



Australian Government

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

The Hon Rory McEwen MP
Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
GPO Box 668
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Dear Minister

I am writing to you as Delegate of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts in relation to the re-assessment of the South Australian Sea Urchin Fishery (SUF) under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

The SUF was first assessed by the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA, formerly the Department of the Environment and Heritage) in November 2005 under Part 13A of the EPBC Act in accordance with the Australian Government *Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries*. This assessment was based on the submission provided by the Department of Primary Industries and Resources South Australia (PIRSA). In light of a number of concerns that needed to be addressed to manage environmental risks in the short-medium term, the SUF was declared an approved Wildlife Trade Operation (WTO) under Part 13A of the EPBC Act. This declaration allowed the export of product from the fishery for a period of three years.

In August 2008, PIRSA submitted the *Ecological Assessment of the South Australian Sea Urchin Fishery Reassessment Report* for assessment under the EPBC Act to allow continued export approval for this fishery. The submission has been assessed for the purposes of the wildlife trade provisions of Part 13A of the EPBC Act.

I am pleased to advise that assessment of the fishery is now complete. The new assessment report will be available on the DEWHA website at:
<http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/fisheries/index.html>.

In considering the current regulations, I am satisfied that the operation of the fishery is consistent with the objects of the wildlife trade provisions in Part 13A of the EPBC Act. I am also satisfied that it is unlikely to be detrimental to the survival or conservation status of any taxon to which the fishery operation relates, or threaten any relevant ecosystem over the next three years.

Performance against the *Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries – 2nd Edition* is adequate, however there are a number of issues that need to be addressed to contain environmental risks in the longer term, particularly regarding the delay in formalising management arrangements and the lack of information on biology and ecology of target species. Hence, I propose to declare the SUF an



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

GPO Box 787 Canberra ACT 2601 Telephone 02 6274 1111 Facsimile 02 6274 1666

www.environment.gov.au



approved WTO under Part 13A of the EPBC Act, subject to the four conditions at **Attachment A**. This declaration would allow the export of product from the SUF until 1 October 2011.

While there are some environmental risks associated with this fishery, I consider that PIRSA is committed to addressing these issues and is already taking proactive steps in most areas. Officers from DEWHA and PIRSA have discussed key areas requiring ongoing attention. In addition to the conditions to the WTO declaration, PIRSA has agreed to a number of recommended actions, focusing on addressing key issues for the SUF, to be implemented before the next assessment of the fishery under the EPBC Act. The recommendations at **Attachment B** have been an important factor in my decision to declare the fishery a WTO and I look forward to receiving your confirmation that they will be implemented.

Yours sincerely



Claire Howlett
Delegate of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

14 October 2008

**Conditions on the Wildlife Trade Operation Declaration for the
South Australian Sea Urchin Fishery (SUF)**

1. Operation of the fishery will be carried out in accordance with the South Australian SUF management arrangements made under the *Fisheries Management Act 2007* (South Australia) and consistent with the *Fisheries Management (Miscellaneous Fishery) Regulations 2000*.
2. The Department of Primary Industries and Resources, South Australia (PIRSA) will advise the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) of any material change to the fishery's management arrangements that could affect the assessment against the criteria on which *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) decisions are based.
3. PIRSA to produce and present reports to DEWHA annually as per Appendix B to the *Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries - 2nd Edition*.
4. PIRSA to finalise the development of formal management arrangements for the SUF.

**Recommendations to the Department of Primary Industries and Resources
South Australia (PIRSA) on the ecologically sustainable management of the
South Australian Sea Urchin Fishery (SUF)**

The SUF is a relatively well-managed fishery with a range of management measures to promote the ecologically sustainable harvesting of species from the fishery. These measures include: very limited number of entitlements, and gear restrictions (hand collection only).

The following recommendations have been made to further strengthen the effectiveness of the management arrangements for the SUF and minimise environmental risks in the short to medium term. Unless a specific time frame is provided in the recommendation each recommendation must be addressed before the next review of the SUF in 2011.

1. In developing the management arrangements, PIRSA to undertake an Ecological Risk Assessment, and to initiate appropriate management responses based on the outcomes of that process.
2. Develop and implement research strategies to address key gaps in the knowledge of sea urchin biology and ecology appropriate to the scale of the fishery. In the absence of scientific data, a precautionary approach should continue to be applied.
3. PIRSA to collaborate with other jurisdictions where appropriate and actively pursue consistent and complementary research needs and management arrangements for the target species.
4. PIRSA to develop and implement finer scale data collection, reporting and management measures appropriate to the scale of the fishery in order to mitigate the risk of localised and serial depletion of sea urchins in the fishery.