Support to strengthen Federal laws against illegal fishermen

Shadow Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries, Fay Miller, has given support to the Federal Government to tighten the arrangement between Indonesia and Australia to curb the number of fishermen illegally poaching in Australia’s northern waters.

“It is evident by the huge number of illegal fishermen inside Australia’s northern waters that serious discussion needs to take place as a matter of urgency and serious action taken,” Mrs Miller said.

Mrs Miller said she would like to see the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement between the Australian and Indonesian Governments tightened.

“The MOU, which allows traditional Indonesian fishermen to work in Australia’s northern waters, has been in place for 30 years,” Mrs Miller said.

“Times have changed. Last year alone more than 200 Indonesian fishing boats were apprehended in Australia’s northern waters fishing for delicacies such as shark fin, trepang (sea cucumber) and trochus (a large, conical-shaped marine snail), that fetch high prices on the Asian market.”

Mrs Miller said the number of illegal fishermen sighted and apprehended in our waters is increasing and with this comes our responsibility to support tough measures to put a stop to these crimes.

“Boundaries and agreements are put in place for a purpose,” Mrs Miller said.

“When it is obvious that these agreements are being abused and/or ignored, it is only appropriate that they are reviewed and strengthened to reflect the seriousness of the offences.”

Ends.

Mrs Miller can be contacted on: 0407 720 511