

Queensland SEAFOOD

2023 NUMBER 4



- QSIA AGM IN TOWNSVILLE
- MORE NET BAN DETAILS
- GULF IN THE CROSSHAIRS
- GOVT PROMISES TO UNESCO

Workhorses at Sea

TMQ's Commercial Autopilots



Our products work as hard as you do

Call us for your marine electronic requirements

Pictured: AP4 and AP9 Autopilots



Conveniently located at Rivergate Refit Complex

Rivergate Place, Murarrie, QLD, 4172 | Call us: 07 3640 5600

Email: tmq@tmq.com.au | Web: www.tmq.com.au



PRESIDENT ON THE LINE 4
FROM THE CEO 5
QSIA AGM BRINGS MEMBERS TO TOWNSVILLE 6
FURNER STATEMENT ON NET BANS..... 8
DETAILS ON NET BANS IN G.B.R., G.S.S. AND G.O.C. 10
KATTERS: PREMIER WIPING OUT NQ INDUSTRIES 13
PLIBERSEK LETTER REVEALS PROMISES TO UNESCO 14
GOVT DISCUSSION PAPER ON GULF NET BANS 18
CAPE YORK FISHERIES ADVISORY GROUP 19
QUALITY RESTAURANTS IMPACTED BY NET BANS 20
PETITION SHOWS SUPPORT FOR NET FISHING 22
FEDERAL FISHERIES MINISTER "HIT NEW LOW" 23
MINISTER GRILLED IN SENATE ESTIMATES HEARING 24
"NET BANS WILL HARM NQ": SUSAN MCDONALD 26
FISHERIES ACT TO BE AMENDED FOR CATCH CAMERAS 27
THE GULL 30



QSIA AGM in Townsville. (Page 6.)



Plibersek promises to UNESCO. (Page 14.)



Ban plans for the Gulf. (Page 18.)



Tourist restaurants worried. (Page 20.)

In this edition ...

AT this time of year, with Christmas just weeks away, we would like to bring good news for our members but, as the President and CEO say in their columns this month, the industry has been going through tough times and there have been a lot of sleepless nights.

One piece of good news is the QSIA AGM in Townsville in November, well attended by members from throughout the State. See page 6 for more details.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government has released more details about its net ban plans for the Great Sandy region, the GBR coast and the Gulf of Carpentaria. A joint statement released by the Fisheries and Environment Ministers is published on pages 8-9 and details of the plans on pages 10-12.

Meanwhile, Katter's Australia Party MPs have used question time in State Parliament to attack the role of the Queensland Government in shutting down fishing operations and threatening other primary industries in North Queensland to appease UNESCO. (See page 13.)

Correspondence from Federal Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek to

UNESCO in May – recently made public – has revealed the promises made by the Federal Government to UNESCO for further controls on primary industries in the GBR watershed and waters. (Turn to page 14.)

Proposals for extensive net-fishing bans in the Gulf of Carpentaria have been detailed in a discussion paper released for public comment by the State Government. (See page 18.)

The State Government has also set up a Cape York advisory body to work on new charter-fishing operations and other tourism ventures. (See page 19.)

Indicative of support for net-fishing in North Queensland, top-end restaurant-owners have complained to the State Government about the potential loss of wild-caught barramundi from their menus (page 20), and a petition in favour of continued gillnet fishing has attracted 10,000 signatures (page 22).

Amendments to the Queensland Fisheries Act have been proposed that include using independent onboard monitoring (IOM) in two forms: onboard observers and catch cameras. (See page 27.)

Front cover: It's almost Christmas, once again wild-caught prawns and other seafood will be at the top of the list for many families' menus on the big day, and at ISP Fish Market in Cairns, Kazu Ando is helping keep the display stocked up to meet the rush.

Queensland Seafood is the official journal of the Queensland Seafood Industry Association Inc, the peak body representing the State's seafood industry.

Mailing Address:
PO Box 8411
Woolloongabba 4102

Mob: 0417 631 353
E-mail: eo@qsia.com.au
Website: www.qsia.com.au

Chief Executive Officer:
David Bobbermen
Tel: 0417 631 353
eo@qsia.com.au

Advertising:
E-mail: mobo2@live.com
Postal:
PO Box 8411
Woolloongabba 4102

PRESIDENT ON THE LINE

A lot has happened to our industry, not much of it good

HELLO everyone. A lot has happened since my last report for this magazine and, unfortunately, things do not look too flash for our industry in almost all sectors.

QSIA held its annual general meeting and a workshop in Townsville recently. The previous Board of Directors was returned, with the exception of Kevin Reibel retiring, and the addition of three new, younger members.

I would like to thank Kevin for his contribution to the Board over the many years he has acted in the treasurer's position.

The workshop and meeting were well attended. There were delegates from both levels of government, with presentations given and a question time where delegates from Fisheries Queensland attempted to answer questions without commitment.

I was invited and attended the AGM for the Gulf of Carpentaria Commercial Fishermens Association.

The Gulf of Carpentaria has started the journey of harvest strategies, which has mirrored the botched east coast model, plus a few extra gems thrown in. Net Free Zones. Questionable stock assessments. Quota.

An observation I came away from that meeting was Fisheries Queensland concerns of cashed-up east coast fishers entering the fishery in the Gulf.!!!

After what has transpired on the east coast with the net and Spanish mackerel fishery, I find it highly unlikely that any business-minded fisher would place themselves in a position to watch another harvest strategy suitcase being unpacked, which has ended in tears here on the east coast.

The State Government has finally

released the structural adjustment package for the net fishery.

To me, it appears to be held together with sticky tape with a lot of the questionable content referencing the BDO report, which appears to have more holes than a block of Swiss cheese.

There seems to be a general consensus amongst fishers that have phoned me that there are going to be a lot of stranded assets left which will not be compensated. You will be hearing more on this from our CEO in the coming weeks.

What QSIA is doing

QSIA has been attending meetings with government trying to get clarity on all fisheries to gain confidence with your business model.

The trawl sub-committee has held several meetings and have established a communication line with fishery managers.

QSIA is endeavouring to set a up a similar model with a crab sub-committee. Some members have registered interest in being part of this.

QSIA is seeking legal, financial and taxation advice for our members with this structural adjustment package.

Conclusion

The spin doctors are peddling the nonsense story we need to protect the Great Barrier Reef to save our \$4.2 billion tourist industry. Let's go back to when our Premier was "keeping us all safe" during the COVID pandemic.

At that time, the tourist industry was on life support, cheap imports were held up, and the fishing industry was granted exemptions and regarded as an essential service supplying food to the public. Fast forward to 2023 and we find ourselves being kicked to the kerb?!

With the festive season just a few weeks away as I write this, I hope you can enjoy this time with your family and friends, and make the most out of a bad situation a large percentage of us have been forced into.

For those who are still able to fish, all the best.

Merry Christmas,

Allan

Allan Bobbermen
President

FROM THE CEO

Unprecedented changes and sleepless nights for our industry

Dear Members

I HAVE no doubt that most of the industry is having many sleepless nights at the moment. The pace and breadth of reform that the Queensland professional fishing industry is currently confronting is possibly without precedent. There is no sign of this change slowing down at any time in the future.

We await with mixed emotion the legislation necessary to empower the Queensland Rural & Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) to begin negotiations with fishermen over the Great Barrier Reef and Great Sandy Straight Marine Parks respective changes.

I am sure there are going to be lots of devils in the detail. It will also be with great interest we observe how closely any submissions made to the department by industry in relation to the proposed net-free zones in the Gulf of Carpentaria are considered, given the significant impacts these are likely to have in this fishery.

We also wait with great anticipation the draft review of the Moreton Bay Marine Park zoning plan, which was expected to be completed by the end of 2023.

Gill-netting in all Queensland waters is under attack and possibly does not have a future beyond the end of this decade. Millions of dollars are being allocated to find alternative fishing methods that can replace gill nets and commercially provide seafood to the consumer.

There is no guarantee that this research and development will uncover such a fishing method. This uncertainty is something that we will just have to navigate in the foreseeable future. I believe that there will be significant opportunities for fishers to participate in this R&D, with some discussions starting this year. June 2027 is not that far away, so there is no time to waste.

Before the Queensland Parliament is a Bill introducing amendments to the Queensland Fisheries Act 1994 to allow cameras on board fishing vessels.

The explanatory documents attached to the proposed bill are somewhat

distressing, particularly around the amount of power it delegates to the Chief Executive when interactions with threatening dangerous species occur. We must ensure that a submission is made to the committee reviewing this bill outlining our concerns and protecting our rights.

As mentioned, these amendments to the Fisheries Act are necessary to allow the installation of cameras on board commercial fishing vessels. Initially, "high risk" fisheries will be actioned, namely gill-netting vessels and the east coast otter trawl industry.

Trawl operators have been negotiating with the department now for coming up to a year on how best to protect data captured by cameras, while striving to maintain their WTO approval.

Recently, yet another version of a field trial agreement has been published by the department, which appears to address many of industry's concerns. We can only hope that the camera trial on board trawlers can progress and ensure the WTO approvals are renewed in late 2024.

How mandating of cameras on board inshore gill net vessels using the new NX authority will work is very unclear. We just must wait and see what the department has in mind.

I understand that they are under-prepared for this reform. We note the undertaking to UNESCO of mandating independent data validation on board these vessels post the 1st January 2024.

At the time of writing this column, the post-implementation review (PIR) for vessel tracking has only just been released and I have not had the opportunity to review it.

I am told that one of the small victories in the PIR is around how fishers may be able to continue to fish when their vessel tracking unit is malfunctioning - more on this perhaps in the next edition of the magazine.

There are several trawl operators on the east coast who wish to follow the Murphy's success story of obtaining Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification and are exploring a Fisheries Improvement Programme in

New Board

FOLLOWING elections at the annual general meeting in Townsville in November, the QSIA Board of Directors for 2023-24 comprises (in alphabetical order):

- ☐ Allan Bobbermen – President
- ☐ David Caracciolo
- ☐ Darcy Fazio
- ☐ Neil Mogenson
- ☐ Brad Perkins
- ☐ Tony Reisenwebber
- ☐ Shane Snow
- ☐ Dale Vener.

Turn to pages 6-7 for a report on the AGM.

the hope that this will shore up access rights to traditional fishing grounds in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and beyond.

This will be a long and challenging process but, if successful, will open significant new markets for the east coast trawl industry, including the 2032 Olympics and export opportunities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support over the past 12 months.

I know it has been a particularly difficult year for the industry, whether it be the reforms, bad weather, fuel prices, product prices or crewing, and I am sure other causes.

Hopefully, 2024 will bring a fresh slate and new opportunities. But, without all of your individual contributions, I am sure (as hard as it is to believe) we would be in an even worse position.

Finally, I just want to make special mention to the continued and unwavering support of this industry from the editor of this magazine Mr. Martin Bowerman. Many of you know Martin has been involved with QSIA for many decades. He does an extraordinary amount of behind the scenes work for us. He is a wealth of knowledge and always a source of wisdom. On behalf of the industry, thank you Martin.

Until next time.

David Bobbermen
CEO

LAW essentials

FISHERIES STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT SCHEME

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Great Sandy Marine Park

- Do NOT take your first offer from the government.
- There are ways to increase your ex gratia payment.
- Do you have special circumstances that should be considered?
- Get the most for the acquisition of nets or boat refits once announced.
- MAXIMISE YOUR CLAIM

WHY USE ME?

1. I know how the fishing industry works.
2. I understand that simply looking at logbook data does NOT tell the real story.
3. I understand how to demonstrate the size of a loss in a fishing business.
4. I'm accessible and approachable (in person, phone or email).
5. COST - I will only charge up to the amount offered by the government.
6. I have over 20 years of experience helping the QLD fishing industry - eg:
 - 2000 - Trawl Plan
 - 2004 - GBRMP RAP
 - 2006 - Fishing Future Package
 - 2008 - Latent Effort Symbol Removal
 - 2008 - Moreton Bay Buyback
 - 2009 - Moreton Island Oil/Container Spill
 - 2012 - CWTH Adjustment Assistance
 - 2015 - Net Free Zones Compensation
 - Current - Gladstone Dredging Class Action
 - Current - White Spot Disease Class Action

GET ADVICE from someone who understands the fishing industry and has proven experience. You only have one crack at it, so **MAKE IT COUNT!**

Contact **Chris Thompson** on (p) 4197 5600 | (m) 0409 517 587
79 Torquay Road, Hervey Bay Q 4655, PO Box 3358, Hervey Bay Q 4655
chris@lawessentials.net.au | www.lawessentials.net.au

www.lawessentials.net.au

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

QSIA AGM brings industry to Townsville

A good rollup of QSIA members from throughout the State have attended the organisation's annual general meeting in Townsville on November 13.

IN his annual report to the AGM, President Allan Bobbermen said the 2022-23 financial year had been dominated by the ongoing implementation of the fisheries reform process, with the QSIA working to advocate for its members interests at this critical time.

In November 2022, former Executive Officer Eric Perez resigned from the Association after many years of service, and Allan thanked Eric for his contribution.

"The EO role was filled by my brother, David Bobbermen. At the time of writing this report, David has just completed a year in the role. With the change of Executive Officer (EO), a fresh approach was taken with heavy emphasis on building relationships with Government and other industry stakeholders," Allan said.

"Our audited financial statements show the continued decline in the financial position of the Association, a trend that has been occurring over many years. The year to June 2023 was impacted by the need to ramp up the EO's efforts – particularly around the East Coast Spanish Mackerel Stock Assessment and the East Coast Inshore Net Fishery reforms.

"Our EO's background in accounting is being well used to reverse this trend of decline. Revenue for the current 2023-24 financial year already significantly exceeds that of the whole 2022-23 financial year. It is projected that, at the end of the current financial year, the Association's financial position will have improved."

Support, membership

Discussing support and membership, Allan said that, to build the revenue base of the Association, corporate sponsors have been approached, gold and silver supporters had come on board, and negotiations are ongoing with other businesses.

"A number of members have also supported our causes during the year, particularly the Independent Review of the East Coast Spanish Mackerel Stock Assessment and the "Save commercial fishing" campaign," Allan said.

"I thank all who have contributed, whether it be in cash or their time. Without this support, QSIA would not be able to do as much as it does.

"QSIA has experienced significant membership growth in the past year across all sections of the industry."

Achievements

Discussing the QSIA's achievements for the year, Allan began with the independent review of the 2021 East Coast Spanish Mackerel Stock Assessment (ECSMSA).

"This was conducted by Dr Simon Hoyle and Dr Alistair Dunn, and concluded that the 2021 ECSMSA had serious flaws and should not be used for management purposes.

"Unfortunately, QDAF continued with its implementation of dramatic cuts to the TACC for 2023-24. QDAF acknowledge that they have taken on board Dr Hoyle's criticisms and will consider these in future stock assessments for all species. It is worthy to note that many of the criticisms apply to most QDAF Stock Assessments.

"While not the outcome industry hoped for, it has helped shape the conversation moving forward."

Allan said QSIA also made multiple submissions to the Senate Inquiry on Quota.

On the east coast net bans (N1, N2 and N4), QSIA wrote to the Future Fishing Taskforce outlining our understanding of the legal position of affected fishers, submitted to the Taskforce a proposal on the proposed new NX symbol rules, and continued to lobby the Taskforce on what commercial fishers deserve and expect.

In the trawl fishery, QSIA had re-established the Trawl Sub-Committee, which meets monthly to discuss trawl fishery related issues, and advocated strongly for the data model for cameras (based on the experiences of vessel tracking).

"After eight months of negotiations, a "Field Trial Agreement" has just been published," Allan said. "Given the

gillnet decisions, the trawl sector is feeling vulnerable. The WTO approval is due to be renewed late in 2024 and a significant amount of work needs to be done to ensure it is maintained. Preliminary work is being undertaken to carry out a pre-assessment for a Fisheries Improvement Plan."

On the crab fishery, Allan said calls for expressions of interest from members to create a crab sub-committee have been made, with its inaugural meeting yet to be held.

QSIA continues to lobby QDAF on the weakness of the mooted reforms in the east coast mud crab fishery.

QSIA engaged with government and stakeholders at all levels to support industry.

Allan also listed several meetings that had been held with Ministers and government departments, and other individuals and organisations, including numerous industry meetings at a local and national level.

Allan also said that QSIA represents members' interests through its membership of the Australian Council of Prawn Fisheries (ACPF), and recently Neil Mogensen has been appointed to the Board of ACPF to represent QSIA and its members.

"QSIA is represented in the Vessel Tracking Working Group. We are still waiting for the Post Implementation Review to be published – some 12 months after consultation closed."

Governance

Allan said that, consistent with section 8(3) of the Association's constitution, the Board has held meetings to conduct Association business. Three nominations for new directors had been received:

- Mr Neil Mogensen – Trawl
- Mr Brad Perkins – Net / Crab
- Mr Darcy Fazio – Net / Wholesale.

"Mr Kevin Reibel is not seeking re-election to the Board," Allan said. "After more than a decade of involvement with the QSIA Board, Kevin has decided to step down as Treasurer and not seek re-election to the Board. Kevin has been a valued member of the Board. On behalf of all members, thank-you Kevin for your years of service."

He said all other members of the Board had nominated for re-election, with Allan the only nomination for President.



The QSIA AGM in Townsville attracted members from throughout the State.

"It is encouraging to see that the Association will have the maximum eight directors allowed by the Constitution, representing a broad cross-section of the industry."

Allan also said the QSIA continued to take a collaborative approach on fisheries issues, working with other industry organisations, uses multiple communication channels, including traditional media, social media, Queensland Seafood magazine and monthly QSIA newsletters.

"Given the significant number of reforms that have and continue to occur, QSIA either directly or through its membership base have generated literally hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of media. It is really sad to say that this is as a result of some tough times."

Conclusion

"The Association continues our engagement with Fisheries Queensland, trying to make practical


changes to fisheries legislation and finding solutions that are workable for industry," Allan said.

"Unfortunately, industry is being either ignored or seen as having little value by governments. Regardless, QSIA continues to lobby all government departments for fair and justifiable outcomes for industry.



"In terms of the broad scale impacts of the reforms, zoning of the coast has led to increased stress and tension amongst all fisheries, but specifically commercial trawl and net fisheries. This outcome need not have been the case, as multiple commercial fishers on Fisheries Queensland working groups had flagged the impacts of the so-called 'reform' process on industry.

"Perhaps the State Government should look at the minutes of the past working group meetings and see what valuable and insightful advice from industry it has overlooked.

"The Association will continue to work on behalf of members and network with other industry bodies to achieve fisheries policy outcomes that do not undermine industry's right to sustainably harvest a clean renewable resource."




MARINE PROPULSION AND MARINE POWER GENERATION

PROPULSION	GENSETS
Isuzu Japan Factory Marinised Up to 730hp and 15.6 Litre	Isuzu Marinised by Zenith Up to 174hp bobtail or with transmission
	
6WG1TCX-730hp	4JG2-30 KVA

Available with heat exchange or keel cooling

16 Crombie Street, Milton Brisbane, QLD
P 07 3369 4599 F 07 3369 0459
E info@zenith.net.au www.zenith.net.au www.isuzumarine.com.au



FOR DIESEL ENGINES, RELIABILITY IS EVERYTHING ISUZU

F5-A/ISZ5844

NET BANS

Furner says net-ban measures “build sustainable future for fishing industry and protect Great Barrier Reef”

This is the joint statement issued on 16 November 2023 by Queensland Fisheries Minister Mark Furner and Environment Minister Leanne Linard.

COMMERCIAL fishers will receive generous financial assistance including buy backs, reskilling and financial advice following an announcement that gillnet fishing in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area will be phased out by mid-2027.

The assistance is part of a \$185 million joint Commonwealth and Queensland government package, which adopts all the recommendations made by the [Future Fishing Taskforce](#).

The phasing out of gillnets and transition to more [sustainable fishing practices](#) is a key measure to prevent the Great Barrier Reef from being listed as “in danger” by UNESCO.

The Great Barrier Reef is a globally important habitat for species such as dugong and sea turtle. Domestically, it contributes \$6.4 billion to the Queensland economy each year and supports about 64,000 jobs.

Of the \$185 million joint package, the Queensland Government has committed \$125 million to implement the phasing out of gillnets on the Great Barrier Reef, rezoning the Great Sandy Marine Park, and increasing protection from gillnet impacts in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

The remaining \$60 million from the Australian Government is for even more independent data validation and to further reduce bycatch in high-risk fisheries.

The gillnet fishery in the Great Barrier Reef provides 2.6 per cent of the east coast wild-caught seafood harvest.

Impacted commercial fishers will be contacted directly by Fisheries Queensland about the timeline and how the reform process applies to them.

Assistance for affected commercial fishers will include grants for licence-holders to seek independent advice, structural adjustment payments, buying back gillnets and support for employees and supply chain businesses.

The breakdown of the Palaszczuk Government’s \$125 million contribution is:

- Around \$90 million to financially adjust eligible fishers and supply-chain businesses, including licence packages, relevant symbols, relevant individual transferable quota (ITQ), nets and their disposal, boat refits, ex-gratia payments acknowledging loss of future income, and support for seeking independent advice;
- \$1.5 million for reskilling and retraining grants and support;
- \$2.25 million to support employees such as deckhands and skippers;
- \$15 million to develop a whole-of-government strategy to accelerate and adopt innovative best-practice sustainable aquaculture in Queensland;
- \$4.5 million with matching Australian Government funding from the Fisheries Research & Development Corporation to support an evidence-based approach to developing and trialling sustainable alternative commercial fishing gear;
- \$2.95 million for developing and growing sustainable regional jobs, tourism opportunities and supporting master fishers training and threatened species protection; and
- \$1.5 million for making hammerhead shark a no-take species for commercial fishers.

Transition to the new arrangements will commence from 31 December 2023. Fisheries Queensland will contact licence holders about arrangements to access structural readjustment payments and new fishery symbols with a Q&A that will assist commercial fishers in understanding their entitlements.

The Queensland Government acknowledges the difficulties the commercial fishing industry is facing and has partnered with [Stay Afloat](#) to provide confidential mental health support and advice to commercial fishers.



Fisheries Minister Mark Furner.

Furner quotes

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities Mark Furner.

“These are landmark investments that demonstrate the Palaszczuk Government’s commitment to a sustainable fishing industry supporting good jobs well into the future,” Mr Furner said.

“This package gives the certainty that our commercial fishing industry needs to plan and be able to ensure the ongoing supply of Queensland seafood that has built a global reputation.

“These investments will also support the ever-growing tourism and aquaculture industries that continue to play a key role in jobs growth in our regional communities.

“Aquaculture will never replace Queensland’s wild-caught commercial fishing industry, but it does have an ongoing role to play in complementing the State’s supplies of fresh seafood while growing hundreds more good jobs for Queenslanders.

“The wild-caught fishing industry will only exist if it is in a sustainable position.”

Linard quotes

Quotes attributable to Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for Multicultural Affairs Leanne Linard.

“The phasing out of gillnet fishing in the Great Barrier Reef and the rezoning of Great Sandy Marine Park are important reforms which will ensure these areas and the iconic species of the Great Barrier Reef are protected so they can be enjoyed by future generations,” Ms Linard said.

“Threatened, endangered and



Environment Minister Leanne Linard.

protected species including dugongs, snubfin dolphins, turtles, sharks and sawfish can become entangled in gillnets and be injured or killed. The latest science tells us that the populations of species such as dugong cannot afford any human-induced mortalities.

“The Government acknowledged from the outset that there would be an impact on commercial fishing operators from these reforms. That’s why we are delivering this package of support that invests in the industry’s sustainability while protecting the Reef.”

Tanzer quotes

Quotes attributable to Future Fishing Taskforce independent chair John Tanzer.

“In undertaking its work, the Future Fishing Taskforce sought to balance securing improved conservation outcomes with impacts on fishers and the continued supply for locally caught seafood.

“The taskforce was always mindful of the world heritage values, the wellbeing of the individuals and communities impacted and the substantial public investment being made.

“More than 100 submissions were received during the public consultation period, around 75 per cent of which were from commercial fishers. Expert scientific advice was considered in regard to endangered, threatened and protected species. Advice was also provided by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

“All feedback received was considered in both the development of the structural adjustment package and in the mapping of the net free areas.”

Further information:

Gillnetting is one form of fishing in

the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area to catch the main commercial species such as barramundi, king threadfin, shark and some species of mackerel. In all, over a 100 different species are taken by commercial nets in inshore waters.

Threatened, endangered and protected (TEP) species including dugongs, dolphins, turtles and sawfish can become entangled in gillnets and be injured or killed.

Globally, many countries, even in areas that are not World Heritage-listed, have restricted or banned the use of gillnets due to concerns over interactions with sea birds, turtles, dolphins and other marine mammals.

The Australian and Queensland Governments announced the framework of these changes on 5 June 2023.

More information is available at Great Barrier Reef gillnet fishing phase out | Environment, land and water | Queensland Government (www.qld.gov.au) and Future Fishing <https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/fisheries/commercial/future-fishing>



Gladstone Ports Corporation
World leading multi-commodity ports' corporation
Port of Gladstone | Port of Rockhampton | Port of Bundaberg | Port of Maryborough

gpcl.com.au | 1800 243 GPC (472)

 **Gladstone Ports Corporation**
Growth, prosperity, community.

BAN PLANS

Further details on bans of gillnet fishing in GBR region

These further details about the bans on gillnet fishing have been published on the Queensland Department of Agriculture & Fisheries site.

WE are committed to a sustainable wild-caught seafood industry that provides the quality products that consumers appreciate, while protecting our unique ocean environments—especially the Great Barrier Reef.

As a key part of delivering this shared vision, the Australian and Queensland Governments have committed to maintaining the Great Barrier Reef as a World Heritage area that is considered “not in danger”.

Earlier this year the Australian and Queensland Governments announced a package to phase out gillnet fishing in the Great Barrier Reef by mid-2027 and transition to more sustainable fishing practices.

Phasing out gillnets in the Great Barrier Reef is a key commitment to protecting the Great Barrier Reef. At present, the Queensland gillnet fishery within the Great Barrier Reef provides 2.6 per cent of the entire east coast wild-caught seafood harvest to consumers.

The Future Fishing Taskforce has finished its deliberations and government has accepted its recommendations.

Of the \$185 million joint package, the Queensland Government has committed to \$125 million to implement:

- ☐ phasing out of gillnets on the Great Barrier Reef
- ☐ rezoning the Great Sandy Marine Park
- ☐ increasing protection from gillnet impacts in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

To support regional economies, further investment into the aquaculture and tourism industries will also be funded.

The remaining \$60 million from the Australian Government is for:

- ☐ additional programs to implement independent data validation
- ☐ further reduce bycatch in high-risk fisheries.
- ☐ It is not for structural adjustment.

- ☐ Support for affected licence holders

All licence holders

\$3,000 grant for seeking independent financial or legal advice to eligible licence holders.

Symbol and individual transferable quota unit values have been established based on expert advice on market value prior to the 5 June 2023 announcement.

Holders of N4 and N2 symbols will be paid \$150,000 and \$60,000 respectively.

Holders of N1 symbols will be paid \$35,000.

Holders of the following individual transferable quotas will be paid the corresponding values:

- ☐ barramundi (BMI-5: \$17/unit)
- ☐ king threadfin (KT1-5: \$20/unit)
- ☐ grey mackerel (GMI-5: \$25/unit).

For management region 5 (south of the Great Barrier Reef) a new symbol for gill netting will be available—N15. These will be available to eligible holders of N1 or N2 licences and will include barramundi but will retain N1 conditions.

Holders of N10 and K symbols will be paid 80% of the market value of an N1 to acknowledge loss of access to management regions 1 to 4 (\$28,000). They will automatically be granted an ‘as of right’ N15 symbol (similar to N1 currently).

Eligible deck hands and skippers (employees) will receive ex-gratia payments (\$8,000 and \$10,000 respectively) and be entitled to a TAFE retraining grant.

Nets will be bought back and additional financial support for net reel boat refit grants and other costs associated with stranded assets (e.g. larger N4 vessels).

Red tape will be removed to create new supply chain opportunities for line-caught barramundi.

Great Barrier Reef fishers

Eligible licence or lease holders with recent catch history (since September 2021) in the Great Barrier Reef (management regions 1 to 4) under a N1, N2 or N4 symbol will be entitled to an ex-gratia payment, that approximates future income lost for a period of 3 years, based on average reported harvest and BDO beach values (and CPI indexation).

Holders of N1, N2 and N4 licences with catch history in the Great Barrier Reef can opt to seek a total licence package buy out—for all eligible symbols and primary commercial fishing boat licence.

Eligible holders of N11 licences with relevant catch history in the new net-free north may also be entitled to an ex-gratia payment.

Eligible licence or lease holders that have not had a recent catch history due to extenuating circumstances may still be eligible pending demonstration of such circumstances.

For management regions 2 to 4 (Great Barrier Reef), a new temporary symbol for gillnetting will be available—NX. These will be available for up to 40 eligible licence holders.

Great Sandy Marine Park

Eligible licence or lease holders with recent catch history (since September 2021) in areas which are no longer accessible (because of rezoning of the Great Sandy Marine Park) under an eligible N, C1, L or T symbols will be entitled to an ex-gratia payment, that approximates future income lost for a period of 3 years, based on average reported harvest and BDO beach values (and CPI indexation).

Holders of ITQ units for grey mackerel, school mackerel and whiting in management region 5 can seek a voluntary buy out (\$25/unit GM5, \$20/unit SM5 and \$20/unit WT5).

Holders of N1, N2 licences with catch history in the Great Sandy Marine Park can opt to seek a total licence package buy out—for all eligible symbols and primary commercial fishing boat licence.

Other impacted fisheries (harvest, marine aquarium fish) will also receive ex-gratia payment that approximates future income lost for a period of 3 years.

Eligible licence or lease holders that have not had a recent catch history due to extenuating circumstances may still



The net bans are going ahead despite causing community anger in North Queensland coastal communities.

be eligible pending demonstration of such circumstances.

Business and downstream supply chain support

The immediate priority for financial support are the affected fishers, so business and supply chain support details (such as eligibility criteria and funding) will follow in early 2024.

Great Barrier Reef gill net licence from 2024 to June 2027

As part of transitional arrangements for commercial fishers, the Queensland Government will issue 40 gillnet fishing symbols (NX) for the Great Barrier Reef region that will expire on 30 June 2027.

These will be available to existing eligible fishers and operate under similar arrangements as the current N2 arrangements, with the following exceptions:

- ☐ defined Dugong Protection Area A areas will be closed to gill nets
- ☐ defined Dugong Protection Area B areas will be closed to gill nets—except associated rivers and creeks, which will remain open
- ☐ harvest of key species won't be subject to individual transferable quota, instead there will be competitive regional total allowable commercial catch limits
- ☐ commitment to independent data validation through onboard

observers or cameras will be a mandatory condition of operating

- ☐ automatic expiration on 30 June 2027.

A further new symbol (N15) will replace the existing gillnet licences operating south of the Great Barrier Reef in management region 5. These will be available to existing eligible licence holders and operate as per the existing N1 arrangements, and the take of barramundi will be permitted.

Other initiatives

Other initiatives that will be implemented under the Queensland Government's \$125 million funding include:

- ☐ \$1.5 million for reskilling and retraining grants and support
- ☐ \$2.25 million to support employees such as deckhands and skippers
- ☐ \$15 million to develop a whole-of-government strategy to accelerate and adopt innovative best-practice sustainable aquaculture in Queensland
- ☐ \$4.5 million with matching Australian Government funding to support an evidence-based approach to developing and trialling sustainable alternative commercial fishing gear
- ☐ \$2.95 million for developing and growing sustainable regional jobs, and supporting master fishers training and threatened species protection

- ☐ \$1.5 million for making hammerhead shark a no-take species for commercial fishers.

The Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries will contact affected commercial fishing licence holders when the adjustment package becomes available.

Mental health support

We acknowledge these changes may have financial and psychological impacts. The Queensland Government has partnered with Stay Afloat to provide confidential support.

Phasing out gillnet fishing in the Great Barrier Reef

In June 2023, the Australian and Queensland governments announced they would commit more than \$160 million to phase-out gillnet fishing in the Great Barrier Reef by mid-2027 and transition to more sustainable fishing practices. Read the media statement on phasing out gillnet fishing.

Great Sandy Marine Park rezoning

The review of the zoning plan for the Great Sandy Marine Park has been completed and the outcomes will be progressed into a final zoning plan. You can:

- ☐ read more about the final Great Sandy Marine Park zoning plan
- ☐ email marine.policy@des.qld.gov.

au if you have specific questions about the review of the Great Sandy Marine Park zoning plan and its outcomes.

The final zoning plan will:

- ❑ increase the area of the marine park in green and yellow zones
- ❑ remove commercial large mesh gillnets and ring nets from the yellow zones within Baffle Creek, Elliott River, Burrum River system, the designated Great Sandy Area waterways
- ❑ introduce measures to increase protection of threatened species, cultural heritage and amenity values.

The government has committed to deliver impact mitigation measures for commercial fishers and to provide support to post-harvest seafood businesses and impacted workers in the commercial fishing sector that are directly affected by the Great Sandy Marine Park zoning changes.

Future Fishing Taskforce

The independently chaired Future Fishing Taskforce was formed to make recommendations about compensation packages to ensure the amounts payable are fair and consistent for all eligible fishing industry participants.

The chair of the taskforce was Mr John Tanzer. He has significant fisheries, marine park and governance experience developed over many years working in Queensland, Commonwealth and international agencies.

Members of the taskforce included senior representatives from:

- ❑ Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
- ❑ Department of the Environment and Science
- ❑ Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- ❑ Queensland Treasury
- ❑ Queensland Rural Industry and Development Authority.

The taskforce sought input from subject matter experts, stakeholders and peak bodies and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. The results of targeted consultation with affected commercial fishers and processors was also provided for consideration.

The taskforce focused their discussions on investment and initiatives to protect the Reef, including the following issues:

- ❑ adoption and trialling of sustainable fishing methods and alternatives to gillnets
- ❑ business advice, management and disposal of stranded assets, and retraining and reskilling
- ❑ investment for expansion into new aquaculture and oyster mariculture initiatives, line-caught fisheries, charter and indigenous fishing businesses
- ❑ growing nature-based sustainable economic opportunities

- ❑ investigating 'reef safe' accreditation for export markets
- ❑ managing other potential high risk fishing activities affecting the Great Barrier Reef
- ❑ the operation of the limited-life net fishery licences for the Great Barrier Reef (that will expire in June 2027)
- ❑ the ongoing operation of gillnet licences operating south of the Great Barrier Reef (management region 5), taking into account the Great Sandy Marine Park rezoning
- ❑ other potential gillnet free zones on the east coast and in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

The taskforce also considered assessment of impacts and the development of an impact mitigation package for industry participants who are directly affected by the Great Sandy Marine Park zoning plan changes. The impact mitigation package will include:

- ❑ financial mitigation for eligible fishers
- ❑ buyback of fishing entitlements (primary licences and symbols) to address displacement of fishing effort and to provide an opportunity for affected fishers to exit the industry
- ❑ purchase of quota units for some species
- ❑ some support for eligible post-harvest seafood businesses to adapt to changed or reduced seafood supply.

(Meeting communiques are available on the DAF site.)

World Heritage Committee decision

At the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee held in September 2023, the committee agreed to adopt the draft decision proposed by UNESCO to not consider the Great Barrier Reef for the List of World Heritage In Danger.

The committee requested the submission of a progress report to the World Heritage Centre by 1 February 2024 for consideration at next year's 46th session of the World Heritage Committee.

Read the media release: Great Barrier Reef World Heritage status confirmed.

More information

The QDAF site can be accessed at: <https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/fisheries/commercial/future-fishing>

Email Future.Fishing@daf.qld.gov.au

Call 13 25 23

PARLIAMENT

Premier "proud of plans to wipe out NQ industries": KAP

KATTER'S Australian Party (KAP) MPs claim Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk is obliterating industries and communities in North Queensland.

In a media release in October headed "Premier "proud of plans to wipe out NQ industries", the party said "KAP MPs used Question Time in the Queensland Parliament to this week force the Premier to come clean on her involvement in the Commonwealth Government's plot to destroy the futures of many North Queensland farmers and commercial fishers.

"Last week, Member for Kennedy, Bob Katter MP, tabled a letter in the Commonwealth Parliament that exposed the Australian Government's plan to systematically suffocate North Queensland and its primary industries.

"The letter, dated 25 May 2023, under the hand of Federal Environment and Water Minister Tanya Plibersek, was addressed to the Director-General of UNESCO, seeking approval from the international body on the suggested measures.

"KAP Member for Hill Shane Knuth said that over the years North Queensland had been hit hard with overregulation, green zones, yellow zones, bag limits, vegetation management laws and reef regulation laws which have punished hard working rural Queenslanders.

" 'Now we have hard evidence from the Federal Minister for Environment and Water that this has all been promised to an unelected international body in UNESCO, without any science-based evidence, with much more to come,' Mr Knuth said.

" 'Our State Government needs to stand up for regional Queensland, stop destroying our fishing and rural industries, and make decisions based on reliable and tested science-based evidence, instead of bowing to demands from international bodies such as UNESCO.'

"KAP Deputy Leader and Member for Hinchinbrook Nick Dametto said that the Premier lacked the capacity to grasp the magnitude of the joint Government decision to shut down large parts of rural and regional Queensland.



KAP MPs in State Parliament: (from left) Nick Dametto, Shane Knuth and Robbie Katter.

" 'The reef plays a vital role to Queensland and we don't disagree with that but we can't continue to be told what to do by UNESCO and WWF when those that interact with the Reef are saying that it's never been in better health, even the Australian Marine Institute of Science and other reef experts agree,' he said.

" 'Record high coral calcification indicates a healthy reef. I don't know any other way to say it, the reef is fine, jump on a boat and come check it out'."

"KAP Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter ... was first to question the Premier on whether she would revoke her support of measures that would see the hear ripped out of North Queensland's rural and regional communities.

"Assisted by the Speaker, the Premier was able to side-step and avoided answering the question except to acknowledge that she would 'get back to the member'.

"The following day, KAP Deputy Leader and Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto again took aim at the Premier and questioned if she had committed Queensland to the Commonwealth's draconian tree-clearing laws, further sediment and nutrient run-off regulations, and commercial fishing wind backs.

"Seemingly better prepared, the Premier proudly confirmed, inter alia: 'As we know, the State Government and the Federal Government have been working very closely together in terms of ensuring that the Great Barrier Reef is not listed as endangered. That is why we have together undertaken measures as much as we possibly can to ensure that we protect the Reef.'

" 'The Federal Minister, in

consultation with our Government, wrote to UNESCO to talk about the measures that we have taken, including substantial fisheries reform, which we needed to do, accelerated action to improve water quality and strong legislated climate action,' The Premier said. 'This letter very much sets out the actions of both the Commonwealth and the state in relation to saving the Great Barrier Reef.'

"KAP Leader and Member for Traeger Robbie Katter said the letter from the Federal Minister was a smoking gun that exposed the Premier and her relationship with UNESCO.

" 'They've been firing all the bullets here in Queensland and we've long suspected that there was UNESCO involvement here but now we have it in black and white, and confirmed by both levels of Government, what measures have already been taken and what is yet to come,' he said.

" 'At the start of the east-coast gill net bans, they tried to disguise the plan with some science but, by the time they reached the Gulf, they didn't even bother with that.

" 'We have a Government that is intent on shutting down communities and shutting down industries, all in the name of UNESCO and leaving behind a trail of destruction.

" 'That's simply not good enough for the people of North Queensland who are asking why this Brisbane Government is so committed to obliterating us in the North.

" 'It's now up to the North Queensland Labor MPs to decide if they are going to stand by their constituents and push back on the Government about this, or are they going to stand by and watch as their electorates economically shut down'."



Industry protests were brought to Parliament House in Brisbane as well.

Letter reveals Federal Government promises to UNESCO

A letter from Federal Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek to UNESCO has revealed promises the Albanese Labor Government has made to the United Nations organisation for further controls and restrictions on primary producers – especially professional fishers – in the Great Barrier Reef catchment and adjacent waters.

THE letter from Minister Plibersek was dated 25 May 2023 – two weeks before she distributed a media release announcing net bans in waters in the GBR region – and was addressed to Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, in Paris.

Minister Plibersek’s letter began: “Dear Director-General, I would like to thank UNESCO and the World Heritage Centre for your positive engagement with the Australian and Queensland Governments to maintain the Outstanding Universal Value of the Great Barrier Reef (the Reef). Australia’s active progress towards the Reactive Monitoring Mission (Mission) report’s recommendations and continued dialogue demonstrates our shared interest and urgency to protect and restore the Reef, and better manage it for the future as one of Australia’s most precious and unique places.

“Our Governments are pleased to further commit substantial actions to secure the future of the Reef. These measures include substantial fisheries reforms; accelerated action to improve water quality; and strong, legislated climate action. We have worked closely with the World Heritage Centre to ensure these actions meet your expectations and address the recommendations of the Mission report.

“Our detailed commitments are enclosed, and I would appreciate your confirmation that these, together with our other actions under the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan, address the concerns of UNESCO and the recommendations of the Mission report.

“Australian and Queensland Governments’ combined investment of A\$4.4 billion underpins the delivery of the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability and confirms our resolve to secure the future of the Reef.

“These new measures are an outstanding outcome and will lead to a stronger Reef. They underscore our Governments’ commitment to

work collaboratively and deliver on our commitment both to protect the Reef and to demonstrate international environmental leadership. The measures will be successful because of the important contributions and efforts of Australia’s First Nations communities, Australian industry and the broader community working together for a common cause to safeguard the future of one of Australia and the World’s most iconic places.



“I also want to acknowledge the expertise and advice provided by UNESCO and the World Heritage advisory bodies and thank you for the constructive engagement that has informed these significant commitments.”

Copies of the letter were also sent to: (Queensland) Senator Nita Green, Envoy to the Great Barrier Reef; Ernesto Ottone Ramirez, Assistant Director-General for Culture, UNESCO; and Lazare Eloundou Assomo, Director, UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

Promises to UNESCO detailed

An accompanying document to Ms Plibersek’s letter to UNESCO details the promises the Federal Government was making.

The document was headed “State of conservation of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage property: Australian and Queensland government commitments for the protection of the Great Barrier Reef – May 2023”.

Water quality

Australia commits to *enact*, with immediate *effect*, a major shift in its water quality programs, alongside an AUD\$1 billion water quality investment through to 2030, with the aim to achieve the 2025 water quality targets and commence a drastic reduction in overall pollutant discharge into the property by 2030, in particular for fine sediment and dissolved inorganic nitrogen. This will put the property on a solid pathway to reach its full ecosystem health by 2050, consistent with the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan.

1. By 31 December 2023: Deliver a complete mapping of all priority areas of grazing land for gully repairs and associated restoration and remediation activities, the identification of the priority gullies where the repair, restoration and remediation action will have the greatest impact on sediment reduction, and a detailed timeline for the completion of the repair of the areas of highest priority.
2. By 31 December 2023: Initiate the delivery of a joint federal-state program that will start repairing and restoring the gullies of the highest priority with immediate effect and deliver significant and meaningful sediment reduction necessary to protect the ecology of the Great Barrier Reef including the most polluting catchment areas (eg, Burdekin, Fitzroy and Burnett-Mary catchments).
3. By 30 June 2025: Finalise the

independent water quality science review and the Scientific Consensus Statement as the foundational scientific understanding to underpin the revision of the Reef Water Quality Improvement Plan and the establishment of new water quality targets for the period 2025-2030, to ensure consistency with the management frameworks adopted in the Reef 2050 Plan.

4. By July 2024: Expand the implementation of 2018 land clearing legislation and further strengthen protection to remnant and high value conservation areas, including, through an accelerated and enhanced compliance program to secure the protection of remnant native vegetation in areas of high conservation value in the Reef catchments.
5. By February 2025: Accelerate progress to achieve all water quality targets through a program of sediment, nutrient and pesticide reduction through combined efforts in regulation, incentives, and accelerated landscape restoration programs, eg, 60 per cent reduction in dissolved inorganic nitrogen loads (remaining to target: 32.3 per cent), 25 per cent reduction in sediment loads (remaining to target: 9.8 per cent), 20 per cent reduction in particulate nitrogen loads (remaining to target: 5.6 per cent), 20 per cent in particulate phosphorous loads (remaining to target: 2.6 per cent), and pesticides target of 99 per cent of aquatic species protected at end of catchments (remaining to target: 2.3 per cent).
6. By January 2024: Double compliance activity being undertaken across the regulated reef catchment areas comparative to what was being achieved in 2021 in order to enforce landholder compliance with reef protection regulated standards and respond to any non-compliance.

Concurrently secure improved water quality outcomes by supporting increased industry participation in best management practice projects and programs, with 50 per cent of sugarcane and banana areas operating above minimum practice standards by June 2026.

Fisheries

Australia commits to delivering a \$100 million fisheries structural adjustment package to significantly reduce net fishing and other high risk fishing activities impacting the Reef. A further \$62 million will support the implementation independent data validation and bycatch reduction to

Why an N2/N4 ban?

THIS document raises the question of where and when the 31 December 2023 ban on the use of N2 and N4 gillnets was decided.

Nowhere in the list of undertakings to UNESCO from Federal Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek is there any mention of removing nets throughout the GBR region by 31 December 2023.

There is an undertaking to “phase out all destructive gillnet fisheries” by 30 June 2027.

There is also an undertaking to establish a complete net-free zone in the northern third of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (Cape Bedford to the tip of Cape York) by 31 December 2023. (Why would there need to be a special net-free zone in the northern one-third of the GBR region by 31 December 2023 if it was anticipated that all nets would be removed throughout the entire GBR region by the same date?)

So, that begs a question: where, when, how and by whom was a decision made to impose a total ban on N2 and N4 nets throughout the entire GBR region by 31 December 2023, something never promised to UNESCO in Federal and State Government undertakings conveyed to UNESCO by Federal Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek in this correspondence.

reduce risks to protected species from fishing gear.

The package will:

1. Phase out all destructive gillnet fisheries to ensure the property as a whole will be gill-net free by 30 June 2027.
2. Establish a complete net free zone in the northern third of the property (Cape Bedford to the tip of Cape York) and establish additional net-free-zones that expand net restrictions in the Gulf of Carpentaria (eg, Mornington Island, rivers/foreshores adjacent to Weipa, Karumba and Mapoon), to further strengthen protections for threatened species that move between Great Barrier Reef and the Gulf, and ensure displaced fishing



Although it's promoted as fishing "on the Great Barrier Reef" the gill nets to be banned work inshore areas.

effort does not intensify threats to those species, as well as in other high value habitats of protected species identified through consultation, by 31 December 2023.

3. By 31 December 2023, complete implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy, including finalising all harvest strategies with defined quotas for all key species, and by 31 December 2027, working to achieve the target maximum economic yield (60 per cent biomass).
4. By 1 December 2023, introduce legislation to mandate the use of Independent Data Validation on all commercial fishing vessels.
5. Immediately make threatened hammerhead sharks "no take" for commercial fishers.

Climate change

1. The Australian Government commits to set successively more ambitious emissions reduction targets, reflecting highest possible ambition, consistent with achieving net zero by 2050, and in alignment with efforts to limit global temperature increase to 1.5 deg. C. These targets will be informed by advice from the independent Climate Change Authority. The Government will set a 2035 target and communicate it to the UNFCCC as Australia's second Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement in advance of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement in 2025.
2. The Australian Government commits to update the Reef 2050 Plan (in consultation with the Queensland Government) to reflect (a) the new commitments

taken under the Climate Change Act 2022 and (b) Australia's overall commitment to work alongside global partners to tackle the climate crisis, achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement and pursue ambitious emissions reductions to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5 deg. C above pre-industrial levels.

In support of these commitments:

- a. The Australian Government has legislated emissions reductions of 43 per cent by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050.
- b. The Australian Government is required by law to prepare annual statements to Parliament under the Climate Change Act 2022 on progress towards national emissions reduction targets, international developments, climate risks, impacts and policy. These statements must be informed by advice from the independent Climate Change Authority.
- c. The Australian Government commits to continually increasing its climate ambition, including by working urgently to implement its substantial and rigorous suite of new policies across the economy to maximize their emissions impact and drive Australia's transition to net zero. Australia's States, Territories and local governments are also implementing significant policies and programs to reduce emissions. The cumulative impact of action by governments at different levels, and industry, businesses, land managers and Australians, seek to deliver the greatest possible emissions reductions in this critical decade.

d. The Australian Government commits to increase renewable electricity generation to 82 per cent by 2030.

e. The Queensland Government has released its Energy and Jobs Plan to achieve 70 per cent renewable energy by 2032 and 80 per cent by 2035. The plan will achieve a 50 per cent reduction in electricity emissions on 2005 levels by 2030 and a 90 per cent reduction in electricity emissions by 2035-36. It includes delivery of a 2 gigawatt 24-hour Borumba pumped hydro energy storage project and the world's largest 5 gigawatt Pioneer-Burdekin pumped hydro energy storage dam.

f. By 2035, Queensland will have no regular reliance on coal for power production and will have more pumped hydro energy storage for renewable energy than the rest of Australia combined. Queensland's pumped hydro energy storage for renewable energy will be more than Europe, China or the US as a share of energy demand. This will provide Queensland with reliable, firmed renewable energy combined with a SuperGrid to transmit renewable energy including a connection to Australia's largest renewable energy zone and the world class North West Minerals Province with over \$500 billion in new economy minerals needed to manufacture renewable energy technologies. That means Queensland will not only transition to renewable energy but will also play a key role in the global supply of new economy minerals and in the manufacturing of renewable technologies.

Your ship, is our ship.



You keep our world moving, we keep you in business.

Shipping is the lifeblood of our country and it's our job to keep you working safely and hassle free. Trusted. Experienced. Certified Commercial Marine Surveyors™.

Find a surveyor at www.aimsurveyors.com.au
Email us at info@aimsurveyors.com.au
or call us on 02 6232 6555



GULF OF CARPENTARIA

FQ discussion paper on Gulf net bans

Fisheries Queensland has published a discussion paper on its proposed expanded gillnet-free zones and other management changes (which FQ describes as “reforms”) in the Gulf of Carpentaria. This is a brief overview of the 34-page discussion paper.

FISHERIES Queensland says there are several measures being proposed that will change the way the Gulf of Carpentaria inshore fishery is managed into the future.

FQ says these are necessary to “modernise management arrangements, be responsive to changes in stock levels, optimise economic and social benefits, manage ecological risks, and ensure fair and equitable access by all”.

Changes are expected to be implemented within the following timeframes:

- new gillnet-free zones – short term
- king threadfin rebuilding actions – short to medium term
- harvest strategy (including management reforms) – medium term
- protected species management strategy implementation – medium term
- improved reporting arrangements – medium term
- independent onboard monitoring – longer term.

“Other changes on the horizon, but not discussed in this paper, include a future review of access fees to align all Queensland-managed commercial fisheries to a beneficiary-pays model,” it says.

“Also, the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy includes the development of a latent effort policy to remove inactive licences and prevent increase in effort over time. Future consultation will be undertaken about the fee review and development of a latent effort policy.

“It is acknowledged that these changes are likely to make it challenging for some commercial operators to maintain their operations in the same way and may result in economic impacts.

“While consultation will inform total allowable harvest levels, harvest strategy mechanisms, a protected species management plan and a recovery plan for king threadfin, it is expected that the future management of the fishery will look very different to today.

“The aim of this discussion paper is to establish a framework for the future direction of the Gulf of Carpentaria inshore fishery and a clear vision of the operational landscape that lies ahead, with a focus on providing guidance to all stakeholders, particularly those in the commercial industry.”

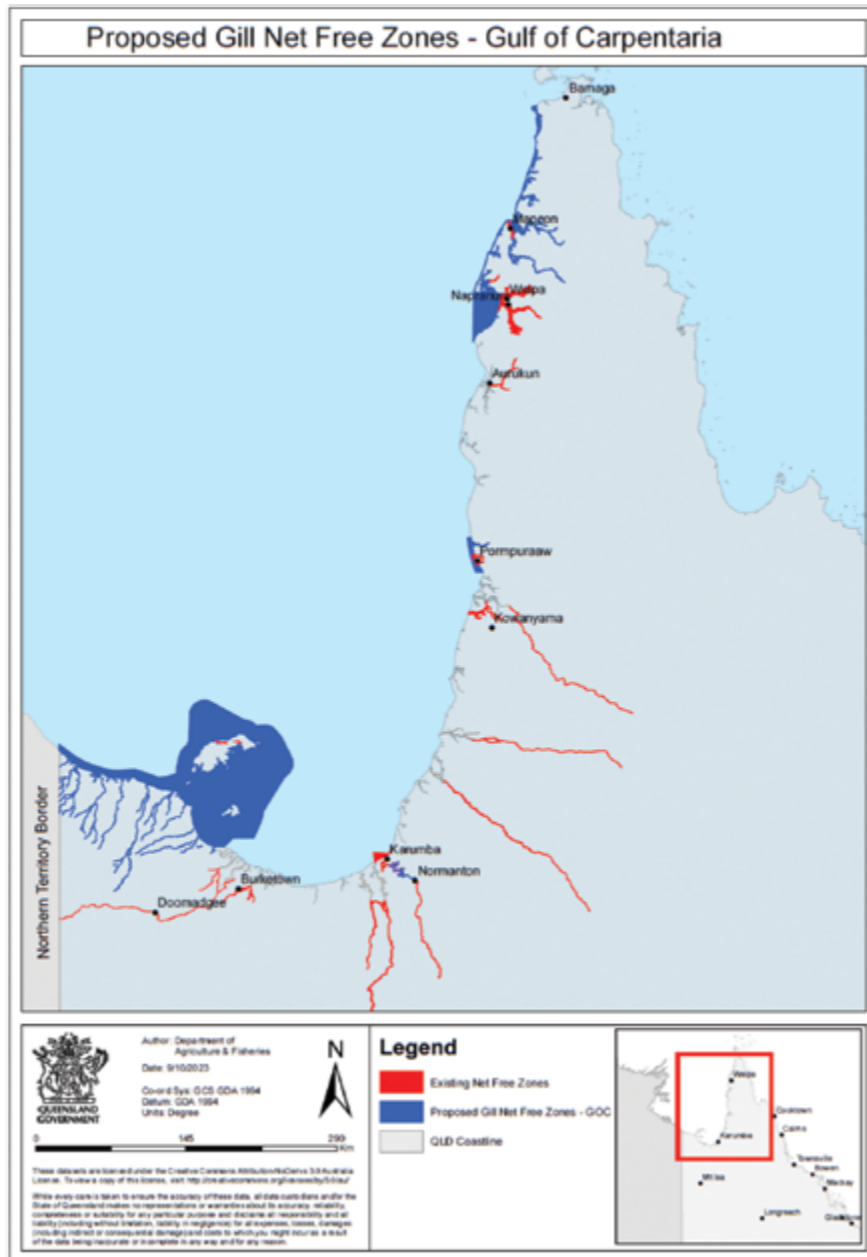
Short-term reforms

FQ says the Gulf of Carpentaria “is a highly productive area for commercial fisheries but is also an area with high habitat values for protected species,



supporting some of the most significant populations of threatened and endangered marine species, including all known sawfish species”.

“The region supports significant natural and cultural values, while providing opportunities for a range of



different users. Unlike the Queensland east coast, the Gulf of Carpentaria does not have the same level of protection as state marine parks and the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

“Unlike the east coast, there is no network of integrated protected zones or management areas within the Gulf of Carpentaria, except for several small-scale gillnetting closures in selected rivers and creeks. “The Gulf of Carpentaria includes two marine parks in Commonwealth waters – the Gulf of Carpentaria Marine Park and the West Cape York Marine Park. As both marine parks are located in Commonwealth waters, they only overlap with the line fishery (L4 symbol) and the offshore net fishery (N12 and N13 symbol). They do not afford suitable protection to habitats within the inshore components of the gillnet fishery (N3 symbol).

“The implementation of additional gillnet-free zones in the Gulf of Carpentaria is a commitment made by the Australian and Queensland governments and will deliver a number of objectives, including:

- safeguarding and future-proofing economic opportunities in Gulf of Carpentaria fisheries and improving the social licence of the industry;
- delivering objectives of the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy, responding to ecological risk assessments and reducing impacts on threatened species;
- reducing the risks to, and improving the resilience of, threatened species in a changing global environment;
- improving stock sustainability of key fisheries resources;
- recognising and protecting cultural values and recognising First Nations people’s native title rights and connection to their sea country; and
- supporting future economic growth through improved tourism and recreational and charter fishing opportunities.

“Several threatened and endangered species are known to inhabit the Gulf of Carpentaria. Fisheries Queensland completed a level-2 species-of-conservation concern ecological risk assessment for the Gulf of Carpentaria inshore fishery. The ecological risk assessment contains a number of high-risk ratings for protected species.”

A summary of the protected species known to inhabit the Gulf of Carpentaria, current conservation status under the Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and risk rating from the level-2 ecological risk assessment is provided in an appendix to the consultation paper.

FQ says: “The taskforce heard from a number of scientific experts about the costs and benefits of gillnet-free zones in a number of regions in the Gulf of Carpentaria. The taskforce agreed that larger closed areas were preferable to smaller areas to support compliance activities and ensure areas offer an adequate refuge for protected species.

“The taskforce recommended including all rivers, creeks and nearshore waters (waters less than two metres deep at low tide within each proposed gillnet-free zone.

“The proposed gillnet-free zones (see map) recommended by the taskforce sought to balance the social,

Minister sets up Cape York fisheries group

FISHERIES Minister Mark Furner has established a Cape York Special Fisheries Working Group he says will “work closely with key regional stakeholders to identify new economic pathways through charter fisheries and tourism operations while ensuring sustainable fisheries are maintained”.

On a visit to the Torres Strait in July, Mr Furner announced the composition of the 10-person Cape York Special Fisheries Working Group to provide advice on fisheries issues in the region.

“The establishment of the 10-person working group fulfills a Palaszczuk Government commitment made at the 2020 State election,” he said.

“The new working group is a non-statutory advisory body which provides advice that will be considered alongside advice and information from Fisheries Queensland, the Sustainable Fisheries Expert Panel and other Government agencies.

“Collectively, this will inform decisions on the management of our fisheries and best practice fisheries management and implementation of the Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy: 2017–2027.

“The Queensland Government has also set aside \$200,000 for a Cape York Fisheries Economic Pathways Grants Program to be launched later this year, further meeting the State Government’s 2020 election commitment.

“In accordance with its terms

economic and ecological costs and benefits. The taskforce recommended consultation with affected stakeholders to inform a final decision.

“The Queensland Government is considering financial support for commercial fishers to implement the proposed gillnet-free zones in the Gulf of Carpentaria as part of the \$100 million structural adjustment package announced for the Great Barrier Reef.

Note: To read the full 34-page discussion paper – included a list of questions gauging support for the Fisheries Queensland proposals – go to: <https://daf.engagementhub.com.au/gulf-of-carpentaria-fishery.pdf> and click on Discussion Paper.

of reference, the working group is comprised of up to 11 members, including an independent chair. Membership consists of representatives from Cape York First Nations communities, community development, fishing industry, local government, non-government organisations and private enterprise.”

Mr Furner said the inaugural members of the special working group will be:

- Brendon Wymarra - Northern Peninsula Area (NPA)
- Clinton Williams - Pormpuraaw
- David Clarke - Lockhart River
- Frank Proctor - Wuthanthi/NPA
- Jack Jans - Mapoon / Central Western Cape
- John Dockrill - Mossman / Wujal Wujal
- Linc Walker - Cape Tribulation
- Toni Hodges - Cairns
- Wanjibung Shaun Edwards - Kowanyama / Cairns
- Kirsty Burchill - Mossman Gorge.

“These partnerships with Cape communities will play an important role in developing and maintaining fisheries in the region,” he said. “Charter fishing and fishing tourism are an important economic opportunity for Cape communities and this working group will help to identify those opportunities and make them real.”

Member for Cook Cynthia Lui said fisheries are an integral part of life on the Cape York, providing sustenance and income to many communities.

“Maximising the value of our world-renowned Cape fisheries in a sustainable way is crucial, and that’s what this working group will help to deliver,” she said.

TOURISM

Quality restaurants impacted by northern net bans

A NUMBER of restaurant-owners in North Queensland have complained to the State Government about the impact of the east coast gillnet bans on the availability of wild-caught barramundi and other species.

Typical of these complaints is the letter written on October 13 to Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk by Michael McFie, owner of the Airlie Beach Hotel in the Whitsundays.

“Your Government’s banning of gillnet fishing by the end of 2023 – based on a recommendation only from UNESCO, with no scientific evidence – will have a major impact and cost to the tourism, restaurant and hospitality sector in our region,” Mr McFie said.

“It is my strong belief that the impact of such a decision on our sector has not

been taken into consideration in what is clearly an uneducated decision with no scientific backing.

“The Whitsundays is a premium tourist destination of national and international scale, and, as a major venue operator in this sector, we are extremely concerned about the impact and damage that this will have on our business, its brand and, ultimately, its financial viability.

“The impact that this will have on the loss of supply of many species, such as Barramundi, Grunter, King and Blue Salmon, Bream, Trevally and Queenfish, just to name a few.

“This will have a damaging effect on our businesses in not being able to provide the premium Australian seafood to our guests and customers that has become synonymous with the Whitsundays.

“All of the above-mentioned species, with the exception of Barramundi, are unable to be sourced from Australian aquaculture, leaving only unregulated, unethically sourced and inferior

imported seafood as our main option to promote.

“Wild-caught Australian Barramundi is an iconic species that we proudly promote on our menus, when seasonally available. Clients travel the world to experience premium dining on premium seafood in travel destinations such as the Whitsundays.

“Australian wild-caught seafood is already an expensive commodity to purchase and promote. With the cost-of-living pressures currently being felt by business and household budgets, I believe the removal of these gillnet-caught species will also have greater impact on what has previously been an affordable seafood option.

“I respectfully request you ask your Ministers to review this decision and take steps to ensure fresh Queensland wild-caught species such as barramundi and other net-caught species (as mentioned above) continue to be available to the restaurant and hospitality trade throughout North Queensland.

“I would be pleased to discuss this

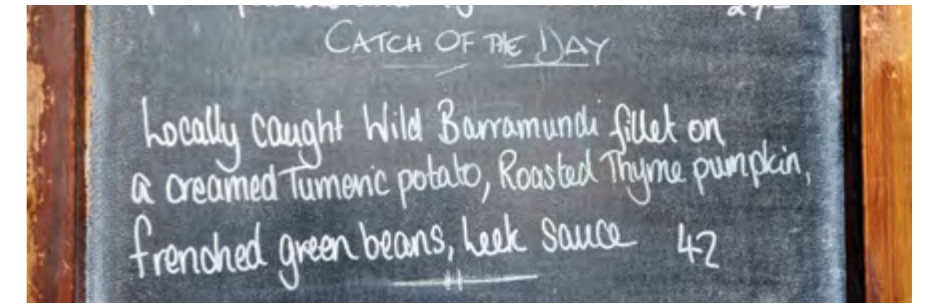
issue with you or your staff and further explain my concerns over the impacts of the looming ban.”

Minister’s reply

Mr McFie received a response on October 25 from Fisheries Minister Mark Furner, who said the letter had been referred to him “as this matter falls within my Ministerial portfolio responsibilities as Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Rural Communities, your email has been referred for a direct reply”.

“As you may be aware, on 28 November 2022, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the International Union for Conservation of Nature released a report that recommended the Great Barrier Reef be inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger,” Mr Furner said.

“The report identified several recommendations for urgent implementation. Recommendations included the phasing out of gillnet fishing in the Great Barrier Reef and the establishment of gillnet-free zones in



Wild barramundi features on menus in North Queensland tourist locations.

areas of high ecological significance.

“Prior to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the reef property supported more than 64,000 jobs and contributed \$6.4 billion annually to the Australian economy. The vast majority of this comes from tourism with a value of \$5.7 billion annually.

“Being inscribed on the ‘World Heritage in Danger’ list would have far reaching and significant implications across Queensland’s economy, and both the Federal and Queensland Governments are committed to actions that will prevent that listing.

“While the target fish species taken by gillnets are sustainable on the east coast, it is clear this method of fishing continues to pose risks to threatened, endangered and protected species.

“In response to the recommendations to list the Great Barrier Reef as in danger, the recent announcement to phase out gillnet fishing in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area will support a more sustainable future for the reef and for its commercial fishing industry.

“By transitioning to more sustainable fishing practices and taking measures to maintain fish stocks, we can ensure the long-term viability of good jobs in the fishing industry.

“To help mitigate impacts on the commercial fishing industry, over \$160 million has been allocated to support industry through the delivery of a structural adjustment package and additional programs to further reduce bycatch in high-risk fisheries.

“Access to seafood is expected to be maintained through ongoing operation of a limited-life net fishery that will occur in the Reef until June 2027.

“Furthermore, the Queensland Government will investigate and trial alternate fishing methods that do not have the same environmental footprint as gillnets, expansion of new aquaculture and oyster mariculture initiatives, line-caught fisheries, charter and First Nation fishing businesses to address the potential economic and social impacts from delivery of the reef policy commitment.

“A Future Fishing Taskforce was established to advise Government on the best approach, design and implementation of the structural adjustment package, and impact mitigation. Recommendations from the Taskforce are currently being considered by the Queensland Government and further announcements will be made once a decision has been made.”



The Whitsundays is a region with an international reputation for stunning scenery ...



... and superb seafood in its top-quality restaurants.

Petition shows support for fishing

A petition supporting continued gillnet fishing in Queensland has attracted some 10,000 signatures.

A PETITION sponsored by Katter's Australia Party Deputy Leader Nick Dametto calling for continued gillnet fishing in Queensland has attracted strong support.

"The Queensland community has rallied behind this parliamentary petition, with almost 10,000 signatories pledging their support towards the continuation of sustainable gillnet fishing practices along Queensland's east coast," Mr Dametto said.

"The petition ... was tabled in Parliament on Tuesday, November 14 with an official total of 9,991 signatures.

"The petition was in response to a joint State and Federal Government decision to ban gillnets along the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) region from 31 December 2023.

"A \$160-million compensation package was promised, however those in the industry that will be impacted are still waiting to hear what reimbursement they may be entitled to for the loss of their business enterprises." The Hinchinbrook MP said he had called on Fisheries Minister Mark Furner to immediately withdraw the decision to ban gillnets or at least postpone the

bans by 12 months, which would allow fishers to continue making a living until the Government was clear about what the remuneration packages would look like.

"Only a few months ago, we stood on the steps of Parliament House with the Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA) and commercial fishers impacted by the east coast gillnet fishing ban, asking for the State Government to readdress what is going on here and consider the livelihoods of these people," Mr Dametto said.

"Off the back of that, a parliamentary petition was raised by Lucas Dansie and that closed with just short of 10,000 signatures from people right across the state who wanted to support local wild-caught Australian seafood.

"These people want to make sure there is a way forward in the future to ensure that sustainable fishing is carried out but also that the nets stay in the water.

"We're talking about intergenerational fishing families. The Green family from the Burdekin said they have been doing this over three



QSIA CEO David Bobbermen (second from left) at Parliament House with KAP MPs Robbie Katter and Nick Dametto.

generations and they want to continue doing it.

"People have put some much time, energy and resources into making sure that they are doing this as sustainably as possible and now we have a State Government that is beholden to UNESCO when it comes to what happens here in Queensland.

"A total of \$160 million has been committed from the State and Federal Governments to reimburse everyone affected. A taskforce was set up to investigate how that money should be distributed and I understand that report sits with the Minister now.

"Most of these families are not earning a dollar right now and Queenslanders want to know what is going on with that report.

"We're asking them to postpone the gillnet fishing bans by 12 months to give everyone, including Government and departmental staff, some breathing space and to ensure that if we're going to move forward, it is done in a measured way.

"We're saying they need to sit down with the fishers and sit down with the QSIA. We don't want a repeat of what happened at yesterday's QSIA annual general meeting, where a departmental officer was sent down to deliver messages on behalf of Government.

"Some of the things I heard from yesterday's meeting were disgusting and unprofessional. The Fisheries Minister should be apologising and pushing these bans back or even better, scrapping it all together.

"Once upon a time, the DPI (as it then was) used to stand up for industry and acted as a support mechanism between industry and Government. Now, it seems the DAF we have today is engulfed by people with WWF affiliations and clear conflicts of interests who are hellbent on shutting the industry down.

"Imagine if the Education Minister was closing down schools or the Health Minister was shutting hospitals. Here we have an Agricultural and Fisheries Minister who is shutting down the very industries he is tasked to protect."

QSIA Executive Officer David Bobbermen said the QSIA meeting was emotive, with a number of fishermen and their spouses speaking to Department officers about the decision that will be impacting their lives and communities.

"It was really distressing," Mr

Bobbermen said. "I am hearing from families who don't know if they can give their kids anything this Christmas or go on a holidays this year. They want to know what's in their future.

"What I found most disheartening was when I relayed these concerns to a senior officer in the Department of Environment and the response I got was '... What are they worrying about, they're going to get a cheque'. I had to walk out of the room. It was embarrassing.

"Not the Minister nor the Premier have had the guts to face these people and tell them what they're doing. They keep sending puppets from departments to deliver a message which for the most part is 'We can't tell you anything'.

"WWF are currently trialling gillnets in other areas of the world to reduce interactions with threatened and endangered species, so these claims that gillnets aren't socially acceptable is rubbish.

"The Queensland and Federal Governments have a moral belief they are running with. There is no science behind it.

"We don't fish on the Reef. We provide sustainably harvested seafood from a naturally renewable source. We extract the seafood in a way so that what we harvest is available next year and for many years to come."

Commercial net fisher Neil Green, attended the QSIA meeting in Townsville but said bureaucrats "showed a lack of empathy to us fishermen and our businesses".

He believed the Government had sent those bureaucrats to test the waters to see fishers' response to the predetermined direction they are rolling with.

"They personally insulted me by calling us 'unprofessional' as leaders of industry of the past, something I donated my life and my family's life to for seven years," he said.

"I reckon if Furner does not dismiss this bureaucrat, then at the very least he should be getting them to make a public apology for their comments.

"This is the most disgusting process I have ever encountered in the 47 years I've been in the industry."

Traeger MP and KAP Leader Robbie Katter said the Gulf was home to a sustainable fishery that provided fresh seafood to Australians and

Federal Fisheries Minister "crashed to a new low"

TWO Opposition Members of Parliament claim Federal Fisheries Minister Murray Watt has "crashed to a new low".

"Senator Murray Watt's impotence as a Cabinet Minister and indifference for stakeholders, even in his own portfolios, have crashed to a new low following a Senate Estimates hearing in Canberra," according to Shadow Fisheries & Environment Minister Jonno Duniam and North Queensland-based Shadow Minister for Northern Australia Susan McDonald.

"Asked a succession of questions (on October 31) about the Albanese Government's cave-in to UNESCO's demand to install a ban on gillnet fishing, Senator Watt couldn't even recall if he had voiced concern with Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek over the ban's impacts on the regional Queensland fishers that he supposedly represents," they said in a joint statement.

"He even argued that his Department had 'no responsibility' over the ban and its effect on Commonwealth fisheries.

Senator Duniam said: "As Fisheries Minister, Senator Watt is meant to provide a counterweight to Ms

also underpinned the many services up in the Gulf such as fuel supply, general transport and employment in Indigenous communities, all of which have not been consulted on this decision.

"When the Fisheries went up there for so-called consultation, the messaging given was that the rest of the world doesn't like gillnet fishing and this was purely just a deal with UNESCO," he said.

"They aren't even bothering with science anymore and I think that's the truly scary thing, that this issue is bigger than commercial fishing, the issue here is sovereignty.

"This is nothing more than political posturing to groups such as UNESCO. Some political parties might be okay with this but we're not and it's disheartening to see the Labor MPs up there in the north, who are meant to be representing these people, and

Plibersek's hard-left ideological instincts but he continually fails to put up even one iota of a fight for the industries and communities he is meant to serve.

"This is despite the fact that the gillnets ban is already turning into one of the most consequential and devastating decisions in memory for Australia's commercial fishing industry."

Senator McDonald said: "It beggars belief that a Federal Minister would act so rashly to sign off on the decimation of Queensland's commercial fishery without seeking the advice of Australian Fisheries Management Authority and the Fisheries Research & Development Corporation.

"Furthermore, the Federal Fisheries Minister – a Queensland Senator – refused to answer questions about the devastation fishers in his own State are facing under this plan, which will increase costs of seafood and hurt Australian families already burdened by a cost of living crisis.

"I am appalled and angry such a serious issue has been hastily endorsed with zero consultation and no regard for the welfare of fishers or the people who can't catch their own fish.

"Queensland and Federal Labor are doing the bidding of activists and ignoring Australian families trying to put food on the table."

Note: For a report on the Senate Estimates hearing, turn to page 24.

they're sitting here in Brisbane silent on the issue.

"I'd like the Premier and the Minister to stop building policies around Finding Nemo and David Attenborough."

KAP Member for Hill, Shane Knuth, said the State Government succumbing to UNESCO just demonstrated a weak Government.

"A good government would have said 'Stuff UNESCO, we're here for the best interest of small businesses and the best interest of Queenslanders'," Mr Knuth said.

"Firstly, they came out saying that this was about protecting the Great Barrier Reef, but now they are targeting the Gulf so that's got nothing to do with the Great Barrier Reef.

"I say to this Government: get up here and stand up for Queenslanders and small businesses."

Fisheries Minister Murray Watt grilled on net-fishing ban in Senate Estimates

Federal Fisheries Minister Murray Watt has been grilled on the GBR region net-fishing bans in Senate Estimates hearings, telling questioning Opposition Senators it was largely a Queensland fisheries issue rather than federal.

SENATOR Watt faced fellow Senators in a Senate Estimates hearing on October 24, including Shadow Environment, Fisheries & Forestry Minister Jonno Duniam, Shadow Infrastructure, Transport & Regional Development Minister Bridget McKenzie, and Shadow Resources & Northern Australia Minister Susan McDonald.

Senator Duniam said: “I have questions about fish. I want to go to the gillnet issue. I want to get an understanding from you, Minister, as to your involvement in the broader issue that we are talking about here – the decision-making and response to it.”

Senator Watt responded: “I personally was not involved, to my recollection. It’s possible that our department was. Of course, that is being led federally out of the Department of the Environment. I think it is actually being led by the Queensland Environment Department as well ...”

A bureaucrat from Senator Watt’s department followed up that it is a Queensland-Commonwealth matter through the environment portfolio.

“There is a split of activity under that. The Queensland Government has the levers and will make adjustments to the use of gillnets and those sorts of things, including a transition plan over time ...”

Department staff continued that it is a Queensland-managed fishery, Commonwealth involvement is through the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment & Water (DCCEEW), and federal fisheries staff has had “some general discussions” with DCCEEW.

Senator Watt said: “There are any number of decisions that state governments make about state fisheries that the Commonwealth department doesn’t get involved in because our focus is Commonwealth fisheries.”

Senator DUNIAM: “Indeed. I accept that. Again, I make the point that this is an international obligation being

“I’ve obviously followed this debate, not only as a Queenslanders but as the Fisheries Minister. I’m also aware that there are definitely commercial fishers who are unhappy about this decision. My understanding is that there are very large numbers of recreational fishers who are very supportive of the decision”: Federal Fisheries Minister Murray Watt, commenting on the decision to ban gillnetting in the GBR region.

complied with by a Commonwealth Government in partnership with a State Government. It affects all Australians.”

“Rec fishers supportive”

Later, Senator Duniam asked: “Have you had any interaction with the industry, Minister, in Queensland about this, particularly QSIA?”

Senator Watt: “I haven’t had a conversation with them. I couldn’t rule out that they had raised it with my office or written in. Again, I would think that QSIA would be directing its efforts to the organisations that have a responsibility for this decision. This Department is not one of them. I’ve obviously followed this debate, not only as a Queenslanders but as the Fisheries Minister. I’m also aware that there are definitely commercial fishers who are unhappy about this decision. My understanding is that there are very large numbers of recreational fishers who are very supportive of the decision.”

Asked by Senator Duniam whether he had had any conversations with Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek on this issue, expressing any concern on behalf of the commercial fishing sector, Senator Watt responded: “I think I spoke to her about it around the time of the decision. I don’t remember the conversation clearly. I probably did raise the fact that there were concerns from commercial fishers but that there was support for it from recreational fishers and that there was support for it from the tourism industry. I think it was

a more broad-ranging conversation rather than me specifically advocating for something.”

“Overfishing” challenged

Senator Duniam returned to the gillnet issue later, asking: “Minister, in that interview you did for (ABC) Queensland Country Hour on 21 July, I think, you were quoted as saying: ‘If we do go the way we have been, with overfishing in those areas and catching all that bycatch and things like that, that would put not just the fish population at risk but it will risk people’s traditions of going out on their tinnie on the weekend and that kind of thing as well’. In terms of the overfishing comment you made, what data or information did you base that comment on?”

Senator Watt: “I would have to look back at the interview and at the time. I suspect you probably asked some questions at the environment estimates yesterday about the scientific basis for the decision. DCCEEW is best placed to answer those sort of questions.”

Senator Duniam: “Just in terms of your comments that you made in July, eight weeks after the decision was made, what was the source of your information?”

Senator Watt: “Again, I would have to go back and look at what I had read in the lead-up to that interview. It’s quite some time ago.”

Senator Duniam: “So you stand by that claim – that overfishing is occurring?”

Senator Watt: “Well, I think it’s a matter of record that there has been overfishing in a range of locations across Australia, including around the Great Barrier Reef. There has been ...”

Senator Duniam: “You do stand by those comments. While you are taking on notice the source of your information in preparing for that interview, can you also find out which species it was you were referring to as overfished?”

Senator Watt: “Sure.”

Senator Duniam: “That would be excellent. Thank you very much. Were you invited to the meeting in July 2022 between UNESCO representatives, the Prime Minister and the Minister for the Environment in relation to this issue?”

Senator Watt: “I would have to check my records to see whether I was invited. I don’t recall being invited. As I say, I don’t usually get



Senator Watt.

invited to meetings that don’t have any connection to my role, such as this.”

Senator Duniam: “If you take that on notice, that’s fine.”

State fisheries issue

In response to a question about federal involvement in the net-ban decision from Senator McDonald, Senator Watt responded: “As discussed earlier, Senator McDonald, the gill net restrictions don’t impact on Commonwealth fisheries.”

Senator McDonald: “Minister Plibersek wrote to UNESCO committing to banning net fishing around the Great Barrier Reef and that she would extend the net bans into the Gulf of Carpentaria to prevent those fishermen moving into the Gulf of Carpentaria. And so, whilst it may not be the policy of the federal agricultural department, it’s certainly the Environment Minister’s policy.”

Senator Watt: “To extend them into Commonwealth fisheries?”

Senator McDonald: “To extend net bans into Queensland.”

Senator Watt: “Into Commonwealth fisheries?”

Senator McDonald: “I appreciate the question you’re asking, but does it matter? She’s written to UNESCO banning nets. She hasn’t identified whether it’s Commonwealth or State borders, and neither have the fish.”

Senator Watt: “The point is that it’s not surprising that AFMA haven’t been involved in this because AFMA’s role and our role on fisheries is generally about Commonwealth fisheries.”

Senator McDonald: “My question to you is: given that the Environment Minister’s letter to UNESCO wasn’t discussing Commonwealth or state



Senator Duniam.

waters, but was talking about banning gill net fishing, I wonder if you would expect to be consulted by a Minister on a topic such as that?”

A bureaucrat from Senator Watt’s department responded: “Perhaps if I take a step back and do a very brief description of the jurisdictional arrangements of fisheries, because I think that will help to convey that it’s not a policy decision whether one agency is involved or not.

“The jurisdictional arrangements stem from the Constitution, which assigns management responsibility for fisheries in coastal waters, which is generally taken to be three nautical miles, to state and territory governments and jurisdiction for fisheries beyond three nautical miles to the Commonwealth government.

“Over time, over a period of decades, we’ve evolved what’s called a series of offshore constitutional settlements, which are basically agreements between each state and territory and the Commonwealth as to who will manage what kind of fishing where and when.

“In the case of the two fisheries that we’re talking about here, being gill netting on the east coast of Australia and gill netting on the Queensland coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria, the offshore constitutional settlements make it very clear that they are under the jurisdiction of the Queensland government.

“So to answer your question, no, I think it would be far more important and appropriate for the Commonwealth environment minister to be dealing thing with the Queensland fisheries department in coming up with whatever those arrangements or recommendations are.”



Senator McDonald.

“Go to Karumba”

Senator McDonald: “It’s going to be somewhat problematic for me going back and explaining this to the fishermen who are going to lose their careers and their industries – that despite having a federal fishing department and advisory agencies, I can’t provide them with any guidance at all and they’re on their own. I am unsure of where to go, because in Queensland – Minister Watt made the statement earlier that while he knew commercial fishermen were upset, recreational fishermen would be delighted. But, for somebody like me, who can’t catch my own fish, 80 per cent of fish in Queensland eaten is caught by commercial fishermen. I assume that means Friday night fish and chips is off the agenda for me.”

Senator Watt: “We’re pretty used to alarmist claims from National Party members.”

Senator McDonald: “Go to Karumba.”

Senator Watt: “It wasn’t that long ago that electric vehicles were going to end the weekend.”

Senator McDonald: “Minister, go to Karumba and talk to those guys, because they’re far more alarmed than I am!”

In response to Senator McDonald continuing “I’m trying to get an answer for my fishermen in Karumba, Mareeba ...”, Senator Watt responded: “Maybe your state colleagues could raise this with the state government. We went over this with Senator Duniam. What we do is regulate and administer Commonwealth fisheries. Happy to deal with any questions you’ve got about that.”

Note: This is brief excerpt from a lengthy transcript of the Estimates hearing involving Senator Watt.

Net bans will harm North Queensland

CLAIMS that banning commercial net fishing is necessary to protect the Great Barrier Reef and tourism jobs ignores the human cost of unnecessary and harsh government intervention, and also raises serious national security questions for North Queensland.

How does Labor justify also imposing net bans in the Gulf of Carpentaria and the Great Sandy Straits when they are about 600km and 155km respectively from the nearest part of the GBR?

It is deliberately misleading to insinuate gillnets are used on the Great Barrier Reef, but Queensland and Federal Labor are using this scare tactic to justify their betrayal of these communities.

These net bans will essentially wipe out Karumba and Normanton.

Families will move away, risking the closure of already limited education and childcare services.

House prices will collapse and residents will be left with crushing debt.

There will be fewer jobs, including for Indigenous communities.

Major support centres for fishing such as Townsville, Mareeba, Cairns and Cardwell will suffer job losses.

Consumers and retailers from Cooktown to Melbourne will lose ready and affordable access to wild-caught barramundi.

Labor likes to talk about protecting jobs but it is ignoring the impacts on fishers, net makers, marine mechanics, chandlers, cold storage operators, ice makers, transport companies, fish and chip shops, and seafood outlets.

I have met impacted fishers and seen their anguish, frustration and despair.

Seafood retailers from Cairns to Brisbane tell me there is no doubt these net bans will drive prices up for all seafood.

I challenge Labor Senators and Queensland MPs to look impacted people in the eye and explain why their livelihoods are being ruined.



Senator McDonald meeting with seafood business operators Dave Wren and Shawn McAtamney.

But they have run for cover at every turn because Labor's obsession with appeasing international radical activist groups is more important than defending its own citizens.

The other implication for North Queensland is that without net fishermen, there will be fewer eyes out for illegal boat arrivals, drug running and illegal fishing.

Border Force does an outstanding job intercepting these incursions but the role commercial fishers also play in monitoring our northern borders cannot be discounted.

Fishermen have gone well beyond the requirements for sustainable fishing and have been innovators in improving their industry's environmental measures.

Gulf fishers created and funded a barramundi hatchery in Karumba to release fingerlings back into the system each year.

They also asked to extend the Gulf closed barramundi season for an extra month – four months instead of the government-mandated three.

They have established their own "no go" zones to reduce pressure on fish populations, and they set their nets

far from where they know non-target species congregate.

Labor claims net fishing "only" accounts for 2.6% of the East Coast wild-caught seafood harvest, but what is the figure when the Gulf and Great Sandy Strait is included?

This figure also doesn't factor in the value of wild-caught barramundi - an iconic species sold around the country, highly sought after by tourists and which fetches top dollar at restaurants.

Nor does it account for the economic impacts on regional North Queensland or the cost increases already struggling families will have to pay for seafood.

Australian governments should be seeking ways to work with primary producers to ensure they can keep operating, not shutting them down.

The demise of commercial fishing in North Queensland, the decline of northern communities, the national security ramifications and the impacts on consumers and family businesses will be to Queensland and Federal Labor's eternal shame.

**Susan McDonald
Senator for Queensland**

Note: This article first appeared in the *Townsville Bulletin* newspaper on November 25.

Fisheries Act to be amended

There is a Bill before the Queensland Parliament to amend the Queensland Fisheries Act 1994 and the QSIA is looking for feedback from members on proposed changes.

THE Bill is before the State Development & Regional Industries Committee. Members of this committee are: Chris Whiting, MP Bancroft, Chair (ALP); Jim McDonald, Lockyer, Deputy Chair (LNP); Michael Hart, Burleigh (LNP); Robbie Katter, Traeger (KAP); Jim Madden, Ipswich West (ALP); and Tom Smith MP, Member for Bundaberg (ALP).

A submission to the Committee has to be made before 15 December 2023, so we have little time to prepare this, so please contact CEO David Bobbermen with feedback as soon as possible.

Note: The printed version of the magazine potentially will be received after December 15 but the electronic version will be received by QSIA members well before this date. David has also sent details of the legislation direct to members by email and can be contacted for further information

The short title of the Bill is the Agriculture and Fisheries and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023.

It is making changes to a number of existing pieces of legislation, including some unrelated to fishing, but the main objectives affecting the Fisheries Act 1994 (Fisheries Act) aim to:

- ❑ introduce a framework for independent onboard monitoring (IOM) under the Fisheries Act as an outstanding element of the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017-2027 (the Strategy), and to meet key commitments made by the Queensland Government to support the Great Barrier Reef (GBR);
- ❑ enhance the efficacy of and modernise provisions relating to fisheries enforcement; and
- ❑ streamline the process for amending aquaculture approvals by creating a separate approval for operational components to be processed under the Fisheries Act.

Independent onboard monitoring

The State Government explanation with the proposed Fisheries Act changes say that, on 28 November 2022, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization (UNESCO) released the Report on

the Reactive Monitoring Mission to the Great Barrier Reef (GBR), 21-30 March 2022 (the Report).

The explanation says: "The Report recommended the GBR be inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger and identified 10 priority and 12 additional recommendations for urgent implementation. Impacts from the commercial fishing sector on threatened species is a key consideration for UNESCO in determining whether to list as 'in danger'.

"Such a listing would have major economic and reputational impacts on the Queensland tourism industry and the Queensland Government.

"To address the priority and additional recommendations, the Queensland Government has six key commitments, including legislating the requirement for mandatory Independent onboard monitoring (IOM) for the remaining 'NI-limited' gillnet licences, and the east coast trawl fishery, by March 2024.

"If IOM is not implemented in priority Queensland commercial fisheries, WTO export approvals may be revoked. Consequently, fishing access particularly within the GBR World Heritage Area may be reviewed, resulting in reduced or restricted access and less commercial catch and supply of seafood to domestic and international markets."

Fishing enforcement

Discussing the issue of enhancing and clarifying fishing enforcement, it says a further objective of the Bill is to amend the Fisheries Act to enhance the efficacy of certain provisions relating to fisheries enforcement.

"The provisions in the Bill in this regard, generally fulfill the objectives under Item 9 of the Strategy and more specifically Action Item 9.3 to strengthen enforcement powers, particularly in relation to serious fisheries offences and black-market sales of seafood.

"Action Item 9.5 of the Strategy, to promote cross-decking with other enforcement organisations and

establish formal arrangements to facilitate data sharing and collaborative compliance effort, is supported by the amendment to the powers of police when executing a warrant."

Aquaculture authority

The explanatory document says that, under the present framework, the vast majority of Queensland aquaculture development is authorised under a development approval (DA) issued under planning legislation, such as the Planning Act.

"The current DA process is difficult to administer for aquaculture development, planning legislation limits the conditions that can be recommended for developments and any amendments to conditions must be requested by an applicant.

"A more responsive process is needed to address situations like an emerging biosecurity risk where the conditions attached to a DA for an aquaculture operation need to be amended to ensure that the operation does not contribute to the biosecurity risk."

Argument for IOM

Elsewhere in the explanatory document, the State Government makes the argument for compulsory independent onboard monitoring.

"The Department of Agriculture & Fisheries (DAF) collects information on commercial fishing through various means, including compulsory logbooks, quota reporting, satellite tracking on all commercial fishing vessels (vessel tracking), biological monitoring, and research," it says.

"Retained catch validation occurs through routine and risk-based inspections by the Queensland Boating & Fisheries Patrol and fishing effort is validated through vessel tracking. There is currently no process in place for independently monitoring catch that has not been retained or protected animal interactions.

"Implementing IOM will:

- ❑ improve understanding and management of fishing and its impacts on the wider marine ecosystem;
- ❑ satisfy the conditions of Wildlife Trade Operation (WTO) approvals under the Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth) (EPBC Act) and thereby maintain access to export markets;

Continued on next page.

Continued from previous page.

- support sustainable management of the GBR World Heritage Area and maintain access to key fishing grounds; and
- support industry-led third-party sustainability certification schemes and provide opportunities to improve seafood traceability, demonstrate provenance and develop new markets.

“Clause 173 of the Bill amends the Fisheries Act to establish a framework for IOM requirements which allows data reported by commercial fishers on bycatch or interactions with protected species to be independently validated.

“The amendments support two methods of IOM: independent onboard observers and onboard camera systems. Both methods can collect accurate information on bycatch and detect interactions with protected species during commercial fishing activities.

“The information collected can then be compared with logbooks provided by fishers to validate the logbook data independently.

“Onboard observer conditions under the amendments will authorise the chief executive or a regulation to impose an onboard observer condition where it is reasonably necessary to monitor whether the purposes of the Fisheries Act are being achieved or how commercial fishing activities are conducted under an authority.

“This would require an authority holder to permit an independent onboard observer to be on the fishing vessel monitoring commercial fisheries activities being undertaken and collecting information, such as the catch of protected marine animals or other compliance data.

“Video monitoring conditions under the amendments will similarly authorise the chief executive or a regulation to impose a video monitoring condition where it is reasonably necessary for monitoring purposes, for example on boats fishing in select high-risk fisheries.

“This would require an authority holder to install approved camera monitoring equipment on their boat to record and monitor commercial fishing activities. The footage will be supplied to DAF to be used in independently validating data.”

Funding for IOM

The document says a total of \$45.496 million has been invested

by the Queensland Government to support implementation of the Strategy to date, with a further \$13.175 million already committed for 2022-23 and \$7.5 million in 2023-24 to support continued implementation.

“The total government commitment over eight years is \$66.171 million. The 2023-24 Queensland budget papers included \$22 million over four years for implementing IOM. This funding is contingent on equivalent co-funding from the Commonwealth.

“However, the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment & Water have confirmed that they have allocated \$22 million towards the implementation of IOM as part of a broader \$60 million package to support the reef policy area.

“Plans for an agreement to have this funding package delivered in the first quarter of 2024 are currently being developed. Following implementation, the costs of an ongoing IOM program will be shared between government and industry.”

Fundamental principles

Discussing consistency with fundamental legislative principles, the explanation says some of the proposed legislative amendments depart from the fundamental legislative principles set out in section 4 of the Legislative Standards Act 1992 (LS Act).

“This departure allows important policy objectives in the community’s interest to be achieved,” it argues.

In the proposed fisheries legislation, proposals engaging fundamental legislative principles include the independent onboard monitoring.

“The introduction of a new IOM framework will support requirements for IOM in select high-risk fisheries prescribed by regulation. This amendment requires fishers to install cameras, and to accommodate fisheries observers on commercial fishing vessels, which may be seen to impact their rights to privacy and to conduct their business without interference.

“This may infringe upon fundamental legislative principles not listed in the LS Act, that legislation should not abrogate common law rights without sufficient justification (property rights and privacy rights), and legislation should not, without sufficient justification, unduly restrict ordinary activities.

“The imposition upon fishers’ privacy is mitigated, to some extent, by the fact that observers and cameras

will only be placed, or conduct their observation functions, in areas of fishing vessels where catch is landed, sorted and discarded.

“IOM equipment will not be placed in areas of the vessels (for example, living quarters) in which persons on board would have a reasonable expectation of privacy. Further, DAF is engaging in ongoing consultation with fisheries stakeholders (including through a voluntary trial) to determine how e-monitoring (camera) and independent observers may be accommodated on vessels with the least-possible impact to fishing operations.

“Requiring fishers to accommodate fisheries observers on their vessels also constitutes an interference with fishers’ personal property. Fisheries observers will have to be given access to sleeping quarters and food on the vessels to which they have been assigned.

“Consultation is ongoing as to where responsibility for these arrangements should lie and the potential for the financial impacts upon a fishing operator for providing for an observer. Where possible, IOM will be done through e-monitoring. However, some fisheries will require physical observers either because the Commonwealth has conditioned that in its export approvals or a video would not be able to identify the species that are sought to be observed (for example, certain species of coral, which appear similar to rocks on camera).

“IOM is necessary (and is the only possible method) for validating information on retained catch and determining levels of non-target species catch, including interactions with protected animals.

“Further, significant fisheries trade arrangements are (and will continue to be) contingent upon meeting federal and international fisheries standards, one of which is IOM.

“The benefits gained by better and more accurate fisheries management through IOM (specifically, improved protection of Queensland’s fisheries and marine ecosystems, and ensuring the State’s continued compliance with, and eligibility for, international trade of fisheries stock) are considered to justify the impact of the IOM program on fishers’ rights, liberties and property.

“Any departure from fundamental legislative principles is justified for the reasons identified above.”

MARKETING

COOL news great for Aussie fishers and consumers

GREAT news for Australian professional fishers and seafood consumers: country-of-origin labelling (COOL) is on the way for restaurant menus throughout the nation.

A Federal Government announcement in late November said a meeting of Consumer Affairs Ministers had locked in a requirement for Australian seafood to be labelled on menus in restaurants, cafes and clubs.

A statement from Assistant Minister for Manufacturing & Assistant Minister for Trade, Tim Ayres, said: “Seafood country of origin labelling will ensure that Australians will always know whether the seafood meal they purchase is from Australia or overseas.

“Latest figures suggest more than 60 per cent of seafood bought by Australians is imported and this is increasing every year.

“However, there is no consistent country-of-origin information available in hospitality settings for Australians to make informed decisions.

“The fishing and seafood industry has been fighting for this reform for over 15 years. The industry employs 17,000 Australians, almost all in regional areas on trawlers or in processing and wholesale.

“The Australian-Imported-Mixed (AIM) model is a practical and low-cost approach that strikes the right balance between improving consumer information while minimising business costs and impacts.

“The AIM model has broad support from consumers, industry and government stakeholders, and is estimated to have a positive net benefit.

“The model will be introduced in 2025, after a suitable transition period and an education campaign.

“Over the coming months, advice will become available to help the hospitality and seafood sectors understand and adjust to these new requirements.”

Senator Ayres said the Albanese Labor Government had delivered on its commitment to improve seafood labelling across the country.

“The Australian-Imported-Mixed model is a simple and practical approach that strikes the right balance between informing consumers while minimising costs to businesses.

“I appreciate the extensive contributions of the hospitality sector, consumer interest groups and the seafood industry in developing this proposal.”

Industry welcome

Seafood Industry Australia CEO Veronica Papacosta welcomed the decision.

“Consumers should have the right to make informed choices about the food they purchase and consume,” she said.

“Adopting country-of-origin labelling legislation for seafood sold in food service will enhance consumer awareness, support the Australian seafood industry, create jobs, and have positive economic impacts, as evidenced by a cost-benefit analysis conducted on behalf of the Australian Government.

“With 62 per cent of seafood consumed in Australia being imported, it is imperative that consumers dining out have access to clear and accurate information about the origin of the seafood they are served. This information is critical for supply chain transparency and informed choices.”

LICENCES

BOUGHT SOLD LEASED

Specialising in
Licences
and Quota

All Inquiries Welcome
Maurie and Val Ahchay

NAUTILUS BOAT BROKERAGE

Ph: 07 4954 6200 Fax: 07 4954 8359
Mobile: 0438 - 546 200
Email: vahchay@cqnet.com.au

43 Shepherd Road, Eimeo, Q 4740

RESEARCH

AIMS tags sawfish in the NT

SCIENTISTS from the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) have had a successful trip tagging sawfish in the Northern Territory.

A recent LinkedIn post said AIMS scientist Vinay Udyawer joined the Northern Territory Seafood Council (NTSC) to safely capture, tag and release four adult sawfish (two green sawfish and two dwarf sawfish) in Anson Bay and the Daly River region.

“We’re wanting to understand the movement patterns of the threatened animal in and adjacent to important fishing grounds,” Dr Udyawer said.

“Water samples and genetic samples were also collected. From the water samples, DNA will be extracted to identify if any other sawfish species occur in the area, while genetic samples may be able to tell researchers if the sawfish are connected to populations in other areas in the NT, including Buckingham and Arnhem Bays where the team collected samples last year.

“Data will help to inform management decisions to conserve the species.

“This research was made possible by a partnership between AIMS, NTSC, the Research Institute for the Environment & Livelihoods, Charles Darwin University and Parks Australia. The project is supported with Our Marine Park grant funding from the Australian Government.”

To see the original post, go to: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/northern-territory-seafood-council-exciting-news-were-thrilled-to-share-that-activity-7123525121838915584-Te_j?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android

Fibreglass Materials and Polyurethane Foam

Insulation for Ice Boxes, Deck Boxes, Freezer Holds etc.
COMPETITIVE PRICES
COLDESIGN PTY LTD
20/115 DOLLIS STREET ROCKLEA 4106
Phone (07) 3274 4308
Fax (07) 3274 5140

THE GULL



Entangled

THE net ban plan for the GBR coast looks to me like a mess and I don't know what's going to be sorted out by the time the closure to taking of barramundi lifts on February 1.

It's almost Christmas and there just doesn't look enough working weeks left between now and February 1 to get it sorted.

Part of the problem is the decision to get rid of the N2 and N4 nets immediately.

What's the push to get rid of the N2 and N4 nets so soon?

I have read the letter from Federal Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek to UNESCO – the one she sent on May 25 this year – and I don't see any promise to ban N2 and N4 nets in such a short time frame.

I can imagine environmental activists like WWF and the Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) wanted them gone. Is that the reason it's happened this way?

As it says in an article elsewhere in this edition of the magazine, the Plibersek document raises the question of where and when the 31 December 2023 ban on the use of N2 and N4 gillnets was decided.

"Nowhere in the list of undertakings to UNESCO from Federal Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek is there any mention of removing nets throughout the GBR region by 31 December 2023.

"There is an undertaking to 'phase out all destructive gillnet fisheries' by 30 June 2027.

"There is also an undertaking to establish a complete net-free zone in the northern third of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (Cape Bedford to the tip of Cape York) by 31 December 2023.

"So, that begs a question: where, when, how and by whom was a decision made to impose a total ban on N2 and N4 nets throughout the entire GBR region by 31 December 2023, something never promised to UNESCO in Federal and State Government undertakings conveyed to UNESCO by Federal Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek?"

That's a good question.

Next year there will be a limited number of what are going to be called NX nets – I presume "X" stands for "unknown" at this stage because there doesn't seem to be a lot of details around – but only about 40 of those in place of around 100 N2s.

And I wonder how close the competitive total allowable catch (TAC) quota for NX nets will be to the total of the individual quotas for N2s?

So, it comes back to the question of why the rush to get rid of N2s and N4s now when mid-2027 seems a much more sensible timeframe – allowing industry time to adjust properly and allowing researchers time to look for viable alternative catching methods.

WWF and AMCS seem always happy to get rid of nets – long gone are the days when WWF was helping fishermen work on gillnet modifications – and they do seem to have the ear of the State Government.

Effectively, these bans will also give the State Government more "net-free zones" to add to the many that already exist, including those declared by the current Government a few years back around Rockhampton, Mackay and Cairns, and they'd probably reckon that's a good thing.

There should be some serious questions asked why the Queensland Government is pushing so hard to give UNESCO so much more than it asked for, so much more than it was promised and so much more than it should have expected.

Big Brother

CAMERAS on boats are on their way, to watch over fishers while they work, monitoring what they catch.

I wonder how public service employees would respond if the same Queensland Government suggested cameras be installed to watch over their shoulders on the days they work from home, just to monitor their activity during working hours.

Reckon the unions might have something to say about it?

Tourism

WHEN Oprah Winfrey came to Queensland in 2010 and gave our Whitsundays tourism businesses an enormous boost, she didn't go fishing.

However, she did sample a stellar

selection of the Sunshine State's fabulous seafood, delivered on platters fresh from the ocean straight to Oprah on a sparkling white Whitsundays beach.

Rather than going fishing herself, Oprah allowed other people to catch the seafood and she simply dined on it.

That's what at least three-quarters of the population does, those people who don't catch their own seafood but love to eat it regularly, especially when they are on holidays or dining out.

Restaurant-owners in places like the Whitsundays certainly understand the appeal of wild-caught, locally-caught seafood, and they promote it on their menus.

And it's why they are protesting about the net bans that will impact their supplies of iconic barramundi.

I doubt the State Government ever gave much thought to the impacts of their net bans on the wider business community throughout North Queensland, including on top tourist restaurants.

Cool decision

LET'S finish up with some good news. In fact, great news: State and Federal Governments have decided to introduce country-of-origin seafood labelling in restaurants and other food service outlets across the country.

It won't happen till 2025 but it will happen.

This is something the Aussie seafood industry has been fighting for for years and years, and it's finally going to come to pass.

Providing it's properly policed, this will mean people who want to choose Australian-harvested seafood will be able to see on the menu which dishes contain dinkum fish and which dishes contain stuff that has travelled probably a lot further than they have.

That's a win for the whole fishing industry and for consumers as well.

Good cheer

IT'S been a tough year but let's all take some time over Christmas to celebrate what is really most precious to us all: family and friends. Let's be of good cheer. Merry Christmas



Servicing the Maritime Industry since 1978

Your local TMQ Agent for Far North QLD



In House Service Department
Specialising In:
Life Raft Service, Radio & Compass
Survey, Marine Electronics



Wide Range of Professional
Quality Marine Electronics:
Radar, Echo Sounders, Radio,
Antennas, TV & Internet, GMDSS



Visit our Showroom: 16 Liberty Street, Portsmith, QLD, 4870

Tel: 07 4050 0090 | Email: CairnsSales@nauticalsupplies.com.au

Download or request a printed catalogue: www.nauticalsupplies.com.au

Now operational at the Urangan Boat Harbour (Qld)

300 tonne Shiplift

Complete
repair &
maintenance
facilities
available
on site...



- 300 tonne, 12m beam Travel Lift
- 40 tonne, 5m beam Travel Lift
- 60 x 20 x 15m high Covered Workshop
- Sand Blasting & Spray Painting
- Wash Down & Work Areas
- Engineering & Welding
- Diesel Fitters & Mechanics
- 24V/240V Electricians
- Marine Electronics
- Shipwrights
- Fibre Glassing & Upholstery
- Long & Short Term Storage



- 130 Berth Marina (all with power & water)
- 9m berths up to 24m
- Mens, Ladies, Disabled & Unisex Showers / Toilets



- Coin Operated Washing Machines & Dryers
- Electronic Security Keys
- Long & Short Term Vehicle Parking

*A new addition to Hervey Bay's
Fishermans Wharf Marina*

**Murphy
Shiplifts**
Fishermans Wharf Marina Hervey Bay

**Fishermans Wharf**
MARINA & SHIP LIFTS - HERVEY BAY

Haul Out enquiries 07 4128 9744

Marina enquiries 07 4128 9119

www.fishermanswharfmarinaherveybay.com.au
864 Boat Harbour Dr Urangan, Qld 4655