

**MEDIA RELEASE
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FRESH LOCAL FISH? NOT THIS WEEK!

Seafood lovers in Central Queensland will find fresh local fish harder to get this week – and, sadly, that might be just a taste of things to come.

Several specialist seafood shops have taken favourite fish species off the menu to demonstrate the impact of proposed net-fishing bans to be introduced from November 1.

Industry spokesman Dave Swindells said the shops were taking part in a voluntary “fresh fish boycott”.

“The varieties that people won’t find in the windows this week are the region’s popular estuary fish, including barramundi, king threadfin, blue salmon, diamond-scale mullet and flake,” Mr Swindells said.

“These are the fish that local commercial fishermen will no longer be able to catch in a 1,500-square-kilometre area taking in the entire Fitzroy River and delta, Port Alma and Corio Bay and out to sea past the Keppel Islands.

“Seafood consumers receive more than 250 tonnes of fish from the area every year and this will all be lost to the public if the net-fishing bans engineered by recreational fishing lobbyists are imposed.

“As well as that, dozens of breadwinners will lose their jobs, including more than 50 professional fishermen, both licence-owners and deckhands, and other workers in related businesses like fish shops, ice suppliers and transport.

“At a time when the Central Queensland economy is in trouble and jobs are so hard to find, it is a callous act from a handful of skilled recreational anglers to have lobbied for these fishing bans.

“If the bans go ahead, they will cut off a big percentage of the fresh local fish for the general public and put families on the dole queue, unnecessarily.

“This is just in the Rockhampton area. There will also be impacts from the two other planned net-fishing bans in the Mackay and Cairns regions.”

Mr Swindells, a board member of the Queensland Seafood Industry Association, said specialist seafood shops in Rockhampton, Rosslyn Bay, Mackay and Bundaberg were taking part in the “boycott”.

“This withdrawal of fish from sale will run through till Sunday. Unfortunately, many people don’t realise what they will be losing if the net bans are imposed on the three regions and this is just a way of demonstrating the impact.

“It’s only a voluntary withdrawal of fish for now but it will be the sad reality unless the State Government sees sense.”

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Further Information:

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