

Queensland Seafood Industry Association

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MEDIA RELEASE

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LARGE GULF FISHING BANS WOULD MEAN MORE SEAFOOD IMPORTED AND MORE AUSTRALIAN JOBS EXPORTED, SAYS QSIA

THE Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA) is disappointed at the large size of the proposed marine reserves for the North Region, particularly in Queensland waters in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

“Fishing bans in these large proposed reserves would simply mean more foreign seafood being imported and more Australian jobs exported, QSIA President Michael Gardner said today.

“The release of the North & North West Marine Bioregional Plans by Environment Minister Tony Burke signals the start of a 90-day consultation period,” he said. “During this period, the QSIA will undertake a comprehensive review of the draft plan and provide advice to the Government on alternative options that minimise impacts on the fishing industry and the regional communities they support.”

“However, at first glance it appears there is some work to do, as the draft plan will reduce some productive fishing grounds that provide a high quality product to Australian seafood consumers.

“The Association has been working to ensure our well managed fisheries are recognised in this process but the Government appears to have targeted a number of fisheries they intend to shut down and are doing so through this marine planning process.

“These include fisheries assessed as sustainable by fisheries managers; in fact, even assessed as sustainable by the Environment Department. Yet this same Department is imposing these large scale marine parks and excluding these fisheries from multiple use areas.

“It is possible to have zones that preserve biodiversity and ecological features and still have low risk sustainable fishing practices that provide an important source of seafood for the Australian public.

“We will be working closely with our members and other sectors of the fishing industry to achieve the best outcomes from this planning process. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that every time the Federal Government closes another area to fishing, it forces more seafood to be imported, exports more jobs and weakens Australia’s food security. We will be working with the Government to ensure these issues are front and centre in the final design of the marine park.”

FURTHER INFORMATION: Michael Gardner and Winston Harris