

# Sydney Fish Market Submission

***Submission re: Proposal to vary the Submarine Cable (Southern Sydney Protection Zone)  
Declaration 2007***

## **Introduction**

Sydney Fish Market (SFM) is an institution in the NSW and wider Australian fishing industries, providing a secure and reliable marketplace for Australian seafood since 1966.

SFM first operated as a wholesale fish market by the Fish Marketing Authority, a state-run body. 1994 saw the significant transformation of SFM's structure, as the New South Wales Government privatised the marketing of seafood, and Sydney Fish Market Pty Ltd was formed. Since 1994, SFM has been owned equally by the harvest and post-harvest sectors of the NSW seafood industry - the Catchers Trust of NSW and SFM Tenants and Merchants Pty Ltd.

SFM is the largest market of its kind in the southern hemisphere, with our auction trading over 100 different species of seafood each day. In the 2023-24 financial year, SFM traded more than 500 species of seafood with a total value of over \$162,000,000.

In addition to our auction operations, we also manage a bustling tourist destination, featuring a cooking school and six seafood retailers, as well as several other restaurants and cafes.

## **Our position**

SFM has grave concerns that the proposed variations to the cable locations off Maroubra Beach will result in a significant loss of access to commercial fishing grounds which will in turn impact the commercial fishing industry's ability to continue to harvest a sustainable, nutritious food source on behalf of the Australian community.

Australian fisheries are exceptionally well managed, operating within a tightly regulated framework which accounts for sustainability of the resource, minimising impacts on the marine environment and maintaining the livelihoods of professional fishers who supply seafood to the Australian community.

It is imperative that there is extensive consultation with affected fishers to explore alternative solutions. If fishing grounds are lost and/or fishing becomes less efficient, then compensation for fishers and the broader supply chain (e.g. fishers cooperatives, Sydney Fish Market, and the end consumer) must be considered. Our strong view, however, is that the value associated with a possible permanent loss of such an important source of sustainable Australian protein is incalculable.

Sydney Fish Market fully endorses the comprehensive submission made by the NSW Wild Harvest Fishers which was developed in consultation with commercial fishers that would be impacted by this proposal, including the NSWWHF recommendations as follows:

- 1. Following consultation with commercial fishers operating in the SSPZ the NSWWHF Association opposes the proposed variation in its current form as it will result in an unacceptable loss of fishing quota and threaten the commercial viability of commercial*

*fishers operating in the area of the proposed upgrades, economic loss to Sydney Fish Market and operators within the seafood supply chain.*

- 2. NSWWHF recommends that the 'instrument' the Submarine Cable (Southern Sydney Protection Zone) Declaration Variation 2025 (No. 1) not be progressed in its current form, and instead, the ACMA accept an invitation from the NSWWHF to cohost urgent talks with commercial fishers and Perch Infrastructure Pty Ltd.*
- 3. The purpose of this discussion is to address the impact of the proposed cable changes on the commercial fishing industry and to identify alternative locations for these upgrades to ensure the infrastructure cable upgrades can progress and at the same time the significant impacts on the commercial fishing sector can be avoided and/or significantly minimised. Commercial fishers operating in the area believe an alternative route is available that would address the requirements of the ACMA.*

The NSW government is investing \$860 million in a new Sydney Fish Market scheduled for completion later this year. Sydney Fish Market and the NSW Government have a shared vision for an “authentic operating fish market where locals and visitors can watch fishermen unload the catch of the day”<sup>1</sup>. Designed as a contemporary place of industry, the new Sydney Fish Market is an opportunity to showcase sustainable Australian produce to the world. However, to do so, Sydney Fish Market and its retailers must retain a reliable source of local supply. As indicated above, the loss of our local fleet and/or a notable portion of supply would have a detrimental impact to Sydney Fish Market both as a business and as a destination.