



Australian Government
Australian Fisheries Management Authority

19 December 2008

Reference: F2007/0600

Mr Bill Nagle
C/O Mr Ian Freeman
53 Dirty Creek Road
Corindi NSW 2456

Dear Bill,

I write to advise you of relevant Eastern Tuna & Billfish Fishery (ETBF) outcomes from the AFMA Commission meeting held on 18-19 December 2008. The outcomes primarily relate to the decision to move to an Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ) based system for managing the ETBF and the appointment of an Independent Allocation Advisory Panel (IAAP) to recommend the most appropriate method for transiting to such a system.

As you are aware, in December 2005, AFMA was directed by the then Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation, to, 'Implement output controls in the form of ITQs by 2010 unless a strong case is made to the Minister that this would not be cost-effective or would be otherwise detrimental'.

In June 2008 the AFMA Commission accepted the recommendations of a consultants report into the implementation of ITQs in Commonwealth fisheries. One of the recommendations noted that an ITQ based management system could effectively be implemented in the ETBF. While noting the divergent views of MAC members as outlined in your Eastern Tuna MAC 73 Chairman's summary, the Commission confirmed that there are strong reasons to move to a ITQ system in the fishery and, in terms of the Ministerial Direction, the Commission did not consider that there was as strong case to be made to the Minister not to implement ITQs in the ETBF. The Commission also noted that the system of ITQs for this fishery should be harmonised with the ITQ system for the WTBF, should consider the flexibility needed to deal with fluctuations in fish abundance in the Australian area of influence, have specific mechanisms to minimise discarding and build in consideration of recreational catches.

The Commission discussed the issues surrounding whether TACs should apply throughout the area of the Western and Central Pacific or whether there should be separate in-zone and high-seas TACs, and decided this issue needed careful consideration in terms of Australia's long-term negotiating position with the RFMOs. Noting that this issue will be critical in the consideration of allocation the Commission agreed to delay the commencement of the IAAP process and hold discussions with DAFF to resolve a position on this issue early in 2009. The Commission therefore agreed to consider the appointment of IAAP members once the issue on appropriate

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quota zones had been discussed. The agreed Terms of Reference may need to be revised depending on the results of the consultations with DAFF.

The Commission looks forward to working closely with Eastern Tuna MAC on the implementation of an ITQ system in the fishery. If you require any further information about the Commission meeting outcomes, please contact Mr Trent Timmiss, Manager, ETBF on (02) 6225 5313.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tony Rundle', with a horizontal line underneath.

Tony Rundle
Chairman