

SUBMISSION to the Fisheries Legislation Review

I submit for the review panel, the following considerations for the review on Australian fisheries legislation:

I applaud the two year ban on super trawlers within Australian designated oceans. This ban should be legislated as a permanent ban for the following reasons:

1. Ecological/ state of research reasons

There are many ecological arguments to be made, which will be made by others. I would like to point out just one.

There are claims that the fish species targeted by super trawlers in Australian waters have short life cycles with rapid reproduction rates, that therefore, they are capable of recovery from intensive fishing.

Some Australian marine scientists have disputed these claims, asserting that these studies are for northern hemisphere varieties and species, and that they are not relevant to the varieties within southern species. For example, the varieties of one northern species are, in the southern hemisphere, longer lived, with slower reproduction rates. Therefore they have less recovery capacity than the varieties found in the northern hemisphere.

There is insufficient research on the species that would be targeted in Australian waters.

2. Local fishing economies and regulatory frameworks are undermined.

The local fishing industry has adapted to a framework of regulation aimed at facilitating both the economic exploitation of fish stocks and the sustainability of these stocks. The super trawler practice of intensively fishing one location, then to moving on to another, and another, covering large tracks of the Australian coastline, disrupts and undermines the long worked for systems of fisheries regulation referred to above. There is potential for re-opening the debate about quotas for the local fisheries industries and for a claim that quotas and other regulatory devices should be relaxed.

3. Economics of the super trawler industry

The Netherlands based super trawler that recently visited Australian waters, resulting in the two-year ban, is subsidised by many millions each year by the Netherlands government.

Australia does not want its fisheries economics unfairly disrupted by a highly subsidised operation that is not, of itself, economically sustainable.

Thank you for your consideration of this submission.

Sherrie Cross