

Queensland Seafood Industry Association

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MEDIA RELEASE

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FUNDING WELCOMED FOR CYCLONE YASI INDUSTRY RECOVERY OFFICER FOR SEAFOOD

THE Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA) has welcomed funding for appointment of an Industry Recovery Officer to help seafood producers get back on their feet after Cyclone Yasi.

QSIA President Michael Gardner said it was great news that the 12 Industry Recovery Officers (IROs) that would be employed to assist primary producers in the cyclone-affected region would include one dedicated to seafood producers.

"This will provide an immediate morale boost for affected producers and practical assistance for them over coming months," Mr Gardner said. "The plan is that IROs will work directly with producers to help them access the various forms of government assistance on offer and also provide a link between the on-ground clean up and recovery effort and key business and farm management advisors.

"I understand that the IROs will work with producers in sorting through the paperwork required for the various State and Federal assistance available, which should be of great assistance as seafood industry members focus on getting their operations back on track."

Mr Gardner said the employment of IROs would follow today's agreement between the Queensland Government and the Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) on a \$1.7 million nine-month project. In turn, a number of primary industry representative bodies, including the Queensland Seafood Industry Association and Australian Prawn Farmers' Association, would work with the QFF to facilitate the employment of 12 IROs.

Mr Gardner also said it was significant that the seafood industry IRO was expected to be working with producers this week.

"Agriculture, Food & Regional Economies Minister Tim Mulherin said the officers will be on the ground this week as part of the new Operation Clean Up Queensland program, and it is good news this is happening so quickly" Mr Gardner said.

"Mr Mulherin has said that the IROs will work with local industry and business to assist in prioritising debris clearing, and help landholders determine their recovery needs. They will be targeting the severely impacted areas of the Cassowary Coast, Hinchinbrook and parts of the Tablelands, Charters Towers, Etheridge and Flinders. "They will be providing direct, face-to-face help on the ground, and they will link individuals with financial counsellors, mental health professionals and farming system experts."

Mr Gardner said the seafood industry IRO would be based in Cairns. The QSIA would provide further information direct to wild-catch seafood producers in the region but anyone wanting further information in the meantime should telephone the QSIA office on (07) 3262 6855.

**FURTHER INFORMATION: Michael Gardner
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