

**MEDIA RELEASE
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BATTLE FOR BETTER FISHERIES MANAGEMENT TO CONTINUE

DISAPPOINTMENT, anger and deep concerns are held by Queensland commercial fishers today as a result of the next steps in the so-called fisheries reform process. Today's announcement by the Queensland Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, Mark Furner reflects poor fisheries management and will continue to be opposed by the Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA). 'The Ministers announcement has been long in the making and demonstrates a lack of regard in which commercial fishers are held by the State Government' said Eric Perez, Chief Executive Officer QSIA.

'It is clear that today's announcement brings together the worst elements of fisheries management – an anti-industry and biased State Government, policy making that will fundamentally undermine commercial fishing businesses and a fisheries management agency, Fisheries Queensland, that have been part of a sham fisheries management reform process'.

The Minister or State Government should not try to blame the WTO issue we have faced on the Commonwealth. The Federal Government asked for a management plan - but it did not have to be the plan being championed by the Minister. The draconian controls that most of industry have completely opposed since they were made public at the start of the so-called reform process are entirely the work of the State Government.

'The State Government and Minister in particular was sent a letter from the Federal Government in 2018 advising them what was expected under their WTO obligations' said Mr Perez.

'Using COVID-19 is a reprehensible way to cover what was non-compliance to the WTO – which the State Government had 3 years to comply with and could have done so if they had engaged with Queensland commercial fishers in good faith'.

Why did the State Government wait for almost 3 years to implement its WTO obligations?

Why wait to the 11th hour to push through what have been so-called reforms?

'Do not believe the hype – our fisheries are in great condition; our commercial fishers are family run small businesses operating along the coast and regional Queensland and do a professional job in the supply of fresh local seafood to the community'.

'The so-called reform process has been based on political ideology and a keen eye toward the recreational fishing vote and the process in a word has been a sham perpetrated on my industry and the millions of Queenslanders who can't, don't or won't go recreationally fishing to catch their own seafood'.

'This Association will continue to work on getting a fair and equitable outcome for commercial fishing industry under this so-called shame of a reform process. All we have ever asked for and expected is a fair go, to date this has not happened' said Mr Perez.

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Further Information:

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