Friday, 11 December 2009

NEW FISHING CO-OP OPENED

Minister for Lands Tony Kelly congratulated the Bermagui Fishermen’s Co-Operative on the official opening its new building at Bermagui Harbour today.

Mr Kelly and local federal member Dr Mike Kelly were the guests of honour and jointly opened the new building which has been funded through three Federal Government programs administered by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry that are designed to assist the local fishing industry to adapt to reduced work in this industry.

Dr Kelly said, the Onshore Business Assistance and Fishing Community Assistance program has been provided by the Federal Government to assist businesses and communities that were significantly affected by reduced fishing activity as a result of the buyback of fishing concessions from Commonwealth managed fisheries in 2006.

“This assistance has helped eligible owners diversify their operations. It has been used to start up new businesses in a different sector, diversify existing businesses, helped communities to adjust and funded retirements from the fishing sector,” Dr Kelly said.

“This facility will also be a great addition to the attractions of the by providing a further boost to our local economy.”

“This project has been a tribute to the vision and perseverance of Rocky Lagano and the crew at the Bermagui Fisherman’s Co-op and I have been delighted to have been able to help it along with the tremendous assistance of Minister Tony Kelly,” said Dr Kelly.

Mr Kelly said the co-operative’s 30 year Crown land lease was due to expire at the end of October but a new commercial lease was negotiated through to the end of 2033.

“As part of the new lease, the NSW government agreed to expand the boundaries of the lease to include a closed road so that the design of the co-operative building would enhance the harbour.

“The Land and Property Management Authority (LPMA) also supported the project by agreeing to maintain current rents throughout the construction and approval stages.

“Today we see the end result – a magnificent asset to support the local fishing industry and broader Bermagui economy for decades to come.

“About 30 people are employed within the building which currently houses five businesses, with three more to open in the near future.

“These outcomes are the result of an excellent partnership between the Federal and State governments, and the members of the local fishing co-operative.”
Mr Kelly also announced that a new licence has been issued over the Sinclair Cove mooring area to manage the moorings in Snug Cove.

“LPMA has issued the licence to the Sinclair Cove Mooring Holders Incorporated Association.

“In further improvements at Bermagui, LPMA has commenced the process of upgrading moorings, and as a result up to 20 new moorings will be made available by installing two new large mooring pontoons.

Media Contact: Alex McGregor on 0404 015 556