



## **TO ALL STAKEHOLDERS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIAN SHARK FISHERIES**

### ***Discussion Paper on Temperate Shark Management in all WA Fisheries***

Enclosed for your consideration is a discussion paper, *Fisheries Management Paper 180 - Future Management Arrangements for Western Australia's Temperate Shark Fisheries*, on the future management of the temperate shark fisheries in Western Australia. I encourage you to read and make comment on the paper. You have until 24 September to make a submission. The paper describes in more detail how you may go about making a submission.

This paper proposes measures aimed at addressing concerns about the sustainability of the major shark species taken within commercial fisheries off our coast, particularly the decline of the dusky shark stocks.

The discussion paper focuses on options for management of the temperate shark fisheries, that is the Joint Authority Southern Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline Managed Fishery and the West Coast Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline Interim Managed Fishery, although the issues being faced are common to all shark fishing off Western Australia. Therefore, the paper also proposes changes for the management of sharks taken outside the recognised shark fisheries so if you take shark as part of your commercial fishing operations, or you have an interest in the commercial take of shark, you may wish to make a submission.

### ***Management of Tropical Shark Fisheries***

I am aware of concerns about the management of shark species in the State's tropical (northern) shark fisheries. Accordingly, I have also sought advice on the management options for these fisheries. I am also concerned about the extent to which these fisheries appear primarily dependent on shark fins and will be asking the industry to provide evidence that in future it will make fuller and more appropriate use of the catch.

### ***Requirements for Continued Operation of the State's Shark Fisheries***

I have already given serious consideration to the possibility of closing some or all of the State's shark fisheries. At this point, in the absence of comment on the enclosed paper, and without having an opportunity to fully consider the future management of the tropical shark fisheries I am prepared to, at least in the medium term, support the continued operation of shark based fisheries provided that:

- a) management changes are adopted that will ensure all the fisheries meet sustainability requirements for all key and vulnerable shark species;
- b) by 1 January 2005 those fisheries that appear to primarily target sharks for their fins, can demonstrate appropriate utilisation of the whole shark in accordance with performance indicators that I will establish in liaison with the industry, the Department of Fisheries and other stakeholders;

- c) the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage in assessing the Ecological Sustainable Management Reports for the four shark fisheries accepts that, with the proposed management changes, these fisheries are likely to be ecologically sustainable; and
- d) there is ongoing evidence that any management changes introduced are effective and are likely to ensure the sustainability of the fisheries and conservation of vulnerable shark species.

This position will be reviewed after I have received the advice from the WA Demersal Net and Hook Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (the MAC) on the future directions for shark management. At that time, if there is significant evidence suggesting management changes cannot be introduced to give a reasonable likelihood of ensuring the sustainability of key species, the option of closing these fisheries will be reconsidered.

***Proposed Amendments to the “Anti Finning” Regulations:***

In term of addressing the appropriate utilisation of shark, I am proposing to amend the Fish Resources Management Regulations (FRMR) to require that all sharks, rays, skates and sawfish be landed with their fins (and in the case of sawfish, also their saws and heads) attached to trunks and prohibit all fishers filleting sharks, skates, rays and sawfish at sea. Unless the industry can come forward with equally efficient, effective and practicable proposals that will encourage the appropriate and full use of shark trunks and prevent the undermining of the “anti-finning” regulations these new regulations will come into force from 1 January 2005 and will apply to all commercial fishermen.

***Consultation:***

At the conclusion of the consultation period (24 September 2004), submissions on **both** the *Fisheries Management Paper 180 - Future Management Arrangements for Western Australia’s Temperate Shark* and the proposed tightening of the “anti-finning” regulations will be forwarded to a Shark Industry Working Group that will report to the MAC. I have asked that the MAC provide me before 1 November 2004 its subsequent recommendations on:

- a) how the temperate shark fisheries should be managed,
- b) how shark sustainability and conservation should be addressed outside the recognised shark fisheries,
- c) proposals to tighten the existing “anti-finning” regulations.

I am asking industry to provide me by 1 January 2005 with evidence that all four fisheries are making, and will continue to make, full and appropriate use of all of their shark catch and in consultation with the Department provide me with advice on suitable performance indicators for monitoring the extent of appropriate usage.

I also expect that in liaison with Industry the Department will by 1 January 2005 come forward with recommendations on how the two tropical shark fisheries can be managed to ensure their ongoing sustainability.

In the meantime I have also directed that, for the four State shark fisheries, the Department to progress as a matter of priority, the applications against the *Guidelines for Ecological Sustainable Management of Fisheries* to the Department Environment and Heritage. I will monitor with interest the progress of these applications as I expect that the outcomes may also have a very direct impact on how these fisheries are managed in future.

A list detailing the timelines for consultation on all these issues is attached.

***Conclusion***

I remain very concerned about these issues and emphasise that I will take whatever action is necessary to ensure the sustainability of the State's shark fisheries and the conservation of vulnerable shark species.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kim Chance', written in a cursive style.

Kim Chance MLC  
MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES

## **Fisheries Management Paper No.180**

### **The Sustainable Management of Western Australia's Temperate Shark Fisheries**

#### **SUMMARY OF TIMELINES**

- Deadline for making submissions on temperate shark discussion paper  
**24 September 2004**
- Deadline for making submissions on revisions to “anti-finning” regulations  
**24 September 2004**
- Working Group and Management Advisory Committee (MAC) Meeting  
**Early-mid October 2004**
- MAC recommendations to the Minister for management of temperate shark fisheries and progress of revisions to “anti-finning” regulations  
**Before 1 November 2004**
- Revisions to “anti-finning” regulations come into effect  
**1 January 2005**
- All shark fisheries to provide evidence of full and appropriate usage of shark catch and suggest appropriate performance indicators  
**1 January 2005**
- In consultation with industry, the Department to provide recommendations for the sustainable management of the tropical shark fisheries  
**1 January 2005**

All submissions should be marked to the attention of Mr David Griffiths, Fisheries Management Policy Officer in Commercial Fisheries Program, and addressed to:

Executive Director  
Department of Fisheries  
Locked Bag 39  
Cloisters Square Post Office  
PERTH WA 6850

Or by facsimile to (08) 9482 7224