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Australiaâ??s Canned Tuna Market Hits Key Sustainability Benchmark

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Australian brands and retailers have achieved a significant sustainability milestone, with approximately 70 per cent of canned tuna now sourced and labelled from independently MSC-certified sustainable fisheries.

With an estimated 336 million servings consumed each year, tuna is a staple in most Australian households, making this shift one of the most consequential changes in Australiaâ??s grocery sector in recent years.

Sparked by Colesâ?? 2024 announcement to commit to 100 per cent MSC-sourced canned tuna, all three major retailers, Coles, Woolworths, and ALDI, now exclusively offer MSC-certified homebrand tuna.

"What we have witnessed in Australia is a genuine market transformation. Australia's major retailers now offer only 100 per cent MSC-certified home brand tuna, making sustainable canned tuna the new default for millions of households,â? said Anne Gabriel, Program Director at the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC).

"Australia is one of the very few markets globally where this kind of industry-wide alignment has happened at this pace and scale," Gabriel added

Scott Wing, Senior Manager - Sustainability, for Woolworths Group, said the transition gives customers confidence in sustainable tuna choices.

â??We aim to make sustainable choices accessible and affordable for all our customers. By transitioning our own-brand canned tuna ranges to fisheries certified to the MSC standard, we're giving Australian families confidence that they are purchasing a great value product that has been sourced sustainably. Our long-standing partnership with the MSC helps us deliver on this promise.â?•

A small but growing number of Australian-owned, locally fished brands, such as Walkerâ??s Tuna and Little Tuna, are contributing to the category by offering domestically sourced alternatives. However, most canned tuna in Australia remains imported, mainly from the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, the worldâ??s largest tuna resource and one of the most environmentally sustainable. This means supermarket decisions in Australia directly influence fishing practices in international waters.

â??When retailers commit at this level, it encourages brands and fisheries to meet rigorous certification standards, leading toÂ healthier tuna populations and stronger livelihoods for communities dependent on these waters,â?Â saidÂ Gabriel.Â

John West introduced certified tuna to Australia in 2012, boosting supply and consumer awareness since then.

â??For over a decade, John West has demonstrated its commitment to responsible tuna sourcing through its partnership with the Marine Stewardship Council. The decision by retailers to transition to MSCâ??certified sourcing reflects strong collaboration across the supply chain and helps make responsibly sourced seafood the easy choice for consumers,â? said Phoebe Dowling, Director Global Food Sustainability, at Simplot.