



16 March 2020

Hon Anastacia Palaszczuk
Premier
PO Box 15185
CITY EAST QLD 4002

Dear Premier

Re: Relationship between the State Government and recreational fishing groups

On behalf of the Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA) I have questions regarding the relationship between the State Government and recreational fishing groups. Please note that Attachments 1 and 2 were downloaded from the Bush 'n Beach Fishing Magazine Facebook page and website respectively. Attachment 3 is an email sent by CAREFISH to politicians, conservation and industry groups.

Since the start of the so-called fisheries reform process many commercial fishers have asked if the process was (1) a pre-determined exercise; and (2) managed by the State Government with input from recreational groups.

The following quote from Attachment 1 suggests an existing agreement between Government and recreational fishing groups, *'They have been ready to go for a year and were promised by last December at the latest. Many of us have been trying to resolve this quietly and internally without any successes. Many commercial fishers have been doing the same, environmentalists too. Next will be the Science sector'*.

It is difficult to comprehend the arguments posed in the Bush 'n Beach Fishing Magazine Facebook page and website suggesting that the recreational sector is over-regulated. Recreational fishers are not monitored to the degree commercial fishers are, they do not have to account for any catch via logbooks and their effort remains a guess at best. Industry pays for access to the resource and for the right to sell to the public.

The following table provides a simple comparison between sectors regarding the differences in fisheries management applied by the State Government.

Regulation	Recreational Fishing	Commercial Fishing
Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS)	x	✓
Logbooks	x	✓
Licence fees (Fisheries Queensland Fees, Safe Food Production Queensland)	x	✓

The number of recreational fishers is growing at an alarming rate with no strict cap on effort as part of the so-called fisheries reform process. The amount of pressure on the fisheries resource and the environment coming from this State's recreational sector is unknown. If you believe we have 943,000 individuals who self-identify as recreational fishers why have their impacts escaped the attention of our fisheries management?

Again, for your consideration, Attachment 3 notes the following, '*We're sickened by the ancient anti-reform commercial lobby*'. My Association has engaged with the so-called fisheries reform process and brought to the attention of industry and community as follows:

- A poorly structured consultation process;
- No regulatory impact statement;
- No modelling of the financial implications of the so-called reforms on any element of the commercial fishing supply chain;
- An underlying consultation approach designed to divide industry and to create the pre-text for the introduction of zoning and quota management;
- The propagation of the lie that our fisheries are on the brink of collapse and only through reform can they be saved for our children and grandchildren;
- The introduction, without scientific research of a 60% biomass target that is ultra-conservative to appease conservation groups. It should be noted that international practice sets biomass set targets between 30-40% while our Commonwealth fisheries aiming for 20%;
- A process that at its core will exclude commercial fishers from accessing the resource by undermining their historical catch; and
- The creation of fisheries working groups that have restricted the dissemination of verbatim meeting minutes and instead industry is provided with vetted communiques. It seems these groups were never meant to challenge policy thinking but were created as a way to legitimise the so-called fisheries reform process. The Association estimates that across the Moreton Bay, Trawl, Crab and Inshore fishery working groups, commercial fishers have lost \$181,000 in income.

These issues have been raised with members, other industry groups and the community as a way to unpack poor and lazy policy making. We are being managed on **speculation, imagination and assumption**.

The Association has used social media and traditional media channels to shine a light on the political nature of fisheries reform in Queensland. Doing so has helped industry and the community to ask – ‘who is managing our fisheries and for who’s benefit?’

Finally, I pose the following questions that flow from the material covered in Attachments 1, 2 and 3, including:

- What, if any, promises regarding the fisheries reform process were developed between the State Government and recreational fishing groups?
- If there has been a ‘deal’ which groups were involved and what were the details?

If you have any questions regarding this correspondence please contact Eric Perez, QSIA CEO on M: 0417 631 353 or E: eo@qsia.com.au.

Regards,



Allan Bobberman

Chair
Queensland Seafood Industry Association

Cc:

1. Hon Mark Furner, Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries