



Ministerial Statement

August 7, 2014

Prawn fisheries seek sustainability certification

- **\$14.5m WA Government initiative delivers first two fisheries for MSC assessment**
- **Exmouth Gulf and Shark Bay prawn fisheries sign up for the sustainability tick**
- **WA Fishing Industry Council is helping other fisheries to win the MSC eco-label**

Western Australia's two biggest prawn fisheries have signed up for the final rigorous stage to earn the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) tick of approval for sustainability.

The commitment follows intensive pre-assessment for the fisheries, which was the first stage in the process for independent, internationally recognised, sustainability certification.

Fisheries Minister Ken Baston said the Exmouth Gulf and Shark Bay prawn fisheries were keen to embrace this third-party verification to help future-proof their operations.

"The operators know how important sustainability is to customers and the community and, increasingly, certification is being demanded by retailers worldwide," Mr Baston said.

"WA Government support for MSC certification via its \$14.5million initiative will show the world that, as the western rock lobster industry has since 2000, WA fisheries deliver sustainable seafood."

Western Australian Fishing Industry Council (WAFIC) chairman Arno Verboon said these two prawn fisheries were collectively worth more than \$20million a year.

"WAFIC is working very hard with its member organisations and the State Government to maintain the economic viability of the commercial fishing sector, while also ensuring that environmental and sustainability issues are addressed responsibly," Mr Verboon said.

"A number of other commercial fisheries are reaching for the same goal and we anticipate similar announcements about their engagement with the MSC process as we progress."

The MG Kailis Group operates the Exmouth Gulf Prawn Fishery and there are seven companies that catch prawns in the Shark Bay Prawn Fishery.

The Minister said the operators worked together with the Department of Fisheries to assess the optimal time to harvest the prawns each year.

"Departmental research indicates that all WA prawn fisheries are managed sustainably and the MSC certification will be the independent tick of approval they will need to reflect the hard work the operators put in to meet the international standards of the MSC," he said.

Fact File

- **A new website, funded through the Australian Government's Fisheries Research Development Corporation has been set up to provide more details on WA's MSC initiative. Go to <http://www.wamsc.com.au>**

Media contact: Jim Paparo Telephone: 6552 6381 Mobile: 0417 946 788
Email: jim.paparo@dpc.wa.gov.au Website: <http://www.premier.wa.gov.au>