

Queensland Seafood Industry Association

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MEDIA RELEASE

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QSIA SAYS “THANK YOU” FOR COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE IN FLOODS

THE Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA) has thanked Gulf of Carpentaria communities for assistance during the recent flooding in the region.

QSIA spokesman Robert Pender said the help and support of local individuals, businesses and organisations had been a “life saver” for the region's fishing families.

“The QSIA wishes to acknowledge the united effort that the people in the communities of Normanton and Karumba and the broader region have achieved during the extensive road closures over the past weeks,” Mr Pender said.

“Flooding at the Flinders River and both Norman River crossings meant that product had to be transported up the Norman River from Karumba to Normanton via barge, where it was unloaded onto a truck, then again unloaded onto another barge and then finally onto road transport on the other side.

“The operation continued 24-hours-a-day for weeks on end and the result was that, for the most part, fishers were able to continue to operate without interruption,” he said.

“The viability of many inshore gillnet fishers revolves round being able to operate efficiently at the start of the barra season. Distributors rely on the early stocks in readiness for Easter and are usually low on stock after the four-month summertime spawning closure.

“It's not only barramundi that has been transported during the floods. Local aerial charter operators and people with boats and vehicles have helped with transport of mud crabs as well.

“This extra assistance was underscored by goodwill, with no monetary compensation. In many cases, the associated costs have not been passed on to fishers or even highlighted,” Mr Pender said.

Mr Pender said naming individuals, businesses and organisations risked overlooking some who had provided assistance but he particularly wanted to record fishermen's appreciation for the efforts of Raptis Coldstores and staff, Wren Coldstores, Hawkins Transport, Greg and Leanne Campbell's barge and staff, Carpentaria Shire Mayor Fred Pascoe, Council staff and others, including volunteers who had been contributing tirelessly.

“Without the services they have provided and continue to provide every year, Gulf seafood would be an unreliable product that distributors would have to consider alternatives to,” Mr Pender said.

“Fishers in the Gulf acknowledge the efforts of the communities of Normanton and Karumba and the broader region. On behalf of QSIA members, I express my gratitude and respect for all those who have thrown in to keep the wheels turning.”

Mr Pender said fishermen had been working together and also appreciated the visit of Minister for Agriculture, Food & Regional Economies, Tim Mulherin, and Member for Mount Isa, Betty Kiernan, to talk to locals at Karumba, Normanton and Burketown about recent flood events.

Fishermen were looking forward to follow-up discussions with Ms Kiernan in coming weeks.

FURTHER INFORMATION: Mr Robert Pender on (07) 4745 9119 or 0427 373 844.