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Gillnet ban a further impost on the fishing industry

The state's commercial fishermen are facing a new challenge with the imposition of a ban on gillnet fishing in the South East.

The temporary ban, which is aimed at protecting dolphins, affects over 27,000 square kilometres of coastal waters from south of Kangaroo Island to south of Cape Jaffa.

'This news will cause great angst in an industry that has faced and continues to face serious challenges to its viability,' said opposition fisheries spokesman Adrian Pederick.

'In recent years, South East fishermen have been affected by quota cuts and season closures. We also have the spectre of marine park sanctuary zones looming across the state's fishing industry.

'Of course it's important that the state's fish stocks are protected, all fishermen agree with that.

'But this instant ban is a knee-jerk reaction by the federal Labor government to win favour with the Greens who raised this subject in parliament last week.

'I challenge them both to present the science to justify it.

'The sudden imposition of a temporary ban without warning or prior consultation can seriously threaten the carefully planned financial situation of licence holders.

'We are told it is necessary to prevent accelerated fishing activity in advance of a ban.

'If the authorities have good reason to believe some fishermen are flouting the rules, they should take appropriate action, not simply ban them all from earning a living.

'This ban should be matched with an immediate offer of compensation to those fishermen affected, some of whom do not have another species licence to get them through.

'These people have millions invested in boats and equipment and crews who have committed to a season's fishing. They all deserve more respect and consideration.'

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