



Position Statement #9

Policy making based on scientific data

1. Introduction

Too often policy making is based on political ideology not science. This is not acceptable and undermines the long-term viability of industry.

The Association seeks a commitment to policy making based on scientific data.

2. Rationale

The introduction of restrictions to the commercial catch of Black Jewfish, quota setting processes and the introduction of 60% biomass targets under the so-called fisheries reform process are clear examples of a non-reliance on science.

2.1. Black Jewfish

At least 40% of the Queensland east coast is unfished under the protection of State and Federal marine park systems and net free zones (NFZ's). The Association is not aware of any research to justify a 20-tonne total allowable commercial catch (TACC). The TACC was reached in over 5 weeks limiting the season to 5 weeks per year based on no scientific evidence¹.

2.2. Quota Setting

The Coral Trout quota managed fishery have been subjected to quota variations. This fishery has been impacted by changes to quota arrangements. In 2018, Fisheries Queensland increased Coral Trout quota levels by 200 tonnes to address a drop two years before of over 370 tonnes².

Views of recreational fishers, conservation groups and conservation managers tend to have too much influence in the quota setting process.

2.3. Fishery Biomass

In a submission to the State Government fisheries management green paper process in 2016, Professor Robert Kearney from the University of Canberra demonstrated that our fish stocks are already sustainably managed, even by the strictest international standards.

¹ Fisheries Queensland has no idea about the stock status of Black Jewfish and the TACC was driven by no scientific research.

² Queensland Country Hour, Debate erupts over decision to increase quota in Queensland's coral trout fishery', Charlie McKillop, 17 April 2018: [Queensland Country Hour](#)

A 60% biomass targets is not consistent with the generally accepted criterion of 30-40%

The Queensland government targets are higher than Commonwealth fisheries which are managed at 20-40%

The primary reform proposed in the Queensland Government's green paper was a change in strategy to a commitment to 60% of unfished biomass. The Association that no specific information was given to support the State Government's key proposal³, 'A review of scientific literature and discussions with scientists and fishery managers suggests managing stocks to achieve a 60% unfished population size is most likely to optimise benefits to the community'.

No scientists or fisheries managers are identified and/or quoted to support the 60% biomass target.

3. Conclusion

3.1. Course of Action

Industry needs a fisheries management system that is based on science not pandering to conservation or recreational fishing interests. The system also needs greater influence over policy development from commercial fishers who must endure the outcomes of government policy making.

3.2. Solution

Fisheries management decisions are based on scientific data.

4. Authorisation

The QSIA is the peak industry body representing the Queensland seafood industry. Our members include professional fishers, seafood processors, marketers, retailers and other business associated with the seafood industry. Our representation to members and the community at large is to promote the consumption of wild caught Queensland seafood.

Approved and Endorsed by: QSIA Board
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³ Green paper on fisheries management reform in Queensland, July 2016, p. 12.