
MEDIA RELEASE

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EPA “short changing” Queensland Government and seafood industry on costs of Moreton Bay Marine Park fishing bans

THE Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has short changed both the seafood industry and the Queensland Government in its estimates of the costs of its Moreton Bay Marine Park fishing bans.

Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA) Senior Vice President Mr Robin Hansen said EPA had allowed a total of \$15 million for buying out fishing licences but the true cost would be closer to four times that much annually.

“We are calling on the Queensland Government to independently review the impacts of the fishing bans,” Mr Hansen said. “The area closed to professional fishermen is larger than people think and the costs will certainly be far higher than EPA have told the Government.

“EPA has told the State Government a figure of \$15 million will make up for the fishing losses. Our research suggests the annual losses will be closer to \$60 million and there’s no way EPA’s budgeted figure will cover the true cost.

“EPA is proposing a structural adjustment package for professional fishermen, where they buy out a certain number of licences. We saw exactly the same thing in the rezoning of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park in 2004, where bureaucrats told the Federal Government rezoning would cost industry no more than \$2.6 million a year.

“Well, so far the Federal Government has paid out more than \$250 million to businesses damaged by the GBR Marine Park bans. EPA is going down exactly the same track.”

Mr Hansen said that, while the EPA was publicising the fact 16% of the Moreton Bay Marine Park was closed to fishing, in fact the QSIA estimated more than 50% was closed to one or more forms of commercial fishing.

“As well as the 16% of the Marine Park totally closed to all forms of fishing in ‘no fishing’ green zones, professional fishing in one form or another is also banned from ‘recreational only’ yellow zones and ‘no trawling’ dark blue zones.

“Also, fishermen say many of their most productive fishing grounds have been locked away by the new bans -- deliberately locked away, they believe -- and that this will mean the actual seafood production losses will be a far higher proportion than the simple area of the closures.

