



**TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE ON AUSTRALIA'S PROPOSAL FOR A CONSERVATION AND  
MANAGEMENT MEASURE ON ESTABLISHING A HARVEST STRATEGY FOR KEY  
TUNA SPECIES IN THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC OCEAN (DP03)**

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**WCPFC-TCC10-2014-DP02**

**29 August 2014**

**This paper is an explanatory cover note to the Proposal contained in  
WCPFC-TCC10-2014-DP03**

**Explanatory note on Australia’s proposal for a conservation and management measure on establishing a harvest strategy for key tuna species in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean**

The objective of the *Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean* (the Convention) is to ensure through effective management, the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the highly migratory fish stocks of the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. WCPFC is responsible for the world’s largest tuna fishery, which covers 20% of the Earth’s surface. Australia is deeply concerned that in recent years, conservation and management measures agreed by WCPFC have fallen short of what is needed to sustain tuna stocks in the long-term.

WCPFC has started a process to determine agreed management objectives for key fish stocks with a view to translating these objectives into effective management frameworks and harvest strategies through the MOW process. In addition, the Commission has adopted limit reference points for four tuna species. While the adoption of the tropical tuna conservation and management measure (CMM) at WCPFC10 was an important step (CMM 2013-01), much more needs to be done to meet the Convention’s objective.

As advised in WCPFC Circular 2014/38 and 2014/72, Australia intends to submit a CMM to WCPFC11 seeking the Commission’s endorsement of an approach whereby pre-agreed rules or actions will be used for determining a management action response to changes in indicators of stock status with respect to reference points. The aim of the CMM is to ensure that scientific outcomes and findings are incorporated into the management process as part of the Commission’s evidence-based decision making processes. Australia considers that a binding CMM will best demonstrate WCPFC’s commitment to establishing harvest strategies in accordance with an agreed, clearly articulated framework.

The draft CMM:

- seeks agreement from the Commission that it shall develop and implement a harvest strategy approach for each fishery under the purview of the Commission
- states that harvest strategies are a best-practice approach, providing a consistent, predictable, transparent, and more certain operating environment for fisheries managers, and
- sets out a number of principles to be considered, including that fisheries are most sustainable and productive when stocks are at larger stock sizes, and not experiencing recruitment failure.

The CMM proposes that harvest strategies should contain seven elements with the detail of each element set out in Annex 1:

1. Defined operational objectives for the fishery (‘operational management objectives’)
2. Indicators of fishery performance related to the objectives (‘performance indicators’)
3. Reference points for performance indicators (‘reference points’)

4. A statement defining acceptable levels of risk to meeting objectives ('acceptable levels of risk')
5. A monitoring strategy to collect relevant data to assess fishery performance ('monitoring strategy')
6. Decision rules that control the intensity of fishing activity and/or catch ('harvest control rules'), and
7. An evaluation of the performance of the proposed harvest strategy against management objectives ('management strategy evaluation')

Australia submitted the draft CMM (WCPFC-SC10-2014/MI-WP-08) to the Scientific Committee (SC) to provide an opportunity for the SC to comment and to allow for an early exposure of the draft CMM amongst Members, Cooperating Non-Members and Participating Territories (CCMs). We were pleased to receive a number of comments from interested stakeholders on the draft measure. Australia revised its measure to incorporate the comments received to date. On 14 August 2014, Australia circulated a revised version of the CMM seeking further feedback and suggestions from WCPFC Members.

Australia has received comments from two Members. We have not had a chance to fully consider all comments received, but have incorporated some of the comments into Revision 3 of the draft CMM. One Member expressed the view that much of the proposal is already set out in the Convention, which incorporates relevant guidelines from the UN Fish Stocks Agreement. Australia considers that there is nevertheless value in seeking the Commission's agreement to and endorsement of the key elements of a harvest strategy, set out in one place (a binding CMM) and incorporating relevant provisions of the Convention, the UN Fish Stocks Agreement and relevant FAO Guidelines. Another Member suggested that the third Management Objectives Workshop be incorporated into the timelines set out in Annex 2 of the CMM. This Member noted that at the latest SC meeting (held in Majuro, Republic of Marshall Islands) SC10 recommended that MOW3 should be organised before the next annual meeting to enable the draft CMM and related issues to be discussed ahead of WCPFC11. Australia notes that at WCPFC10, the Commission agreed to hold an additional workshop on management options (MOW3) in 2014 (paragraph 164 of the WCPFC10 Report). Australia would welcome the opportunity to discuss the draft CMM prior to WCPFC11, if other CCMs agree. As we are not aware of any dates for MOW3 being set, we have not included it in the draft CMM. We would note that whether or not there is explicit reference to MOW3, timelines in Annex 2 do not preclude the measure being considered at MOW3.

Revisions from the first draft are marked up in track changes, with subsequent comments incorporated in a different colour for ease of reference. We look forward to continuing to work with CCMs on this measure as we refine it. Australia would welcome any offers from CCMs to co-sponsor this proposal.

Australia looks forward to constructive discussion on this measure at TCC10, with a view to the measure being adopted at WCPFC11.