

**MEDIA RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
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The Commercial Seafood Industry calls for an end to Net Free Zones in Queensland

The Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA) supports the State government's advertisement as part of a social media campaign to promote support for fresh local caught Queensland seafood.

Mr Keith Payne VC AM and patron of QSIA sees some inconsistencies in state government policy. "On the one hand, we have the Minister supporting local industry which is great to see but on the other industry is still suffering through net free zones in central and north Queensland. There is also a proposal to introduce these zones in Moreton Bay" said Mr Payne.

"Post the impacts of Tropical Cyclone Debbie commercial fishers across north Queensland have been impacted by the cyclone. In the Fitzroy region for example commercial fishers could be net fishing if not for the net free zones. These fishers have been impacted by the cyclone and may not return to crab fishing for 3-4 weeks".

"The seafood consuming public have lost of one-third or almost 74 tonnes of local Barramundi caught in Queensland which are now being denied to seafood consumers. Put another way seafood retailers are losing over 2.9 million serves of fish that could be on the lunch or dinner plates of Queensland and Australian seafood consumers".

"As we approach Easter – a time for family and eating fresh local seafood, the net free zones policy denies a huge supply of local fish to Queenslanders. Abolishing the net free zone policy is a good policy outcome – for commercial fishers, retailers and wholesalers but more critically Queensland and Australian seafood consumers".

"I urge the Minister and government to review the net free zones policy in central and north Queensland and to publicly commit to abandoning any introduction of net free zones in Moreton Bay. Over 86 percent of Queenslanders do not recreationally fish and rely on local commercial fishers to supply the local seafood they love" said Mr Payne.

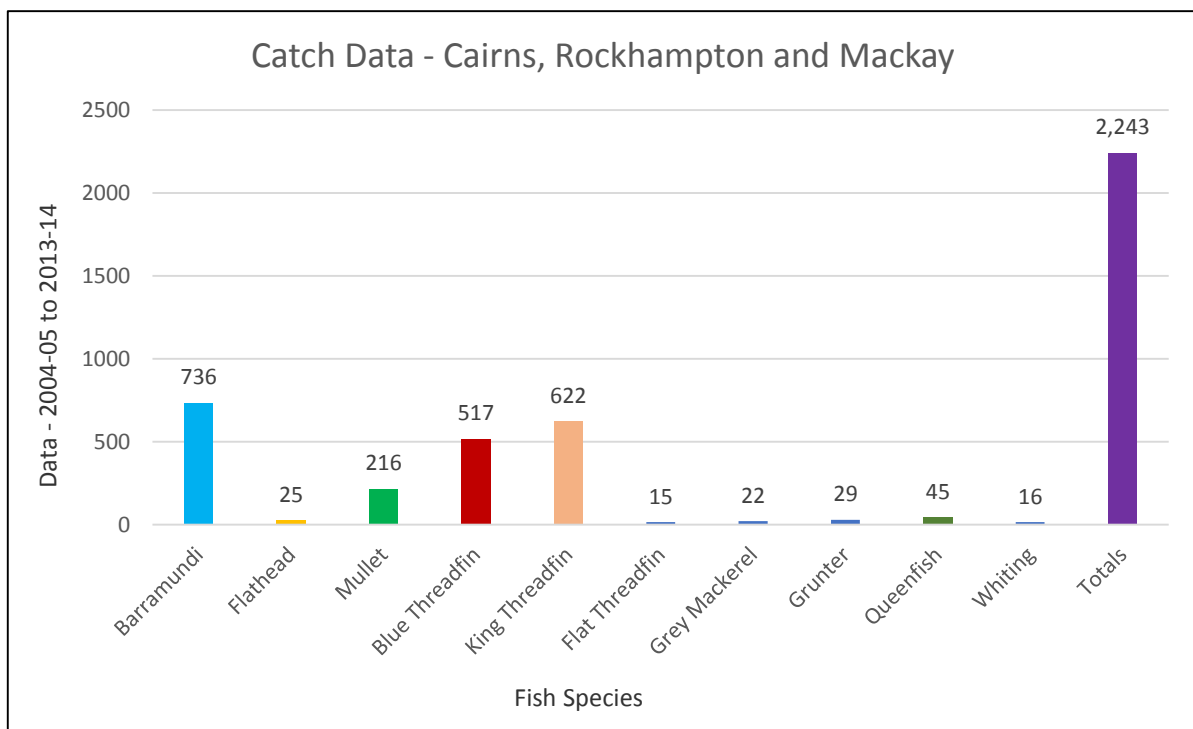
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Net Free Zones Data

- Over the 2004-5 to 2013-14 period 2,243 t of fish were harvested in the Cairns, Rockhampton and Mackay regions.
- On average, the State has lost 224.3 t of local caught fish not only going to local supply chains but also exported to other states.
- In terms of the iconic Barramundi – the average yearly catch was 73.6 t per year and with the net free zones this will fall to 48.6 t per year with the remaining potential catch lost to the Queensland and Australian seafood market but freely open to minimally monitored recreational fishing take.



Serves of fish lost to Queensland seafood consumers

QSIA used the experience of local commercial fishers, wholesalers and retailers to determine the following metrics:

- The average serve size was estimated at 150g. This was based on restaurant and retail fish and chip businesses and typical serving sizes. QSIA also examined the Heart Foundation and Queensland Health recommend 150g and 100g serves respectively.
- QSIA also obtained advice from retail and wholesale businesses with respect to product retention rates with an average rate of 60% being applied to the statistics in this document and the attached excel spreadsheet.

Overall in terms of fish serves lost to the community:

- Over the 2004-5 to 2013-14 period 8,972,000 serves of fish were harvested in the Cairns, Rockhampton and Mackay regions.
- On average, the State has lost 897,200 serves of local caught fish supplied to local supply chains but also exported to other states.

- In terms of the iconic Barramundi – the average yearly fish serve was 294,400 serves per year and with the net free zones this will fall to 197,248 serves per year.
- In effect, almost 100,000 serves of fresh local fish have been lost to Queensland retail and wholesale seafood outlets.

