



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP
Australian Minister for the Environment,
Heritage & the Arts

The Hon Tim Mulherin MP
Queensland Government Minister for
Primary Industries and Fisheries

27 November 2008

INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF QUEENSLAND FISHERY RECEIVED

An independent expert review of Queensland's East Coast Inshore Fin Fish Fishery has been released, with both the Australian and Queensland Governments committing to act on its findings.

The review found that proposed changes to the fishery represent a significant step forward, but also identified further improvements that should be made in future to ensure best practice management.

Australian Government Environment Minister Peter Garrett said the suggested improvements were likely to form the basis of the conditions and recommendations of the fishery's export approval.

"The independent review which I commissioned in September will help to inform the Commonwealth's assessment of the fishery against sustainability guidelines under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

"The primary objectives of the review were to assess the fishery's level of interaction with protected species, such as dugongs, whales and sawfish, management of shark, and commercial fishing effort," Mr Garrett said.

Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries Minister Tim Mulherin welcomed the outcomes of the review.

"During the past two years, Queensland has reviewed the East Coast Inshore Fin Fish Fishery, which targets a range of species including shark, barramundi and mullet. The proposed changes were released for public consultation in early 2008," Mr Mulherin said.

"This review has identified best practice management measures that Queensland can now work on through a process of continuous improvement."

"The Queensland Government is committed to the sustainable management of fisheries operating in our state and have been working closely with the Australian Government and the independent expert panel to ensure strict sustainability guidelines are met," Mr Mulherin said.

"The Queensland Government will consider changes to the fishery in the near future to be implemented in 2009. The Australian Government will then undertake a formal assessment of the fishery under the new arrangements."

Minister Garrett said that a temporary extension of the export approval which expires on 30 November had been extended to 28 February 2009.

“This will allow me time to consider the outcomes of the report, the new arrangements and consult with stakeholders prior to making a decision on ongoing export approval for the fishery.”

Minister Garrett also said he was committed to ensuring the fishery is managed in an ecologically sustainable manner and that the World Heritage Area values of the Great Barrier Reef are protected.

“I also understand the importance of the fishery to Queensland and intend to work closely with the Queensland Government in relation to the sustainable management of the East Coast Inshore Fin Fish Fishery.”

Minister Garrett also extended his thanks to the Panel members. The Panel was 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 included Dr John Stevens, a globally respected shark scientist and Mr Frank Meere, who has extensive experience in fisheries management and qualifications in economics.

The independent review of the East Coast Inshore Fin Fishery is available online at:
<http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/fisheries/qld/east-coast-finfish/index.html>