



Australian Government
Department of the Environment

The Hon Peter Walsh MLA
Minister for Agriculture and Food Security
8 Nicholson St, Level 16,
East Melbourne 3002

Dear Minister

I am writing to you as the Delegate of the Minister for the Environment in relation to the reassessment of the Victorian Eel Fishery under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

In February 2014, the Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries provided an application to the Department of the Environment seeking continued export approval for the Victorian Eel Fishery.

The application has now been assessed under the wildlife trade provisions of Part 13A of the EPBC Act. The assessment took into account measures that have been developed by the Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries in response to the recommendations made in the 2009 assessment of the fishery.

I am pleased to advise that the assessment is now complete. The new assessment report will be available on the Department of the Environment's website at:
<http://www.environment.gov.au/topics/marine/fisheries/vic/eel>.

I consider that the Victorian Eel Fishery operates in line with the Australian Government *Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries – 2nd Edition*. Given the management arrangements and precautionary measures for the fishery, including limited entry, spatial closures, gear restrictions and size limits, I have decided to amend the list of exempt native specimens to allow export of product from the Victorian Eel Fishery to continue for a period of five years, until 17 April 2019.

While there are some environmental risks associated with the Victorian Eel Fishery, I believe that the Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries has in place measures to address these issues. Officers from the Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries and this department have discussed and agreed to five recommendations focussing on ensuring the continuation of good management practices. These recommendations can be found at **Attachment 1**.

I would like to thank you for the constructive way in which your officials have approached this assessment.

Yours sincerely

[Signed]

Paul Murphy
Delegate of the Minister for the Environment
17 April 2014

**Recommendations to the Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries
on the ecologically sustainable management of the Victorian Eel Fishery, April 2014**

1. Operation of the Victorian Eel Fishery will be carried out in accordance with the management regime in force under the Victorian *Fisheries Act 1995* and *Fisheries Regulations 2009*.
2. The Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries (Victorian DEPI) to inform the Department of the Environment of any intended material changes to the Victorian Eel Fishery management arrangements that may affect the assessment against which *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* decisions are made.
3. The Victorian DEPI to produce and present reports to the Department of the Environment annually as per Appendix B of the *Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries - 2nd Edition*.
4. The Victorian DEPI to:
 - a) collaborate with other jurisdictions and pursue consistent and complementary research needs and management arrangements for target species; and
 - b) communicate the level of harvest in the glass eel sector with all relevant jurisdictions pending the resumption of harvesting in this sector.
5. The Victorian DEPI to:
 - a) finalise and publish the new management plan before 2016;
 - b) ensure that the new management plan incorporates appropriate decision rules for monitoring and responding to ecosystem changes as they develop; and
 - c) develop and implement a precautionary management strategy for the glass eel sector, including defined management triggers and responses.