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FISHERIES & AQUACULTURE

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NOTICE TO WEST COAST PRAWN FISHERY LICENCE HOLDERS

Management arrangements for the 2026 season

Dear licence holder,

I am writing to inform you that the maximum fishing nights for the West Coast Prawn Fishery (WCPF) for the 2026 season will be set at **98 nights** consistent with the decision rules in the draft WCPF Harvest Strategy (HS).

Section 6 of the draft WCPF HS outlines the process for developing management arrangements for the WCPF including the use of performance indicators to determine the maximum number of nights for the season. The average catch rate for the 2025 WCPF season (53.49 kg/hr) is above the revised trigger reference point (45.00 kg/hr) in the draft HS and therefore will be managed under sustainable fishing strategies. Section 6.3 specifies that sustainable fishing strategies with an average catch rate of 45 kg/hr or greater allow for a maximum of 98 nights for the season.

While I note these arrangements are described in a draft HS, I consider the updated HS provides improved management arrangements based on contemporary information that furthers the objects of the Act including manage, use and develop consistent with ecologically sustainable development (7(1)), optimal utilisation of the resource (7(1)(b)), fostering commercial fishing activities for the benefit of the whole community (7(1)(d)), and encouraging participation of users of the aquatic resources of the State in the management of fisheries (7(1)(e)).

Following consideration of the recommendations of the Spencer Gulf and West Coast Prawn Association (SGWCPA), the results of the WCPF performance indicators for the 2025 season, the draft 2026 WCPF HS decision rules, and the objects of the *Fisheries Management Act 2007*, I advise that the management arrangements for the 2026 season will allow for a maximum of 98 fishing nights and application of sustainable fishing strategies in 2026 as described in the draft HS. These management arrangements will be enacted through the fishing run notices issued under section 10 of the Fishery Management (Prawn Fisheries) Regulations 2017.

I look forward to considering a final draft of the revised harvest strategy for adoption in the near future.

Please note that there is some uncertainty around the potential impacts of the algal bloom in South Australia and monitoring of the impacts of the bloom is ongoing. Please be advised that changes to management arrangements for 2026 may occur

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in consideration of the outcomes of that monitoring as guided by the [Algal Bloom Fishery Management Roadmap](#).

Should you have any further queries regarding the management arrangements for the WCPF 2026 season, please contact Jade Fredericks, Fisheries Manager on 0417 495 352.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Begg', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Prof Gavin Begg

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE**
Department of Primary Industries and Regions