



Department of Primary Industries

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Ms Claire Howlett
Director Sustainable Fisheries Section
Marine Environment Branch
Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts
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Dear Ms Howlett

Request for extension to the Victorian abalone export approval

I write to request an extension to the current Victorian abalone fishery Commonwealth export approval that expires August 2008.

The Victorian commercial abalone fishery commenced in 1962 and during its relatively short history has been subject to fairly intensive management in an array of both input and output controls in the form of legal minimum lengths, zonation of the fishery, limited entry and quotas. As a consequence, the fishery has been relatively stable and remunerative. The fishery has management arrangements that are subject to different levels of Government intervention and enforceability and the catching sector has developed effective fishing practices and voluntary management arrangement. Abalone harvested in Victoria is predominantly exported.

During 2002/03, the Victorian abalone fishery was assessed by the Department of Environment and Heritage as satisfying sustainable management criteria under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and was granted a 5-year export exemption this is due to expire August 2008.

The Victorian Abalone Fishery Management Plan (VAFMP) was released in late April 2002 and expires April 2008. Currently, a new plan is being developed and expected to be complete in April 2009. The purpose of this management plan is to ensure that the fishery continues to be managed on a sustainable basis into the future while allowing for on-going development of the industry that it supports. The Plan is expected to sets future management directions and strategies with a 5-year time horizon and beyond.

The presence of a viral disease causing ganglioneuritis that was first confirmed in wild abalone in early 2006, has highlighted the importance of abalone health issues in Victoria. This has resulted in changes to current Victorian abalone fishery management that will be reflected in the new VAFMP. These changes include: the total allowable catch setting process, legal minimum size limits, further development of fine scale management, translocation/biosecurity protocol and changes to monitoring and assessment.

I request an extension to the current export approval until June 2009 to correspond with the introduction of the VAFMP. If you require further information please contact Mr Stewart McGlashan, Abalone Fishery Manager on (03) 9658 4366. I look forward to your response

Yours sincerely

Mr Jon Presser
A/ Executive Director Fisheries Victoria

3 / 4 / 2008

