

CIRCULAR

ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING OF WESTMAC

WESTMAC is a Management Advisory Committee established by AFMA to provide advice on the management of the Western Deepwater Trawl Fishery and the North West Slope Trawl Fishery. Both fisheries are located seaward of the 200 metre isobath off the west coast of Western Australia.

WESTMAC will be holding a meeting on 29 July 2002 at

The Sheoak Room
Holiday Inn
788 Hay Street, Perth (city centre)

As part of the meeting WESTMAC is required to hold an annual public meeting. The annual public meeting will start at 8.30 am. This is an opportunity for stakeholders and other interested parties to ask members of the Management Advisory Committee about issues relating to the management of the fisheries.

The annual public meeting will be followed by a formal meeting of WESTMAC. The Chair of WESTMAC, Martin Holtz, has advised that there are a limited number of spaces available for people who attend the annual public meeting to stay on as an observer for the main WESTMAC meeting.

An agenda for the meeting is attached. The main issue on the agenda is the requirement for the fisheries to undergo a strategic assessment. All Commonwealth managed fisheries are required to be strategically assessed. A strategic assessment is essentially an Environmental Impact Assessment and requires approval from the Minister for Environment and Heritage.

The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act) requires assessment of all State and Commonwealth managed fisheries with an export component. Assessments for these fisheries must be completed by December 2003.

Under the EPBC Act, a fishery can be assessed to determine whether all reasonable measures are being taken to avoid the incidental capture of protected species. The fishery may then be accredited on the basis that the management plan or regime includes all reasonable steps to ensure that members of protected species are not adversely affected by the fishing operation.

AFMA will begin preparing a combined draft strategic assessment the Western Deepwater Trawl Fishery and the North West Slope Trawl Fishery in November 2002 for consideration by WESTMAC with a view to finalising it by 30 June 2003.

Should you wish to attend the WESTMAC meeting as an observer please contact Peter Neave (acting Manager, Northern Prawn and Western Trawl Fisheries Section) at AFMA on (02) 62725039 or by e-mail peter.neave@afma.gov.au by 25 July 2002.