



The Hon Niall Blair MLC

Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Regional Water
Minister for Trade and Industry

BN17/124

Your ref: D17/00249

The Hon Robert Brown MLC
Committee Chair
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Brown *Robert.*

Thank you for your letter of 11 January 2017 concerning Mr David Mehan MP, Member for The Entrance's suggestion regarding the allocation of shares in the commercial fishing subsidised share trading market. I appreciate yours and his keen interest in ensuring that all steps are taken to look after small fishing businesses. I am also committed to this objective and have taken a number of decisions to ensure Government assistance is prioritised to benefit active fishers, particularly small scale fishers who need more shares to continue their fishing effort.

However, issuing new shares on a conditional basis to those fishers who are unable to secure funds to purchase additional shares is not feasible. The NSW Government does not hold any surplus shares and cannot issue new shares (even on a conditional basis) or otherwise amend the rules for the subsidised share trading market, as suggested by Mr Mehan MP, without:

- degrading the value of existing shares which could trigger claims for compensation;
- affecting those fishers, including small scale fishers, who have already engaged in the share market based on publically released commitments about how the market will operate;
- impacting participation in the subsidised share market.

I refer you to the comprehensive, Independent Review of NSW Commercial Fisheries Policy, Management and Administration. Different options to address the complex problem with commercial fisheries management in NSW were thoroughly addressed. The review is available from:

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/commercial/reform/historical-docs/review>.

The subsidised share market is the primary mechanism the NSW Government will use to estimate the number of shares fishers need, the value of the shares and the

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allocation of the subsidy applied to each share class. This will best assist those fishers, particularly active fishers, who need the most help to purchase the shares they need.

All fishers are encouraged to participate in the market. In order to be able to achieve this, the NSW Government is offering measures to assist fishers to participate in the share trading market through offering:

- low interest rate loans for eligible fishers to purchase shares;
- \$1000 for independent financial advice about future business planning;
- \$1000 for assistance relating to the share trading market including legal advice and/or to appoint a professional to place bids and/or offers on behalf of them in the subsidised share trading market.

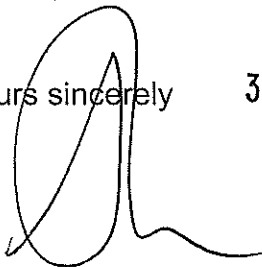
Fishers are encouraged to access these assistance measures as soon as possible. It is important that fishers engage with the market or these assistance measures because if they do not, the NSW Government can only assume that they have the necessary shares or other arrangements in place that suit their needs.

The commitment I can give you is that the NSW Government will work with individual active fishers on a case-by-case basis where they cannot secure the minimum number of shares needed, for example if they cannot secure funding, and they have participated in the subsidised trading market.

Thank you for bringing this to my attention.

Yours sincerely

3 FEB 2017

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Niall Blair', written over the 'Yours sincerely' text.

The Hon Niall Blair MLC
Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Regional Water and Minister for Trade and Industry
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council