

Oz flotilla protests super fishing trawler - sends message to lackey government

by David Beniuk via gemma - ninemsn *Saturday, Aug 11 2012, 2:48am*

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'Vacuum' fishing methods are destructive and completely Unsustainable

HOBART -- A flotilla of more than 200 boats has wound its way around the shores of the River Derwent to protest against controversial Australia-bound super-trawler the FV Margiris.

Recreational fishers have joined their commercial counterparts in an unlikely alliance with environmentalists and tourism operators, all calling on the federal government to stop the 142-metre factory trawler fishing in Australian waters.

The protesters are concerned that the boat will severely deplete local fisheries and populations of dolphins and seals that could be snared in its massive nets.

Greens senator Peter Whish-Wilson said the federal government had no fisheries management plan, particularly for local depletion.

"We think the federal government's been wrong-footed, they haven't been prepared," Senator Whish-Wilson said.

Federal Fisheries Minister Joe Ludwig had failed to adequately address concerns raised in 25 questions about the super-trawler asked by the Greens, he said.

"We've received what I would classify as benign answers that didn't provide any detail," Senator Whish-Wilson said.

Opponents of the Margiris, which is due in Devonport this month, say the science that underpins a quota of 18,000 tonnes of redbait and jack mackerel is out of date.

Trawler operator Seafish Tasmania says it has already hired 40 staff in struggling northern Tasmania, the first step in injecting between \$10 million and \$15 million into the state's economy. *[At great cost to fisheries and the environment.]*

Senator Whish-Wilson said the creation of those jobs had to be weighed against the potential overall effect on the state.

"Jobs are important and I totally understand that, but sometimes you have to make hard decisions and balance those short-term employment gains," he said.

"What are 40 short-term jobs versus long-term damage for example to our tourism industry?"

Smaller protests were held throughout the country on what organisers were calling a national day of action against the trawler.

The protesters are planning to take a petition of more than 30,000 signatures to Senator Ludwig and *[known corporate lackey]* Prime Minister Julia 'carbon tax' Gillard in Canberra next week.

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