



Foreword COMPILED BY GREG CALLAGHAN

TRANSITIONS **Scaling down**

YOU wouldn't guess it from the abundant supplies in your local fish market, but global fish stocks may be less than five years away from complete collapse. "Overharvesting is reducing fish stocks to dangerously low levels," says Professor Garry Russ of the School of Marine Biology and Aquaculture at Queensland's James Cook University. It's a view echoed by respected American marine biologist Daniel Pauly, who has likened the effect of overfishing on the world's marine life to a large meteor strike on landlubbers.

Fish stocks are already in crisis in the north-east Atlantic, the west coast of Africa, the Canadian Atlantic coast and throughout parts of north and south-east Asia. The world's most famous cod fishery, the Grand Banks off Nova Scotia, collapsed ten years ago: stocks slipped so low – about half a per cent of the original numbers – that they failed to recover even after the fisheries closed. A recent United Nations report says 60 per cent of the world's largest fish stocks are in immediate need of rehabilitation.

"Australia is not in such a critical situation because we were one of the first countries to introduce fishing quotas," notes Russ.