



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

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INDEPENDENT REVIEW FOR QUEENSLAND FISHERY

Environment Minister Peter Garrett has commissioned an independent review of proposed new management arrangements for Queensland's East Coast Inshore Fin Fish Fishery to assist in his upcoming assessment of the fishery under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act).

Mr Garrett said the review of the fishery, which operates off the coast of Queensland, including in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, would be completed by the end of October 2008, and would look at the proposed management arrangements for the fishery, providing recommendations to ensure compliance with the EPBC Act.

Mr Garrett said the review follows discussions with Queensland's Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries, the Hon Tim Mulherin MP, in relation to the fishery's impacts on shark stocks and the potential for interactions with protected species, particularly dugongs, whales and sawfish.

"I expect this review will also provide the Queensland Government with additional support and information in their decision making process in regards to the East Coast Inshore Fin Fish Fishery.

"Concerns have been raised by a variety of groups, including the scientific community, about shark fishing and about species protected under the EPBC Act, including dugong. I want to be assured that the World Heritage Values of the Great Barrier Reef are adequately protected.

"I look forward to the outcomes of this important and timely investigation so we can be confident that the fishery has the appropriate conditions in place for accreditation under the EPBC Act."

Mr Garrett said the review would be conducted by a panel chaired by Mr John Gunn, Deputy Chief, CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research, who has 25 years of experience in marine ecology and fisheries science, and including Dr John Stevens, a globally respected shark scientist and Mr Frank Meere, who has extensive experience in fisheries management and qualifications in economics