

# Developmental Fisheries Management Policy Document

The State Government is committed to encouraging the progression of developmental fisheries to allow a broader range of options for commercial fishers, particularly in the area of value-adding to low-value species.

Supporting developmental fisheries (fisheries which are not provided for in any existing fisheries management plan or regulations) can be resource intensive. To maximise the benefits of an investment in developmental fisheries the Government has adopted the following policy position -

**The Tasmanian Government supports providing opportunities for the development of long term environmentally sustainable, commercially profitable and socially acceptable fisheries to deliver economic growth for the State.**

Developmental fishery opportunities will be supported by the Minister only where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated by a proponent that a long term, commercially profitable, environmentally sustainable and socially acceptable fishery can be developed.

A major and increasingly important issue in advancing developmental fishing activities is an expectation that the Government can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the community the environmental sustainability and social acceptability of that activity.

This requires a level of information to provide the necessary confidence that a particular fishing activity will not result in an unacceptable environmental or social impact. Where information is absent, unreliable, inadequate or uncertain, a risk based approach to fisheries development is necessary to ensure that there is an acceptable risk with respect to detriment of resources, the environment and or to other stakeholders.

Where scientific understanding is such that an acceptable level of risk cannot be demonstrated, there will be a cost in acquiring that understanding. This cost may prove to be a barrier in advancing a developmental fishery proposal. Proponents will be required to meet that cost and to assist where they reasonably can to the collection of data to support a scientific understanding.

In addition, fisheries development activities to be authorised under permit issued pursuant to the *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995* must be consulted on with relevant fishery bodies.

It is recognised that there will be very few large scale development opportunities but there may be a number of small scale opportunities.

## Implementation of the policy

There are two categories of fishery developments in the context of this policy: Category (1) - completely novel fishing activities that are outside an existing fishery management plan or regulations and Category (2) - those which might be an adjunct to an existing fishery using current fishing methods/gears compatible with and provided for under a prevailing fisheries management plan. These two categories will be managed differently.

A key objective of this policy is not to stimulate investment in capital equipment, vessels and fishing gear that is totally reliant on the developmental fishing operation / activity.

The following overarching principles have been determined by the Minister to guide the management of **Category (I)** developmental fishery proposals by the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE).

- Proponents must satisfy the Minister that a proposal will provide long term commercially viable, environmentally sustainable and socially acceptable outcomes consistent with the objectives\* of the *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995* (the Act) that are in the interests of the Tasmanian community.
- Development proposals will be advanced through careful analysis, adopting a risk based approach and consultation with relevant fishing bodies.
- The Minister will determine which developmental fishery proposals will be advanced following consideration against the criterion in dot point one. The Minister's decision will be informed by a preliminary assessment of the proposal against a matrix of criteria including the biology of the proposed target species and current knowledge of stocks, the impacts of the proposed fishing method on the marine environment, potential by-catch, market opportunities for the product, potential conflicts with other fisheries and competing marine values.
- Should the Minister support the proposal, the proponent will be invited to submit a developmental fishery plan in accordance with guidelines provided by DPIPWE.
- In the absence of the necessary scientific knowledge to support an assessment of the environmental sustainability of a developmental fishing proposal, the proponent will be required as part of the developmental fishery management plan develop a research plan in consultation with a fisheries research provider recognised by DPIPWE and meet the costs and provide assistance where appropriate to the acquisition of this knowledge.
- Authorisation to undertake any developmental fishing activities approved will be provided through permits issued pursuant to the *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995*. A fee will apply to the granting of any permit, determined by the Minister, which will reflect a contribution to the costs of the management of the permit.
- Permits will be granted for a maximum period of one year. Subsequent permits may be granted to permit holders at the expiry of their permit following review and satisfactory performance against permit conditions.
- The granting of a permit to authorise a developmental fishing activity can provide no entitlement to long term access to any future fishery managed under a fishery management plan. The development of a fishery management plan is the process by which access to a fishery will be determined.
- In the event that a fishery management plan were to be developed following a developmental fishery process, that plan would aim to establish a managed fishery in which a fair return is provided to the State for access to the fishery resource.
- The Minister will determine on a case by case basis the process to identify who and/or a class of person who may participate in a particular developmental fishing activity, so that a proponent may not necessarily be granted exclusive access to a particular developmental fishing activity or area.
- Proponents will be required to secure an existing fishing licence (vessel) and be granted or be a holder of a fishing licence (personal) in addition to a permit to advance a Category I fisheries development proposal.
- Sole reliance on a developmental proposal as a standalone fishing enterprise will be carefully scrutinised to determine the long term commercial viability of such an operation.

The following principles have been determined by the Minister to guide **Category 2** developmental fishery proposals by the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE).

- A proposal received which is determined to meet the criterion of a Category 2 proposal will be considered by DPIPWE against an assessment matrix. Advice from the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) and industry bodies will ascertain the commercial viability, environmental sustainability and social acceptance of the fishery development proposal before a report is provided to the Minister.
- The Minister will then determine if any fishery development proposal of this category will be advanced by way of permits.
- If the Minister determines that a proposal should be advanced as a developmental fishery, a decision will be required if this single permit should be advanced, or if all holders of the fishing licence to which the proposed activity is considered to be an adjunct activity would be invited to apply to participate and provided with the conditions under which a developmental fishery will be conducted.
- The Minister will determine those licence holders to whom permits to participate in a developmental fishery will be issued.
- Persons granted permits to participate in a developmental fishery will be required to meet the costs and provide assistance where appropriate to the acquisition of the necessary scientific information to support the developmental fishery.
- A fee, determined by the Minister, will apply to the granting of any permit, to reflect a contribution to the costs of the management of the permit to support the developmental fishing activity.
- Permits will be granted for a maximum period of one year. Subsequent permits may be granted to permit holders at the expiry of their permit following a review and satisfactory performance against permit conditions.
- The granting of a permit to authorise a developmental fishing activity can provide no entitlement to long term access to any future fishery managed under an amended fishery management plan. The amendment of a fishery management plan is the process by which access to a fishery will be determined. This process will address, as part of a range of issues and considerations, the activities of the permit holder in the developmental fishery.

\*Section 7 (1) – Purpose and Objectives of the *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995* states:

The purpose of this Act is to achieve sustainable development of living marine resources having regard to the need to –

- (a) increase the community's understanding of the integrity of the ecosystem upon which fisheries depend; and
- (b) provide and maintain sustainability of living marine resources; and
  
- (ba) take account of a corresponding law; and
  
- (c) take account of the community's needs in respect of living marine resources; and
- (d) take account of the community's interests in living marine resources.