

## MEDIA RELEASE

13 February 2026

Independent Member for Huon Dean Harriss MLC, supports the call by recreational fishers for a delay to the planned sand flathead ban in south eastern waters to enable the Premier's promised review or the proposed parliamentary inquiry to take place

Mr Harriss said the ban announced by the Minister had blindsided recreational fishers who had been at the forefront of moves to ensure the sustainability of flathead stocks and initiated the call for a review.

"The Minister's out-of-the-blue announcement to ban sand flathead fishing in the south east represents a complete failure of government communication with the fishing peak body on the State's most important recreational fishery.

"The Tasmanian Association for Recreational Fishing (TARFish) has clearly acknowledged the issues with sand flathead stock and has supported drastic restrictions to allow stocks to recover.

"Before last year's election TARFish wrote to the government and the opposition seeking a commitment to a review in 2026.

"The Premier responded by committing the government to that review and the Labor Party provided the same support.

"Instead of the promised review we now have an announcement of the ban without any consultation with the recreational fishing sector.

"That, in my view, is not a review at all.

"Compare it to the review of education in 2024, which began with key stakeholder input into the terms of reference, involved widespread consultation with schools, and, importantly, encouraged all Tasmanians to have their say.

Mr Harriss said fishing was by far the biggest recreational activity in Tasmania with one in four people dangling a line every year.



# Dean Harriss MLC

Independent Member for Huon



“In my experience fishers themselves are the first to acknowledge the importance of protecting fish stocks to make sure they can continue to enjoy what, for many, is the cornerstone of their lifestyle.”

Mr Harriss said the Premier’s letter to TARFish had clearly raised expectations of a far more comprehensive review than the Minister’s pre-emptive announcement.

“Tasmanians are entitled to expect that governments will honour commitments made in election campaigns.

“This is the third time that the Liberal government has reneged on a promise made at last year’s election, following u-turns on greyhound racing and the salmon industry.

“It needs to do a lot better.”

“In the absence of a government willing to deliver on its commitments, I also offer my support for the proposed Parliamentary Inquiry. We need to get to the bottom of this fishing fiasco.”

**ENDS**

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