



Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
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Parliament House
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Re: Fisheries quota system inquiry

Dear Committee Members,

On behalf of Tuna Australia representing Australian tuna longline fisheries, please accept our statements on the current Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport into fisheries quota systems.

Tuna Australia (TA) Ltd represents statutory fishing right owners, holders, fishing companies and fish processors operating in the Eastern and Western tuna and billfish fishery.

Our fisheries extend throughout Australia's entire EEZ. Commercial fishers in the fishery use a variety of pelagic fishing methods with the dominant fishing method being pelagic long-line.

Fish targeted include Yellowfin Tuna (*Thunnus albacares*), Bigeye Tuna (*T. obesus*), Albacore Tuna (*T. alalunga*), Broadbill Swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) and Striped Marlin (*Tetrapturus audax*). In addition, some members of the fishery target Southern Bluefin Tuna (*T. maccoyii*).

The goal of TA is to plan, invest and manage the association with main objectives including

- ecological sustainable development;
- improving resource access, property rights and profitability;
- extending and promoting industry practices to stakeholders and the general public;
- enhancing market opportunity and,
- improving safety and workforce development.

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Australia's Commonwealth fishery management is world leading, focused on ecologically sustainable development principles. Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs) or statutory fishing rights, have played a pivotal role in this outcome and have been effective in producing good community outcomes. Our tuna fisheries clearly demonstrate the benefit of ITQs and the flow on benefit to businesses and communities.

The principle of using ITQs to manage highly migratory tuna stocks is widely recognised as best practice. The Western and Central Pacific Fishery is currently developing a harvest strategy for all target fish based on an ITQ system. This fishery management approach will no doubt underpin the sustainability of fish stocks, and small island development states and their communities.

As a sector we are concerned with instability in legislation and access rights. Instability leads to uncertainty from industry to invest in operations as experienced with the development of Australia's marine park network. Any situation that creates instability restricts new investors and the next generation of workers from considering commercial seafood fishing and production as a career pathway. At a time when food producers nationally are struggling to attract and retain local workers, we need to encourage industry participation and connection to community at every level.

There is a danger in the assumption that ITQs, or any fisheries management tool, can produce good community outcomes alone. ITQs must form part of a broader fisheries management plan and be designed to address the complexities of sustainable fishery management, the fishing community and environment.

Overall, the use of ITQs have had a positive impact on tuna fisheries in Australia.

Yours Sincerely

David Ellis

CEO

21 November 2022