



The Hon Greg Hunt MP

Minister for the Environment

MC13-002165

Mr Chris Fenner
Jacara Consulting
[Redacted]

27 NOV 2013

Dear Mr Fenner

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Chris'.

I refer to your email of 24 October 2013 concerning potential impacts to the squid fishery by seismic survey activity in Bass Strait. I regret the delay in responding.

As you know in assessing a proposal the Department of the Environment only considers whether or not the proposed action will have a significant impact on protected matters under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). In the case of activities in Commonwealth waters this includes potential impacts to the marine environment, including fisheries.

A number of seismic surveys in Bass Strait have been referred to the Department since the commencement of the EPBC Act in 2000 and have been determined not likely to have a significant impact. The Department's assessments on these matters are informed by peer-reviewed scientific literature; which is publicly available.

I am advised that mobile marine species exhibit avoidance behaviour in response to seismic survey noise. While certain marine species, including squid, could be physically affected in close proximity to a seismic source they also are afforded an opportunity to avoid the seismic source because of the gradual 'ramping up' of the source under *EPBC Act Policy Statement 2.1 – Interaction between offshore seismic exploration and whales*. While individual members of marine species may still be impacted, the Department has determined that a significant impact at population levels is not likely.

If you have contrary evidence in relation to the squid fishery I would be interested in receiving it so it can be considered in the decision-making process.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Greg'.