



17 March 2021

FISHERIES & AQUACULTURE

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NOTICE TO FISHERS

Information on the reform of the Marine Scalefish Fishery.

To: Holders of licences in the Marine Scalefish Fishery, and Southern Zone Rock Lobster Fishery and Northern Zone Rock Lobster Fishery licences with marine scalefish access.

I write to provide an update on the processes of implementing the Government's reform of the Marine Scalefish Fishery.

Update on Voluntary Licence Surrender Program (VLSP)

As of 15 March 2021, 68 licences (58 line licences and 10 net licences) have been or are about to be formally surrendered and payments made. A further 54 are in various stages of processing, with many licence holders still to return their deeds of surrender. I am aware some of these are waiting for the outcome of the Exceptional Circumstances process that we expect to be announced in the near future.

Update on Exceptional Circumstances process

The Exceptional Circumstances process is one of the current major components of the reform that is still underway. The Independent Adviser, retired Deputy Chief Magistrate, Dr Andrew Cannon, has provided his assessments to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development for the applications that were received from 90 licence holders. The Minister will be making a decision on each application and applicants will be advised of their individual outcomes. Due to the large number of applications, this process has taken longer than expected. Licence holders will be provided with an updated indicative quota allocation following these decisions by the Minister.

Red Tape Reduction

The Minister has recently announced the key red tape reduction initiatives that will be implemented on 1 July 2021, including allowing licence holders to use multiple gear types on a single fishing trip, removing seasonal closures for garfish and snapper in the south east, and creating more flexible working conditions. These are the first of many initiatives that were recommended by the industry Red Tape Reduction Working Group for the Minister to consider. Other potential regulatory reform measures will require further consultation with the commercial fishing industry, the Minister's Recreational Fishing Advisory Council and other management authorities and stakeholders. Further information can be found on the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) Marine Scalefish Fishery Reform webpage: www.pir.sa.gov.au/fishingreform.

On-line quota trading

A simple on-line trading platform is being developed that will assist licence holders to advertise and trade their individual transferable quota (ITQ) once the new regulations are made on 1 July 2021. Licence holders will also be able to continue to submit paper-based applications to transfer quota.

Separation of the Vongole and Sardine fisheries

Following approaches from the Marine Fishers Association and the South Australian Sardine Industry Association, the Minister approved in early January 2021 the drafting of regulations to constitute both a separate Sardine Fishery and a Vongole Fishery, with the intention to issue a separate licence for these fisheries to licence holders who have sardine or vongole quota entitlements on a current Marine Scalefish Fishery (MSF) licence on 1 July 2021. Fifteen of these fishers have submitted a proposal to surrender their MSF licences under the VLSP.

MSF Reform Compliance Working Group

A PIRSA / Industry Compliance Working Group has been established and had its first meeting on 11 March 2021 to recommend a preferred compliance program that is as cost effective as possible and ensures the integrity of a quota management system in the MSF. Catherine Sayer is chairing this working group, supported by the Marine Fishers Association and PIRSA. It is expected the Compliance Working Group will provide its recommendations by 9 April 2021.

MSF Management Advisory Committee (MSFMAC)

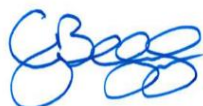
The MSFMAC, to be established by the Minister, will provide advice on day to day management for the commercial MSF. This will include development, review, and implementation of shared fisheries management plans (including harvest strategies) and any other matter referred to it by the Minister that supports the sustainable management of shared access marine scalefish fisheries in South Australia. The MSFMAC will have important responsibilities for providing scientific and management advice to the Executive Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture for the management of the reformed MSF. We are underway in establishing the MSFMAC and expect to be seeking nominations for industry members in the near future.

Stage 3 Information package

Once the Exceptional Circumstances process is complete, the next step is to provide an update of the indicative ITQ to all individual licence holders based on the outcomes of the process and the number of licence holders remaining in the fishery, and the critical dates relevant to finalising the VLSP. I expect we should have this information to all licence holders in April.

If you have any queries regarding these arrangements, please contact Jon Presser, Manager Fisheries Reform on 08 8429 0588 or email MSF.Reform@sa.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Prof Gavin Begg
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