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Greens Urge Albanese to Act on South Australian Algal Bloom Crisis and Fisheries Collapse

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A toxic algal bloom that has severely impacted South Australia's coastline has prompted the Greens to urge Prime Minister Anthony Albanese to declare the situation a national disaster. The bloom has caused extensive marine life deaths and forced fisheries shutdowns,

while criticism mounts over the federal government's perceived slow response to the crisis.

Since March 2025, the harmful algae *Karenia mikimotoi* has spread along South Australia's coast, killing tens of thousands of marine animals across nearly 400 species, ranging from leafy seadragons to sharks. The bloom is believed to be driven by a combination of a marine heatwave and nutrient-rich waters resulting from the 2023 River Murray floods. The affected area extends from the Fleurieu Peninsula to Adelaide's Port River, severely damaging important ecosystems including the Coorong, a Ramsar-listed wetland of international importance.

Greens Senator Sarah Hanson-Young described the bloom as an "environmental catastrophe" at a community forum on 15 July 2025, calling for swift federal action. She emphasised that the scale of devastation warranted urgent government intervention, saying, "If dead fish were washing up on Bondi, there'd be a national outcry," as reported by ABC News.

The economic impact is significant. Fisheries and aquaculture industries are struggling, with mussel farms in Port Lincoln suspending harvesting due to toxin presence. Squid fisherman Nathan Eatts reported no catches since Good Friday, according to ABC Radio Adelaide. South Australia's \$500 million seafood sector faces collapse, compounded by tourism operators experiencing cancellations.

The federal government announced a \$500,000 relief package, including fee waivers for affected businesses. However, fishers such as Rod Ness have criticised this as insufficient. Critics argue that Prime Minister Albanese's focus on international climate engagements, including efforts

surrounding COP31, has overshadowed urgent domestic environmental crises.

Some experts point to bioluminescent algae that might help mitigate the toxic bloom by consuming it, but ecologist Faith Coleman warns it is premature to expect recovery. Monitoring efforts, including recent underwater surveys conducted by the Southern Ranger vessel, have only recently intensified. This delay in action has drawn criticism from Liberal MP Nicola Centofanti, who called the slow federal response “shocking.”

With the bloom expected to persist for up to 18 more months, centre-right commentators and local stakeholders are demanding stronger federal leadership. They warn that continued inaction risks irreversible damage to South Australia’s environment and economy.