



MBSIA

MEDIA RELEASE

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EPA's RUSHED DEADLINE FOR MORETON BAY BUYOUT CREATES OCEAN OF PROBLEMS FOR SEAFOOD INDUSTRY, COMMUNITY & GOVERNMENT

THE Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is creating "an ocean of problems" by its refusal to give Moreton Bay professional fishers sufficient time to decide whether or not to end their fishing careers by tendering their licences.

Spokesmen for the two fishing industry organisations involved with Moreton Bay have both condemned EPA's actions as "hasty and ill-considered".

They claim EPA is creating serious problems for the seafood industry, consumers and the Queensland Government that will continue for months to come.

Professional fishers had been given barely a month to make the biggest decision of their working lives: did they want to stay in Moreton Bay and keep fishing or did they want to go into EPA's "lottery" for a fishing licence buyout.

The deadline for fishers to submit an application for a licence buyout was tomorrow (28/11).

In a joint statement, Mr John Page of the Moreton Bay Seafood Industry Association (MBSIA), and Mr Neil Green, President of the Statewide peak body, the Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA), said fishers had not been given sufficient time to make a considered decision.

"The rezoning plan was only announced on October 19, fishermen didn't receive details for another week, and then they had to try to get accounting and legal advice, and complete a licence buyout application, all by Friday, November 28. EPA are rushing this through and they haven't properly thought through the consequences," they said.

Mr Page said: "Fishers and other business people involved in the seafood industry in Moreton Bay have explained to the Environmental Protection Agency that they have not been given enough time to prepare a properly-considered application.

"EPA warned that fishers should get independent financial and legal advice before deciding whether or not to submit an application, and then refused to give them time enough to arrange an appointment with their accountants and solicitors, let alone examine that advice and make a considered decision.

"EPA should have extended the deadline. They have been working on this issue at their own pace for ages and now they are rushing fishers to the high jump. What's their rush? Why are they trying to get this over with and out of the way, rather than doing the job properly?"

