

Proposal from Fish Trawl Members to Prawn Trawl Members for Consideration

Proposal: In recognition of the targeting of fish by Ocean Trawl Inshore and Offshore Prawn Trawl operators and to formalise current access, representatives of the Ocean Trawl Fish Northern Fishery request that Ocean Trawl Inshore and Ocean Trawl Offshore Prawn Trawl operators be required to hold a small number of Northern Fish Trawl shares (e.g. minimum of 4 fish trawl shares per endorsement). This will provide security for Ocean Trawl Inshore and Ocean Trawl Offshore Prawn Trawl operators to continue to access fish stocks and formalise resource sharing between the three user groups.

Fish Shares would permit access to those species currently harvested in the prawn trawl fishery under *Fish Management Act* and apply to all waters where fish are harvested. The proposal would not change any current activities of the prawn trawl fishery. The proposal simply allows the continuation of the existing arrangements that permits Ocean Trawl Inshore and Ocean Trawl Offshore Prawn Trawl to keep any fish caught within their prawn nets north of the Smokey Cape. South of Smokey Cape operators would continue to keep any fish that does not have a size limit.

The proposal links the current harvest activities of the Ocean Trawl Inshore and Ocean Trawl Offshore Prawn Trawl fisheries to the access rights. Without the Northern Fish Trawl shares than the operator can still continue operations but may not be permitted to retain catches of fish or possibly be subjected to strict trip limits for certain fish species.

Background:

Shares within a share class provides a secure property right to that resource. Through the Reform Program, DPI Fisheries is changing the existing management arrangement and linking shares to a tangible property right.

Fish trawl shares were over allocated and there is high distortion of the shares within the share class. DPI records show that for some species of fish, such as whiting, the combined harvest by Ocean Trawl Inshore and Ocean Trawl Offshore Prawn Trawl operators is far greater than Northern Fish Trawl operators (these figures exclude the Danish Seine harvest). For example:

	Northern Fish Trawl			Inshore Prawn Trawl			Offshore Prawn Trawl		
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Whiting (combined)	317360.6	351068.9	224398.6	162782.1	158917.6	141628.9	335733.5	472443.2	415326.3
Proportion of whiting *	39%	36%	29%	20%	16%	18%	41%	48%	53%

* Proportion of whiting taken by all trawl gear

The current access for the inshore and offshore prawn trawl fishery is based on NSW Fisheries Regulations. It is not a recognised right of access to the resource. The linkage of fish trawl shares to Ocean Trawl Inshore and Ocean Trawl Offshore Prawn Trawl fisheries to provide a recognised right to access the fish stocks using prawn trawl methods there will be greater security for these operators.

Benefits for Northern Fish Trawl:

- Fair acknowledgement of actual use of the resource
- Ocean Trawl Inshore and Offshore Prawn Trawl fishers will also purchase some of latent shares within the Northern Fish Trawl. Therefore the burden to reduce latency within the fishery is not solely born by Northern Fish Trawl operators.

Benefits for Ocean Trawl Inshore and Offshore Prawn Trawl:

- Strong right to access fish stocks (rights which cannot be extinguished later by Government)
- Stronger ability to manage and control the harvest of fish stocks

Proposed Process:

Representatives from the Northern Fish Trawl Fishery have requested that Ocean Trawl Inshore and Offshore Prawn Trawl fishers consider this draft proposal through the Share Linkage Working Group discussions and that this proposal be considered as part of the larger consultation process for share linkages.

Conclusion Proposal:

Internal industry consideration that Ocean Trawl Inshore and Offshore Prawn Trawl fishers be required to attached a small number of Northern Fish Trawl shares to the Prawn Trawl endorsement. Those who do not link be subject to a trip limit reflective of incidental bycatch amounts.