



# Position Statement #1

## Review of so-called fisheries reform

### 1. Introduction

The so-called Queensland fisheries reform process has led to extreme industry anxiety, undermining of industry confidence and a political not science-based rationale for change.

**The Association is seeking a halt and review of the so-called Queensland fisheries reform process including:**

- **A review of quota management arrangements;**
- **A review of zoning and**
- **Modelling of the impacts of the reform on the catch to consumer seafood supply chain.**

### 2. Rationale

#### 2.1. A review of quota management arrangements

Quota management has never had industry support based on its capacity to limit catch at a time when Queensland commercial fisheries are sustainable. This management approach has been forced on industry as the direct result of tokenistic consultation processes and distinct, anti-industry stance from recreational and conservation groups<sup>1</sup>.

#### 2.2. A review of zoning

The majority of inshore and trawl fishers are not in favour of dividing the Queensland coastline into zones. The zones will limit the flexibility that exists under current fisheries management arrangements<sup>2</sup>.

#### 2.3. Modelling of reform impacts

Industry and the Queensland community have been denied an opportunity to understand the impacts of the so-called reform process. With no regulatory impact statement (RIS) undertaken by the State Government it is unclear what the impacts are on commercial fishers, post-harvest businesses (retailers, wholesalers and processors) or the supply and price impacts of the process<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Respondents to the Association's submission to the State Government's discussion papers did not support the introduction of quota in either the crab or net fisheries ([QSIA Submission](#), 3 June 2018).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid ([QSIA Submission](#), 3 June 2018).

<sup>3</sup> To date the State Government has not undertaken a RIS as part of the so-called fisheries reform process.

### **3. Conclusion**

#### **3.1. Course of Action**

A suspension of the review of the so-called reform process.

#### **3.2. Solution**

The review of the reform process should involve a review of the quota allocation process and / or seeking alternatives to quota management. A review of the introduction of zoning as part of the process. Finally, the use of a comprehensive RIS focusing on the impacts (economic, social and environmental) of the reform on the wild harvest, post-harvest sectors and seafood consumers.

### **4. Authorisation**

The Queensland Seafood Industry Association (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.

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## **Position Statement #2**

### **Renewal of senior staff in Fisheries Queensland**

#### **1. Introduction**

A key issue facing commercial fishers in Queensland has been the seeming inability to influence the thinking of senior Fisheries Queensland officers.

**The Association is seeking a complete renewal of senior staff within Fisheries Queensland.**

#### **2. Rationale**

Industry has identified poor consultation processes<sup>4</sup> and an ongoing distrust of the senior staff within Fisheries Queensland that are simply executing political policy making rather than 'politics' free fisheries management<sup>5</sup>.

#### **3. Conclusion**

##### **3.1. Course of Action**

A change in senior management within Fisheries Queensland.

##### **3.2. Solution**

A change of government may provide an opportunity to renew senior management within Fisheries Queensland.

#### **4. Authorisation**

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<sup>4</sup> Correspondence sent to Minister Furner 7 February 2018 noted issues relating to vessel monitoring systems – 'The current industry feeling is of less 'consultation' and more 'you have no choice but to accept VMS'. Commercial fishers have been advised that current departmental processes will ensure VMS data is private' ([QSIA Submission](#), 3 June 2018).

<sup>5</sup> A comment from a commercial crab fisher to the Association' submission to its views on the quota allocation process, 'If the decision was really about sustainability then the working groups and the thoughts and ideas from the commercial fishermen really would have been listened to. Unfortunately, all decisions were made long before any consultation process happened' ([QSIA Submission](#), 3 May 2019).

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## **Position Statement #3**

### **Removal of fake green groups from State Government fisheries working groups**

#### **1. Introduction**

Fisheries management in Queensland is impacted by the advocacy of fake green conservation groups. These groups tend to have a 'seat at the table' to the detriment of the commercial seafood industry in Queensland.

**The Association is seeking the removal of WWF Australia and the Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) from State Government fisheries working groups.**

#### **2. Rationale**

The State Government continues to allow fake green groups a table on fisheries working / advisory groups. Instead of inviting representatives from the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy, their role is taken on by special interest groups. To date there is no rationale for this being the case.

This situation has been allowed to develop for the following reasons:

- A far left/green State Government that would never exclude these groups;
- The public are largely unaware that their resource and the policy debates that ensure its longevity are influenced by special interests that are unelected and do not represent the majority of Queenslanders.

WWF Australia and AMCS are not elected groups, do not generate critical regional employment opportunities or generate regional / coastal economic activity<sup>6</sup>.

#### **3. Conclusion**

##### **3.1. Course of Action**

Seek a commitment from opposition parties in the Queensland Parliament and a potential new State Government to remove these anti-commercial fishing organisations from holding positions on State Government commercial fishing advisory groups.

##### **3.2. Solution**

The removal of fake-green conservation groups from influencing the development of food production policy within State Government fishery advisory groups.

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<sup>6</sup> Negative views held by WWF Australia and the AMCS can be sourced here: [eNGO views of the Commercial Seafood Industry](#)

#### **4. Authorisation**

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## Position Statement #4 An end to Net Free Zones

### 1. Introduction

The net free zones (NFZs) is a policy that was never developed on sustainability or scientific grounds but was a political sweetener from government to recreational fishing groups in Queensland under the perception of anti-commercial fishing actions is a top priority for voters. The policy needs to end to reinstatement hundreds of tonnes of fresh local fish for the domestic, interstate and international markets.

**The Association is seeking the Removal of Net Free Zones (NFZs) as government policy.**

### 2. Rationale

Resource access has also been curtailed through the existence of the NFZs. The policy was initially introduced not as reform but pure resource reallocation to a non-food production sector based on political motives.

The policy has not been abolished but to some degree limited by the introduction of a resource reallocation policy by the Queensland Government. To date the policy remains untested or at least there has been no public announcement by the Queensland Government that a group is seeking to remove even more commercial fishing access using the policy. While the use of petitions and social media polls remains, a tool recognised by government, the policy remains dormant and easily activated.

The NFZs in Cairns, Rockhampton and Mackay<sup>7</sup>:

- 224.3 tonnes / year of fresh local fish has been removed from public consumption.
- Thanks to anti-commercial fishing State ALP government over the 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 financial years the NFZs have denied Queenslanders and visitors (national and international) a total of 897.2 tonnes of fresh local fish as a direct result of the zones.
- In terms of 150g serves of fish what has been lost? Some 897,200 \* 150g serves / year of fresh local fish has gone unharvested over the 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 financial years thanks to NFZs.
- Altogether there has been a staggering loss of almost 3.6 million \* 150g serves of fresh local fish between 2014-15 and 2017-18.

Recent calls from The Boyne Tannum Hookup, a recreational fishing group has led to another consideration for industry, the introduction of recreational only fishing areas (ROFAs). The

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<sup>7</sup> The data used to determine loss of fish in the NFZs is based on QFish, a public commercial fisheries catch database, see: [What has the public lost thanks to the NFZs?](#)

NFZs are a direct threat to commercial fishing and are contrary to enhancing or growing commercial fisheries and production of associated food opportunities industry in Queensland.

### **3. Conclusion**

#### **3.1. Course of Action**

Seek a commitment from all parties in the Queensland Parliament to oppose the NFZs policy and to eliminate it as a fisheries management tool.

#### **3.2. Solution**

Removal of the NFZs policy in Queensland.

### **4. Authorisation**

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## Position Statement #5 Recognition of Commercial Fishing

### I. Introduction

Queensland commercial are valuable to the State economy and rarely recognised by the State Government as an important regional and coastal job creator. Typically, the value of Queensland commercial fishers is typically reported as gross value of production (GVP)<sup>8</sup>.

**The Association seeks recognition of industry as a key food producer.**

### 2. Rationale

In an industry first, the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) have developed a breakdown of the economic value of commercial fisheries are outlined below.

Table 1. Queensland Economic Value Statistics – State Managed Fisheries

	<b>GVA<sup>9</sup> (m\$)</b>	<b>Employment<sup>10</sup> (FTE jobs)</b>	<b>Household<sup>11</sup> Income (m\$)</b>	<b>GVP<sup>12</sup> (m\$)</b>
<b>Direct</b>				
Fishing	100	1,082	42	189
Processing	7	70	4	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>1,152</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>204</b>
<b>Indirect (all other sectors)</b>				
Production Induced	44	411	33	-
Consumption Induced	58	443	31	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>854</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>204</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>2,007</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>204</b>

Source: Australian fisheries and aquaculture industry 2017/18: Economic contributions estimates report, FRDC 30 September 2019.

<sup>8</sup> The GVP is calculated by multiplying the weight of production by the landed unit value. The landed unit value is defined as the beach price for fish species caught in wild-catch fisheries and the farmgate price for fishery and aquaculture products produced in aquaculture establishments.

<sup>9</sup> Gross value added (GVA) – GVA is calculated by subtracting non-wage business expenditure (EXP) such as fuel, trade services, professional services and transport services including taxes less subsidies (TLS and EXP) from GVP.

<sup>10</sup> Full time equivalent (FTE) – The ratio of the total number of paid hours during a period (part time, full time, contracted) by the number of working hours in that period Mondays through Fridays.

<sup>11</sup> Household income is a measure of wages and salaries paid in cash and in kind, drawings by owner operators and other payments to labour including overtime payments, employer's superannuation contributions and income tax, but excluding payroll tax. This indicator provides a measure of the wages and salaries associated with the employment contribution of fishing and processing.

<sup>12</sup> Gross Value of Production (GVP) – GVP is calculated by multiplying the weight of production by the landed unit value. The landed unit value is defined as the beach price for fish species caught in wild-catch fisheries and the farmgate price for fishery and aquaculture products produced in aquaculture establishments.

Table 2. Queensland Economic Value Statistics – Commonwealth Managed Fisheries

	<b>GVA (m\$)</b>	<b>Employment (FTE jobs)</b>	<b>Household Income (m\$)</b>	<b>GVP (m\$)</b>
<b>Direct</b>				
Fishing	74	380	27	135
Processing	5	50	3	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>146</b>
<b>Indirect (all other sectors)</b>				
Production Induced	32	297	24	-
Consumption Induced	40	303	21	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>146</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>1,030</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>146</b>
<b>State &amp; Cmlth Grand Total</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>3,037</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>350</b>

Source: Australian fisheries and aquaculture industry 2017/18: Economic contributions estimates report, FRDC 30 September 2019.

### 3. Conclusion

#### 3.1. Course of Action

Seek a commitment from all parties in the Queensland Parliament to promote not only the value of commercial fisheries but their critical role in the provision of food and its links with the tourism sectors.

#### 3.2. Solution

Shift away from GVP measures of value alone to economic contribution indicators noted in Tables 1 and 2. A new narrative regarding the role in food production played by Queensland commercial fisheries.

### 4. Authorisation

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## Position Statement #6 Resource Access

### 1. Introduction

Queensland fisheries are unique insofar as commercial fishers are forced to compete with recreational anglers for access to a public resource.

**The Association is seeking new thinking and policy approaches to resource access.**

### 2. Rationale

The Association supports the views of the national peak body, Seafood Industry Australia (SIA) regarding resource access security. SIA has formed a Resource Security Task Force with a key aim<sup>13</sup>, 'to develop a commercial fishing access rights system that delivers strong, secure, transferable, long term access rights to be enshrined in and protected by Commonwealth and State/Territory fisheries legislation, and recognised and accepted as 'collateral' by financial institutions'.

Without improved surety of access, the Queensland seafood industry will struggle to attract investment and limit the willingness of existing industry operators to invest in their own businesses.

This statement is linked to Position Statement #4 and requires the abandonment of policies that allow recreational fishers to undermine the access of Queensland commercial fishers.

### 3. Conclusion

#### 3.1. Course of Action

Government and commercial fishers work to design a system that maintains commercial fishing access rights.

#### 3.2. Solution

Development of a new access policy approach from government regarding access that prioritises food production over leisure activities.

### 4. Authorisation

The Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA) is the peak industry body representing the Queensland seafood industry. Our members include professional fishers, seafood

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<sup>13</sup> SIA Resource Security Taskforce.

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.

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## Position Statement #7 Mental Health

### 1. Introduction

A recent report released by the Productivity Commission notes that approximately one in five Australians experiences mental ill-health and that the cost to the national economy of mental ill-health and suicide falls somewhere between \$43 to \$51 billion per year<sup>14</sup>.

**The Association seeks better mental health outcomes through strategic fisheries policy development.**

### 2. Rationale

Two key reports, one taking a national perspective and the other, a Queensland perspective provide a view of mental health in this industry.

#### 2.1. King et al (2019)

The report explored the mental health and stress levels of Australian commercial fishers led by Dr Tanya King of Deakin University and her colleagues.

The report noted the following physical and mental health findings<sup>15</sup>:

- 60% of fishers who responded to the survey had moderate to very severe bodily pain. This is higher than reported by the ABS on the general population at 46.5%.
- Over half of the respondents said pain had interfered with their normal activities.
- The most common health symptoms experienced by the fishers surveyed included back pain, joint pain, fatigue, stress, trouble sleeping, sunburn, infections, and hearing problems. Over 30% of surveyed fishers experienced these health symptoms.
- Surveyed fishers reported being diagnosed with a number of conditions at a higher rate than the general population, particularly high blood pressure, high cholesterol, depression, type 2 diabetes and cancer.
- Commercial fishers who responded to the survey experience significantly higher levels of 'high' and 'very high' psychological distress than the Australian population as a whole. High or very high levels of psychological distress were experienced by 16.0% and 6.2% of fisher respondents respectively, compared to 8.0% (high) and 3.7% (very high) of Australians aged 18 years and over.

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<sup>14</sup> Productivity Commission, Mental Health, Draft Report (2019, p. 2). Approximately \$130 billion is associated with the costs of diminished health and reduced life expectancy for those living with mental ill-health.

<sup>15</sup> King T, Abernethy K, Brumby S, Hatherell T, Kilpatrick S, Munksgaard, K & Turner R. 2018. Sustainable Fishing Families: Developing industry human capital through health, wellbeing, safety and resilience. Report to the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation Project No. 2016/400. Deakin University, Western District Health Service, University of Tasmania and University of Exeter. Canberra, October. CC BY 3.0, pp. 2-3.

## **2.2. Shaw et al (2011)**

Commercial fishers are seemingly under continuous pressure. Shaw and her colleagues noted<sup>16</sup>:

- Fishers and families are feeling the strain from the many changes to which they have worked to adapt.
- This is clearly shown in this response from one of the wives concerned about her husband's health, the family's financial position, and criticism from the community, 'Fishers are not recognised as doing a valuable job, as though they are providing for the community. Their job and position and person are devalued'.

## **3. Conclusion**

### **3.1. Course of Action**

Significantly more work is needed to improve mental health outcomes for commercial fishers.

### **3.2. Solution**

Cooperation between government and industry to develop targeted mental health interventions that focus on commercial fishers.

## **4. Authorisation**

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<sup>16</sup> Shaw S, Johnson H & Dressler W, 2011. Identifying, Communicating and Integrating Social Considerations into Future Management Concerns in Inshore Commercial Fisheries in Coastal Queensland. Report to the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation Project No 2008/073. Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, Canberra, and the Queensland Seafood Industry Association, Clayfield, Queensland, pp. 79-80.



## Position Statement #8 State Marine Parks

### 1. Introduction

The Marine Park system has led to significant loss of commercial fishing access but is an essential activity in marine parks under a multi-use ethos that has characterised these parks like the Great Sandy Marine Park (GSMP)<sup>17</sup>.

**The Association seeks the maintenance of a multi-use philosophy across all State Marine Parks. Moreover, existing commercial fishing activity which has provided social and economic benefits across Queensland are recognised as legitimate and welcome as essential as any other use of the marine park system.**

### 2. Rationale

The Queensland Seafood industry Association's (QSIA) position on the zoning plan review<sup>18</sup>:

1. That the GSMP zoning review maintains a multi-use ethos without undermining existing commercial fishing activity which has provide social and economic benefits across the region.
2. That the best available, peer reviewed science is used to help determine zoning that maintains and does not limit commercial fishing activity in the marine park typical of a resource reallocation policy which is outside the jurisdiction of the review.
3. That no commercial fishing businesses are sacrificed in the event of "trade-offs" of closing one area in favour of another.
4. If any areas are to be extended for green zones then discussions are held between government and industry on new zones that would have minimal impact on commercial fishing operations
5. That decisions relate to actual environmental threats rather than personal agenda pursued for many years by those seeking to exclude others from the very fishing grounds they insist on being able to continue to fish.
6. Acknowledgement is required that the numbers of commercial fishers has been greatly reduced over the past twenty years and that the commercial sector's catch data is already captured in close to 'real time' and fishers' movements in the GSMP are monitored through the VMS system whereas the same does not apply to any other sector using the marine park. The recreational sector has no enforceable requirements to provide catch data, no effort caps apart from very generous bag limits and no tracking mechanism to facilitate checks for compliance to zoning, size and bag limits and no restrictions on the numbers of participants or the extent of fishing effort in even straight yellow conservation zones.

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<sup>17</sup> It is clear that there are many elements of the existing Marine Park system that are detrimental to the operation of commercial fishing that with adjustments could achieve both ecological and commercial fishing outcomes.

<sup>18</sup> QSIA submission to GSMP Zoning Review, 25 February 2019, pp. 6-7.

7. Zoning decisions need to be made on a scientific, risk-based approach and not on the whim of recreational or conservation groups. It is unjustifiable, given the social and economic importance of the seafood industry, to zone commercial fishing activities out of existence in a multi-use marine park.

The issues outlined by the Association are applicable to any Marine Park in Queensland.

The Association supports the Hervey Bay Seafood Incorporated submission which noted<sup>19</sup>, 'To have a security of tenure as a legitimate stakeholder in the GSMP established in a way that it gives clarity and removes any uncertainty that the GSMP zoning plan's intent is to recognise commercial fishing as a legal and welcome stakeholder in the zones where sustainable commercial fishing operations are now currently operating'.

### **3. Conclusion**

#### **3.1. Course of Action**

Continued cooperation between industry and conservation management to ensure ecological, social and economic considerations are balanced in a multi-use State Marine Park system.

#### **3.2. Solution**

Commercial fishing is a recognised and welcome part of the State Marine Park system.

### **4. Authorisation**

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<sup>19</sup> Hervey Bay Seafood Incorporated submission to GSMP Zoning Review, 25 February 2019, p. 6.





## **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 evidence<sup>20</sup>.

##### **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 tonnes<sup>21</sup>.

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.

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<sup>20</sup> Fisheries Queensland has no idea about the stock status of Black Jewfish and the TACC was driven by no scientific research.

<sup>21</sup> 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 proposal<sup>22</sup>, '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**

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<sup>22</sup> Green paper on fisheries management reform in Queensland, July 2016, p. 12.