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NOTICE TO SARDINE FISHERY LICENCE HOLDERS

Dear licence holder

I write in relation to the management arrangements for the 2026 quota period for the South Australian Sardine Fishery (SASF).

Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) and unit values

The Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development has determined, for the purposes of Regulation 9(2) of the Fisheries Management (Sardine Fishery) Regulations 2021 (the Regulations) and licence conditions, the unit values and corresponding TACCs for Sardines and Anchovy for the 2026 quota period, as set out in the table below:

Quota	2026 TACC (tonnes)	Total units	2026 Unit value (kg/unit)
Sardine – Spencer Gulf Zone	30,000	14,000	2,142.86
Sardine – Gulf St Vincent Zone	6,000	14,000	428.57
Sardine – Outside Zone	14,000	14,000	1,000.00
Anchovy	1,000	420	2,380.95

The Minister considered the following information when determining the TACCs, quota unit values for the 2026 quota period:

1. The objectives of the *Fisheries Management Act 2007*.
2. Regulation 9 of the Fisheries Management (Sardine Fishery) Regulations 2021.
3. The harvest strategy decision rules in the Management Plan for the South Australian Commercial Sardine Fishery.
4. 2025 fishery data and SARDI advice.
5. The advice from the South Australian Sardine Industry Association (SASIA) dated 25 November 2025.

Setting the statewide Sardine TACC at 50,000 tonnes continues the arrangements under Tier 2 of the Harvest Strategy decision rules. I note that 2025 represented the third Daily Egg Production Method (DEPM) surveys conducted over the three years since moving to Tier 2 as required under the Harvest Strategy to monitor any changes in spawning biomass.

Objective ID: A7209801

Carry-over

With regard to the carry-over of uncaught 2025 quota entitlements, the Minister considered your request for all uncaught quota to be carried over. In doing so, an assessment of the request consistent with the PIRSA Policy Paper "[Managing under-catch and over-catch in South Australian Fisheries](#)" was undertaken. This Paper describes exceptional circumstances as circumstances beyond the control of a fishery that limit the operation of the fishery, as a collective and result in a market failure. Exceptional circumstance situations are considered on a case-by-case basis. Exceptional circumstances, as described in the Policy Paper, may include, but are not limited to the following unforeseen circumstances:

- A demonstrable temporary drop in market price or markets become temporarily unavailable due to market failure.
- An event significantly impacting fishing activities for the fishery and would include impacts such as fish kills or biosecurity incursions.

In undertaking that assessment, the Minister considered:

- The available monitoring and assessment evidence of the algal bloom.
- Sardine biomass estimates in 2025 above the upper target reference point.
- Catch records for the SASF in each fishing zone in 2025 and recent years.
- The PIRSA Policy Paper "Managing under-catch and over-catch in South Australian Fisheries".
- The objects of the *Fisheries Management Act 2007*.

In consideration of the available evidence, the Minister determined the following:

Gulf St Vincent Zone

- Carry-over of 100% of uncaught 2025 Gulf St Vincent Zone quota entitlements on individual licences to the 2026 quota period is supported due to exceptional circumstances related to the algal bloom based on evidence demonstrating that the fishery as a collective had been inhibited from harvesting their quota entitlements in 2025. The Minister has made a determination for the purposes of regulation 9(3)(f)(ii)(A) of the Fisheries Management (Sardine Fishery) Regulations 2021 allowing for all uncaught 2025 quota entitlements to be carried over to the 2026 quota period in that fishing zone.

Spencer Gulf (initial and second allocation) and Outside Zone:

- Carry-over of all uncaught Spencer Gulf quota entitlements (initial allocation) and Outside Zone quota entitlements on individual licences from the 2025 quota period to the 2026 quota period was not supported as the evidence is equivocal in demonstrating that the fishery as a collective had been inhibited from harvesting their quota entitlements.
- I advise you that the default carry-over arrangements allowing for carry-over of uncaught 2025 Spencer Gulf Zone (initial allocation) quota entitlements and Outside Zone quota entitlements up to 10% quota entitlements on individual licences may be applied, consistent with the default provisions of the Regulations.
- Carry-over of uncaught quota entitlements from the 2025 Spencer Gulf Zone second quota allocation is not supported on the basis these entitlements were issued as temporary arrangements to apply only to the 2025 quota period.

Over-catch

With regard to over-catch provisions, the request for 10% over-catch in 2026 was supported such that if the total catch of Sardine taken by the holder of a licence during the 2026 quota period exceeds the Sardine quota entitlement under the licence for that quota period:

- by not more than 10% of the quota entitlement for that licence, the conditions of the licence may be varied so as to decrease the quota entitlement for the following quota period (2027) by 1 kilogram of Sardines for each kilogram taken in excess of the quota entitlement; or
- if the catch exceeds the quota entitlement by more than 10%, the conditions of the licence may be varied so as to decrease the quota entitlement for the following quota period (2027) by 2 kilograms of sardines for each kilogram taken in excess of the quota entitlement.

Observer program

Further consideration of the level of observer coverage for the Fishery in 2026 is still being considered and we will provide advice to you on these arrangements in due course.

Should you have any further queries in relation to these matters, please contact Dr Annabel Jones, General Manager Fisheries at annabel.jones@sa.gov.au or on 0417 612737.

Yours sincerely



Prof Gavin Begg
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE**