



## **PART A**

# **INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC**

**Guidelines for the preparation of a  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement**

**Marine Harvest  
Barramundi Fish Farm  
Channel Island, Darwin Harbour NT**

**December 2005**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION .....	3
2. PROPOSAL .....	3
3. PURPOSE OF THE DRAFT EIS .....	4
4. EIS PROCESS .....	6
5. ADMINISTRATION .....	6

## 1. INTRODUCTION

These Guidelines have been developed to assist Marine Harvest in preparing a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Barramundi Nursery Farm Proposal at Channel Island, Darwin Harbour, NT in accordance with Clause 8 of the Environmental Assessment Administrative Procedures of the *Environmental Assessment Act (1982)* of the Northern Territory.

These Guidelines consist of two sections:

- Part A (this section) is the introduction and description of the project and the EIS process; and
- Part B (attached) details the type and extent of information to be included in the DEIS. The list includes issues and concerns that were identified before the public and Government review period (for the Draft Guidelines).

This section of the guidelines has been developed to assist members of the public and other interested parties in preparing comments on the PER.

## 2. PROPOSAL

The proponent is Marine Harvest.

The site proposed is located off the north-eastern shore of Channel Island, between Channel Island and the eastern shore of Middle Arm, in the southern reaches of Darwin Harbour.

This is the third of Marine Harvest's three proposed barramundi fish farms in the Northern Territory. Two others have been proposed for Snake Bay (Melville Island) and Port Patterson (Bynoe Harbour) and are subject to a separate environmental assessment. One farm was established at Port Hurd (Bathurst Island) in 2000 as a pilot project.

The proposed barramundi nursery will have maximum holding capacity of 500 tonnes of fish. The site will be stocked with 10-20 gram fingerling barramundi supplied from the Darwin Aquaculture Centre hatchery, which uses locally-sourced broodstock. Fish will be ongrown to 200 grams for transfer to the proposed growout farms at Port Patterson and Snake Bay.

The hatchling stock will be transferred to site and then to the growout farms by well-boat. Initially there will be five intakes per year at 260 thousand fish per intake, which would increase to at least 500 thousand once the proposed growout farms were on line.

The stock will be fed a pelletised food from automatic feeding stations. Feeding will be monitored to ensure as little wastage as possible in the form of uneaten pellets, to reduce contamination of the seabed and water under and adjacent to the site. Stock will be vaccinated for *Streptococcus iniae*, *Vibrio harveyi* and *Photobacterium damsela*.

The proposed farm will be based on 12 steel mesh holding nets each of 49 metres circumference to house the fish. These steel nets have proven to be able to exclude crocodiles and sharks and not entrap any predators. The holding nets will be 9 m deep with a side wall of 4.5 metres. All nets will have a minimum seabed clearance of 2 m. Anchors for the mooring system will be steel anchors. The site will have a moored work platform (floating pontoon) for use by staff and to hold the automatic feeding system, the feed and the accommodation. Two people will be housed on the pontoon continuously. There will be no shore facilities.

The following waste products will be produced by the proposal:

#### ***Wastes to Water***

Wastes to water are expected from

- artificial feed that is not consumed by stock;
- fish faeces;
- parasite control treatment; and
- waste water from the occupation of the site by staff.

#### ***Solid Wastes:***

Solid wastes are expected from:

- Feed bags;
- Dead stock (morts); and
- Waste associated with the occupation of the site by staff.

#### ***Noise, Light, Air***

Expected noise sources are:

- Outboard motors;
- Feeding equipment; and
- Harvesting operations.

Emissions to air may include fumes, hydrocarbons, solvents, greenhouse gases and noxious smells from dead stock.

The development will involve provision of lighting for operations, including habitation of the site by staff.

### **3. PURPOSE OF THE DRAFT EIS**

The draft EIS aims to provide:

- a source of information from which individuals and groups may gain an understanding of the proposal, the need for the proposal, the economic and other benefits that might arise from the proposal, the alternatives, the environment that it would affect, the impacts that may occur and the measures taken to minimise those impacts;
- a basis for public consultation and informed comment on the proposal; and

- a framework against which decision-makers in conjunction with traditional landowners can consider the environmental aspects of the proposal, set conditions for approval to ensure environmentally sound development and recommend an environmental management and monitoring program.

The object of these Guidelines is to identify those matters that should be addressed in the EIS. The Guidelines are based on the initial outline of the proposal in the Notice of Intent. Not all matters indicated in the Guidelines may be relevant to all aspects of the proposal. Only those matters that are relevant to the proposal should be addressed. The Guidelines, however, are not necessarily exhaustive. They should not be interpreted as excluding from consideration any matters which are currently unforeseen that emerge as important or significant from scientific studies or otherwise during the preparation of the draft EIS, the public consultation process and the preparation of the Supplement to the draft EIS (response to submissions).

The proposal has been declared a controlled action under the Commonwealth *EPBC Act* because of the potential for significant impacts on listed threatened species and communities, and listed migratory species. The proposal will be assessed in accordance with Schedule 1 to the “*Agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Northern Territory under s.45 of the EPBC Act relating to Environmental Impact Assessment*” (the Bilateral Agreement). The impacts on the controlling actions should be focused on in the EIS to provide adequate information for the Australian Government Minister to make a decision on approval of the action.

The draft EIS should be a self-contained and comprehensive document written in a clear, concise style that is easily understood by the general reader. Cross-referencing should be used to avoid unnecessary duplication of text. Text should be supported where appropriate by easily interpretable maps, plans, diagrams or other descriptive material. Detailed technical information and baseline surveys should be included as appendices.

Content in the draft EIS should include both quantitative and qualitative analysis as appropriate. Impacts should not just be treated as adverse; beneficial effects should also be identified.

The justification of the project in the manner proposed should be consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development. Assessment of the environmental impacts of the proposal and alternatives should be comprehensive. For the purpose of these Guidelines, “ecologically sustainable use” means:

‘use of the natural resources within their capacity to sustain natural processes while maintaining the life-support systems of nature and ensuring that the benefit of the use to the present generation does not diminish the potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations’

The “principles of ecologically sustainable development” are as follows:

- the precautionary principle - namely, that if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation;

- inter- and intra-generational equity - namely, that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment are maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations;
- conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity; and
- improved valuation and pricing of environmental resources.

## 4. EIS PROCESS

The EIS process, as described by the Administrative Procedures of the *Environmental Assessment Act 1994 (EA Act)* of the Northern Territory, is displayed in Figure 1.

### Overview of the Process

Once the Minister has determined that an EIS is required, the EPA prepares Draft Guidelines for Preparation of an EIS, after consulting with relevant advisory bodies.

These draft Guidelines are then subject to public review for a 14-day period. At the end of this period, the EPA will finalise the draft Guidelines within 14 days for Ministerial approval. When approved, final Guidelines are forwarded to the proponent.

When the proponent has prepared a draft EIS to a publishable standard, this document is exhibited for public review and comment for a minimum of 28 days, during which time advisory bodies also comment on the document.

Issues raised in the public comment period are addressed by the proponent in a Supplement to the draft EIS. The Australian Government process requires that the Final EIS be of an adequate standard before publishing to ensure that each matter protected by controlling actions has sufficient information for the Minister/delegate to make a decision. NT advisory bodies review the Supplement.

The NT EPA then has 35 days to prepare an Environmental Assessment Report and Recommendations based on the draft EIS and Supplement. If the Minister approves the Report and Recommendations, these are forwarded to the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage for approval under the *EPBC Act* and finally the responsible (consent) Minister(s) for inclusion in permit, lease or license conditions and in relevant management procedures (eg. Environmental Management Plans).

The Assessment Report and Recommendations are included on the DNRETA website and hard copies are provided to respondents and selected public libraries and viewing sites.

## 5. ADMINISTRATION

The Project Officer for the environmental impact assessment is Mr Rod Johnson from the Environment Protection Agency, Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts (DNRETA). The contact telephone number is (08) 8924 4002 and facsimile number (08) 89244 4053, e-mail: [roderick.johnson@nt.gov.au](mailto:roderick.johnson@nt.gov.au).

Copies of the Final Guidelines will be posted on the DNRETA website <http://www.nreta.nt.gov.au/whatwedo/environment/index.html>.

The EIS will be advertised for public comment in *The Northern Territory News* and *The Australian* newspapers. Copies of the draft EIS will be available to the public at public exhibition sites around Darwin, or for purchase from the proponent or download from the DNRETA website. **Comments on the EIS should be forwarded to the nominated Project Officer.**

**Figure 1 The Northern Territory Environmental Assessment Process**

