



## **Federal Government Missing in Action**

THE peak body for Queensland's wild-catch fishers is continually being vindicated on its search for compensation for impacted wild harvest fishers in Moreton Bay.

"It's time the Federal Government complied with its duty of care to Queensland wild harvest fishers in Moreton Bay," said the Queensland Seafood Industry Association's (QSIA) President, Keith Harris.

Significant areas have been closed to fishing and movement and sales of seafood from the Moreton Bay region have been restricted. Commercial fishers throughout the region have lost significant income through no fault of their own because of biosecurity failures.

"The Federal Government needs to stop deflecting responsibility and asking the State Government to pay compensation. The State Government has a role to play in responding to biosecurity hazards but its establishment of a movement control zone is a statutory requirement".

"I am amazed that Federal Government officials have advised a Senate Estimates hearing in Canberra that six importers supplied 'the vast majority' of contaminated prawns. How much evidence do we need before the Federal Government does the right thing by industry?"

Commercial fishers pay for a right to access the marine resource, a resource it does not own like a farmer might own his or her farmland and the costs of managing our fisheries are recovered through licence fees.

"Industry does not have the rights enjoyed by land-based agriculture. Commercial fishers do not have tenure, we have a right to fish – a right to go fishing. This is not a guarantee of being able to catch fish. It was not industry's negligence that allowed white spot to enter our fisheries".

"So, what now? Senate Estimates is uncovering departmental failure after failure, illegal business activity amongst some importers and a failed biosecurity policy setting. Industry deserves help, not under some levy based contract that is asking for industry to pay for a government failure and to provide funding to repair a public resource it does not own. Industry's plight is the result of an absentee border cop that has failed miserably in its duty to industry and the marine environment" said Mr Harris.

"This amazing industry is proudly represented by micro and small businesses across Queensland. Real leaders admit mistakes and fix them – industry is still waiting for real leadership from the Federal Government".

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