

Media Release – 16 December 2015

Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) fishery and farming achieve historic international Sustainability Certification

The Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) fishery and farms have achieved an important milestone by being awarded the international Sustainability Certificate of the “Friend of the Sea,” a non-profit NGO which is the world’s largest certifier of seafood.

The sustainability award recognises the decision of the international scientific expert group which sets quotas to give a 40% increase in Australia’s SBT catch quota since 2012. Mr Jeffriess emphasised that the increase is based on a precautionary scientific approach, and this strategy needs to continue.

The sustainability award follows a rigorous sustainability assessment by the major independent international auditor, SGS, including on-site inspections in Port Lincoln.

The Friend of the Sea sustainability award is the only one which covers both the catching of the Bluefin from the wild and the value-added farming of the catch. It has high credibility and recognition in the key markets for Australian Bluefin.

The other major strength of the Friend of the Sea certification is that it covers all parts of the Bluefin Chain of Custody, ensuring full traceability of the product. This includes the sustainability of the fishery, of the ecosystem (including any bycatch), crew safety and labour conditions, the carbon footprint, product testing and waste management.

The reality is the world is increasingly demanding that industries not just prove their harvest is sustainable. The community also wants to be assured that they buy product from industries who are socially accountable and who contribute widely to their communities.

Friend of the Sea has imposed conditions that the Australian Bluefin industry must continue to achieve to maintain the certification. This includes a condition that management of the fishery must continue to meet the targets decided by the international scientific group which sets catch quotas.

The Friend of the Sea certification follows other favourable reports on Australia’s management of its Bluefin Fishery. This includes an independent audit in 2014 by another international auditor SAI Global.

Mr Jeffriess expressed the tuna industry's appreciation of the great support provided by the South Australian Government to achieve the landmark certification. The SA Government itself continuously audits the industry and those audit reports were important in the independent certification process.

Mr Jeffriess also thanked a number of environmental groups for their constructive contribution to the fishery returning to sustainability. Co-operation rather than continuing conflict has benefitted the SBT stock and all stakeholders.

Contact: Brian Jeffriess, CEO of Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna Industry Association (ASBTIA)

Phone: + 61 (0) 419840299 Email: austuna@bigpond.com

Editor's Note: *Friend of the Sea is an international certification program for products from sustainable fisheries and aquaculture. Over 500 companies in more than 50 countries have relied on Friend of the Sea to assess the sustainability of their seafood origins. Audits, based on best and most updated available scientific data, are run by accredited independent certification bodies.*
info@friendofthesea.org