MEDIA RELEASE

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DISAPPOINTMENT ON SCALLOP ANNOUNCEMENT

COMMERCIAL fishers have expressed disappointment over the Queensland Government decision to continue a ban on scallop fishing in the State's major production region.

Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA) Executive Officer David Bobbermen said harvesting of scallops had been banned in trawl-fishing grounds from approximately Yeppoon to Hervey Bay for more than four years.

A decision announced today by the Queensland Government would see this ban continue indefinitely, Mr Bobbermen said.

"Trawl operators I have spoken to, along with seafood processors and marketers, are very disappointed with this decision," he said. "We would have preferred a cautious re-opening of the grounds so that fishers could explore and see what scallops are out there.

"The scallop population in what is called the 'southern inshore region' was previously calculated to be around 15 per cent of what it would have been without any fishing and the Queensland Government wants this to be at least 20 per cent of the 'unfished population' before re-opening the fishery.

"The harvesting of scallops there was banned in September 2021. It's hard to believe that, after four years with no harvesting of scallops, the population has not moved from 15 per cent to at least 20 per cent. There was a short survey in 2025 but allowing boats to cautiously explore for scallops, with daily monitoring, would be a more effective way of discovering what quantity of scallops might be out there."

Mr Bobbermen said scallop populations historically had fluctuated widely from one season to the next and they were difficult to predict.

"A year ago, trawlers catching prawns in the same region were catching and releasing large quantities of scallops, indicating a sizeable population. Have these scallops simply disappeared?"

He added that what is classified as the "central trawl grounds" – from approximately Yeppoon to Cairns – had also been closed to scallop fishing as a precaution for an identical four-year period. This region will now be re-opened but generally produces far smaller catches than the southern region.

"The QSIA will continue talking to the Queensland Government about scallop management to try to find a more sophisticated solution to this issue."

Note: Map of Queensland east coast trawl regions:
https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/ckan-publications-attachments-prod/resources/a7aadd66-158f-4575-b0af-44032921813a/map-trawl-region-areas.pdf?ETag=d82ff72e0ff6c3163fb2b097b2a0c365

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About the Queensland Commercial Fishing Industry

The Queensland Commercial Fishing Industry operates along the Queensland Coast using varied apparatus, mainly pots, lines, nets and trawling. Historically, it is an industry important to many small coastal towns. In the most recent economic data (2021-22 year), it contributed over $250 million to the State's GVP. This contribution was valued at "beach price" – which significantly undervalues the industry. Over 900 businesses work in the industry, employing around 3,000 people.

About QSIA

Queensland Seafood Industry Association Inc (QSIA) is Queensland's peak membership-based organisation representing businesses in the wild harvest commercial seafood industry in Queensland. Its history dates back over 100 years. Membership activity ranges from the NSW border to the NT border and encompasses all forms of commercial fishing – namely line, pot, net and trawl. QSIA also has members that provide pre- and post-harvest goods and services to the industry.

The QSIA Vision is:

The trusted advocate for a profitable, thriving and sustainable Queensland Wild Caught Seafood Industry.

QSIA Mission:

To champion Queensland's wild-caught seafood industry, its people, and its communities by enhancing profitability, supporting best practices, fostering innovation, and maintaining sustainability.

QSIA is proud and honoured to have Mr Keith Payne VC, AM as its patron.