



Dear commercial fishing stakeholder,

**Re: Recent developments concerning NSW trip limits for the Southern Fish Trawl, Ocean Trawl and Ocean Trap and Line fisheries**

I am writing to advise you of recent developments relating to the 'trip limits' that apply to NSW commercial fishers operating in the above fisheries.

The fishing closure that gives effect to the trip limits was recently renewed for a period of 18 months with some modifications, most of which were administrative in nature.

One of the amendments made was to remove the application of the trip limits to 'State-only' commercial fishers. This change was made on the basis that 'State-only' fishers pose no risk to circumventing the Commonwealth's quota scheme – the reason for introducing the limits back in 1996 – and ongoing representations that State-only commercial fishers should never have been subjected to the limits. The change also aimed to address the wasteful dumping of catch that sometimes occurs, particularly in the trawl sector.

Since publishing the revised fishing closure, serious concerns were raised by the Commonwealth South East Trawl Fishing Industry Association and other non-commercial stakeholders that the changes would lead to a significant increase in NSW catch, jeopardise the sustainability of some stocks, especially flathead, and have significant impacts on the value of the statutory fishing rights held by some Commonwealth commercial fishers, among other things.

On 22 May 2013, the Minister agreed to put a hold on the change relating to State-only operators. As such, the pre-existing trip limits will remain until further discussions are held with the Commonwealth and stakeholders to develop effective, efficient cross-jurisdictional management arrangements. This will provide an opportunity to fully examine the concerns raised by those stakeholders and the extent of the risks associated with these or further changes to the trip limits.

If you require further information on this issue please contact Nick Giles on (02) 6652 0919.

Yours sincerely

Darren Hale  
**Senior Fisheries Manager**  
24 May 2013