

20. Email from [redacted] to SEMAC members RE RAG minutes.txt

From: [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, 14 June 2012 3:52 PM
To: [redacted]
Subject: FW: YOUR SPF DECISION - IT'S NOT JUST FOR A YEAR

Hi again [redacted]

[redacted] message to South East MAC members.

Regards

-----Original Message-----

From: [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, 25 March 2012 6:17 PM
To: [redacted]
Subject: YOUR SPF DECISION - IT'S NOT JUST FOR A YEAR

Dear SEMAC Member

As a former MAC member (SPFMAC) and occasional observer over many years on the MACs of other fisheries, I appreciate how difficult it sometimes is to arrive at a decision that is right for the fishery, not just to satisfy a piece of legislation and/or those commercially involved.

The small Pelagic Fishery, a small one when compared to other Commonwealth Fisheries, usually takes very little of your MAC's time. But SPF is unique in that because of its target fish species and the concern recreational and commercial fishers and fisheries managers have for those species, the SPF is the only Commonwealth fishery in which commercial development and management has been based entirely on scientific resource assessments and the precautionary principle. However, at the SEMAC tele meeting scheduled for Monday (26 March 2012) you are faced with a decision which could adversely change the SPF irrevocably. That is quite a statement coming from someone who has been involved at policy, working group, management plan, RAG and MAC level in this fishery for nearly 20 years - since before the SPF was the SPF, when it was called simply the Jack mackerel fishery.

You are likely to have read a letter emailed to you in the past 24 hours from [redacted], a longstanding [redacted] and a long serving [redacted]. I unequivocally support every one of [redacted] reasons for opposing the Jack-mackerel East recommendation from the February meeting of the SPFRAG, the facts he sets out about the processes and outcomes of the meeting and also the basis on which he argues for maintenance of the precautionary principle, particularly in relation to Jack mackerel.

Because of [redacted] excellent statement of the facts and the reasons for strongly opposing the recommendation which is being put to you at the SEMAC meeting, I will not repeat it, except to make quite clear that I strongly oppose the Jack mackerel East recommendation as well.

Instead, I want to propose an outcome for SEMAC to consider which could satisfy most, with the possible exception of the proponents of the super trawler; still enable a SPF DEPM to proceed, maintain the precautionary principle, and not jeopardise the future of the stocks of SPF species and their management.

My proposal, if you adopt it, would also pass the Canberra Times Test. That test is applied mentally by all senior public servants when making decisions: If my (the decision-maker's) decision or anything arising from it appears on the front page of The Canberra Times, will it (i) embarrass the Minister or the Government and/or generate media inquiries to both, and (ii) is it absolutely unchallengeable and unimpeachable on the basis of all the facts or could a probing journalist find irregularities, anomalies or weaknesses in any of the processes or decisions leading to my ultimate decision?

It is simply a fact that the reason for the controversy and disagreement about