

The Hon Eric Abetz MP  
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Mr Rob Fairs MP  
Member for Bass

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Dear Mr Fairs

Thank you for your constituent question asked on 27 November 2024 in Parliament, regarding the development of a new sardine fishery in Tasmania.

Research from the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies confirms a sizeable population of Australian sardines in Tasmanian and Bass Strait waters, presenting a significant opportunity to develop a new commercial fishery. To ensure long-term benefits while maintaining sustainability, the Government has released Development Guidelines for a new Tasmanian Sardine Fishery, focusing on environmental sustainability, strong governance, economic returns, and community benefits.

Importantly, super trawlers will not be permitted, and purse seine gear - already used in Tasmania - will be the preferred method to minimise any potential environmental impact.

The Government is taking a careful, science-led approach, supported by ongoing research and a structured consultation process to engage commercial and recreational fishers. Modelling indicates that the marine food web is not highly dependent on Australian sardines, meaning a well managed fishery can operate without significant ecosystem impacts. This process will ensure sustainable economic growth for Tasmanian businesses and commercial fishers while maintaining a balanced approach for all marine users.

Thank you for raising these matters in Parliament, I trust this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

Eric Abetz MP  
Minister for Business, Industry and Resources