

Queensland Seafood Industry Association

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MEDIA RELEASE

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REGIONAL MANAGEMENT THE WAY OF THE FUTURE FOR FISHERIES

SUNFISH is running a scare campaign to try to wreck a local community-based fisheries management project in the Burdekin.

“Sunfish is coming in from outside the Burdekin with a campaign of misinformation to try to stop regional management happening with fisheries in the Burdekin,” Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA) President Michael Gardner said today. “They are opposed to commercial fishing and are opposed to anything that might help local commercial and recreational fishermen work more harmoniously.”

Mr Gardner said it should be remembered that the Burdekin regional management proposal was originated by local fishermen.

“Local commercial and recreational fishermen got together to try to find a better way to manage their fisheries to the benefit of the environment and benefit of the local community,” he said. “They suggested some local solutions to local problems, involving give and take, and came up with perfectly reasonable proposals that won local community support.”

“Sunfish is running a campaign with misinformation claiming the areas reopened to netting are far greater than what is proposed and making nonsense statements set to scare people and denigrate the responsible action of local commercial and recreational fishermen.”

“The facts are that the extended proposed boundary reopens a 4.5 km stretch of river at the mouth of the Burdekin. This is difficult to access for recreational anglers and is lightly fished. This has been offset by closing to netting a longer than 10 km section of the Homehill beach creating a better outcome for recreational fishers and the local beach community.”

“This is part of developing wide ranging changes to managing the resource in the area with adjustments to things like net gear and practices, permits, voluntary exclusion zones to netting to eliminate interaction with species of conservation interest like dugong and marine park zoning adjustments that will have benefits to all sections of the community.”

“Sunfish certainly does not want local commercial and recreational fishermen taking positive action. In fact, if Sunfish was genuinely interested in better fisheries management in Queensland, then it should be supporting the regional management process.”

Mr Gardner described regional management as “the way of the future” and said the process has strong support from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), Fisheries Queensland (FQ) and the Burdekin Shire Council.

“Regional management involves local stewardship of the waterways, the marine environment and ensuring responsible, sustainable fishing practices by all users of fisheries resources. It is all about

local people having a real say in how local fisheries resources are managed. It will set local rules for commercial fishing, for example, and ensure fishermen from outside the area have to follow rules set by local fishermen who understand the area”

“Sunfish represents a tiny proportion of anglers but one would have hoped it would see the many positives of the process and work with the process to achieve a good outcome for all. Unfortunately it comes back to their basic policy of wanting to eliminate all netting from areas like the Burdekin so the resource belongs to them alone. It exposes them as selfish, obstructive and irresponsible and it is sad to see them living in the past and unable to embrace innovative improvements to managing our fisheries resources to the benefit of our communities.”

“The process will proceed however because it has major benefits and is strongly supported by the GBRMPA, FQ and both Federal and State environment departments.”

For more information contact Michael Gardner on 0409 991 150.