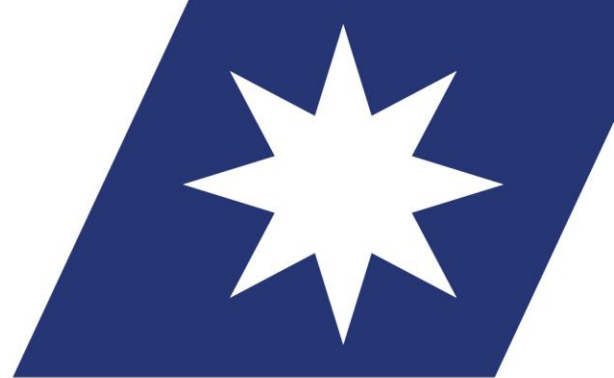


SHANE KNUTH

Katter's Australian Party

Member for Hill



MEDIA RELEASE

September 16, 2022

STATE GOVERNMENT MUST ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY AND AWARD COMPENSATION TO COMMERCIAL FISHERS

State Member for Hill Shane Knuth has called on the State Government to come clean and admit responsibility for the Spanish Mackerel Fishery debacle.

Speaking after the Minister for Fisheries announced this week that commercial fishing quotas will be severely slashed to only 165 tonnes, Mr Knuth said the State Government were avoiding taking responsibility for their department's own mismanagement of the fishery.

"I am on record asking the Minister to explain how a fishery that was assessed as healthy in 2018 by his own department, after 14 years since quotas were introduced, can suddenly be deemed unhealthy, just 3 years, after the stock assessment model was changed?," Mr Knuth said.

Mr Knuth said two key questions posed by the industry have never been answered by the Minister.

1. How the Spanish Mackerel fishery could be in trouble, considering commercial fishers have never reached the yearly Total Allowable Catch (TAC), since quotas were introduced in 2004 by Fisheries, AND;
2. Why was the assessment model was changed after the fishery was assessed as healthy with a 60 per cent biomass in DAF's own 2018 *Stock Assessment of Australian East Coast Spanish Mackerel, Predications of stock Status and Reference Points* report.

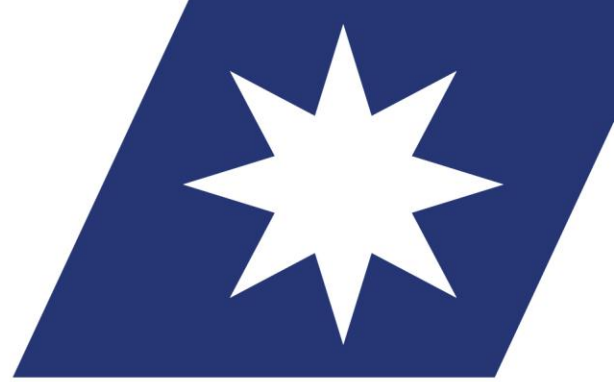
Mr Knuth said these questions must be answered by the Minister, considering just 3 years after DAF's 2018 report, the biomass dropped off a cliff to 17 per cent under the new stock assessment model.

"Commercial Spanish Mackerel harvests, since 2004, have always been well under the allowable annual catch limit set by Fisheries, so anyway you look at this either the fishery has been mismanaged since 2004 or the assessment model now being used is severely flawed," he said.

SHANE KNUTH

Katter's Australian Party

Member for Hill



MEDIA RELEASE

"If we were in a court of law, there could be no reasonable doubt that Fisheries are responsible for this debacle and compensation would be awarded to those affected.

"I call on the Minister to stop dodging the questions being asked by the industry, admit his department got this wrong and immediately compensate those affected by this decision."

-ENDS-