



The Hon Matthew Groom MP
Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage
Parliament House
Hobart Tasmania 7000

Dear Minister

I am writing to you as the Delegate of the Minister for the Environment and Energy in relation to ongoing environmental approvals under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) for seven Tasmanian commercial fisheries, including the Freshwater Eel Fishery.

In October 2014, the then Australian Government Minister for the Environment, the Hon Greg Hunt MP, wrote to the Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP to seek his views on a reform proposal to extend the maximum timeframe for EPBC Act approvals from five years to ten years for commercial fisheries assessed as posing low environmental risk. These approvals are based on assessments of the fisheries' impacts on marine species protected under Part 13 of the EPBC Act, as well as evaluating fisheries for the purpose of export approval under Part 13A.

Minister Rockliff responded in favour of this proposal in November 2014, consistent with the majority view of all parties consulted. The then Minister for the Environment subsequently agreed to proceed with the proposal and I am pleased to advise that Tasmania is now able to benefit from the extended environmental approval timeframes. Officers from the Department of the Environment and Energy, the Tasmanian Inland Fisheries Service (IFS) and the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) have worked collaboratively over the last several months and determined that seven Tasmanian fisheries continue to meet all relevant EPBC Act requirements. I am therefore extending the export approval for these fisheries until July 2026.

These seven fisheries comprise one fishery managed by the Tasmanian IFS and six fisheries managed by the Tasmanian DPIPWE. I have written separately to Minister Rockliff, in his capacity as Minister for Primary Industry and Water, concerning the six fisheries managed by the Tasmanian DPIPWE, which are the:

1. Abalone Fishery
2. Commercial Dive Fishery
3. Gould's Squid taken in the Scalefish Fishery
4. Native Oyster taken in the Shellfish Fishery
5. Rock Lobster Fishery
6. Scallop Fishery

The fishery managed by the Tasmanian IFS is the Freshwater Eel Fishery. The assessment for extension to export approval considered the protected species provisions of Part 13 and the wildlife trade provisions of Part 13A of the EPBC Act. The assessments took into account all of the management arrangements implemented by the IFS in this fishery.

I consider the Freshwater Eel Fishery operates in line with the Australian Government *Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries – 2nd Edition*. Given the management arrangements and precautionary measures in place in the fishery, I have decided to amend the list of exempt native specimens to allow export of product from the fishery until 25 July 2026.

It is important that reports be produced and presented to the Department of the Environment and Energy annually in order for the performance of the fishing operations of the Freshwater Eel Fishery to be monitored and assessed throughout the life of the approval. Export approval is therefore contingent on the requirement for the IFS to produce and present a report on the Freshwater Eel Fishery to the Department of the Environment and Energy annually as per Appendix B of the *Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries - 2nd Edition*.

I would like to thank you for the constructive way in which your officials have approached this reform process and these assessments.

Yours sincerely



Nathan Hanna

Delegate of the Minister for the Environment and Energy

9 August 2016