

Queensland Seafood
Industry Association

www.queenslandseafood.com.au

2012 Queensland State Election

**Actions to Achieve Sustainable and Economic
Fisheries Management**



Actions to Achieve Sustainable & Economic Fisheries



1. FISHERIES IS A **FOOD PRODUCING** PRIMARY INDUSTRY

Commit to restore the status of Fisheries Queensland to where it rightly belongs as an important primary industry food producing sector - within the Primary Industries portfolio.

2. **MANAGING** OUR FISHERIES

2.1 Commission an independent review of fisheries management, administration and Queensland fisheries policy. The objectives of the review will be to make recommendations to government on a more progressive and economically viable fisheries management regime that provides greater certainty to stakeholders underpinned by the principles of sustainable fisheries management.

2.2 Introduce an effective monitoring and data collection system for the recreational fishing sector that provides significantly better data and contributes to improved management of sustainable marine resources and fish stocks for future generations. Further, for the government to consider an appropriate cost recovery mechanism to support this system.

3. **RESOURCE** SHARING

3.1 Investigate with commercial fishers the benefits of a resource sharing allocation with the recreational and charter sectors to promote economic viability of line fishers in Queensland. This would ensure long term sustainability of fisheries coming under increased effort from the recreational and charter sectors while preserving the public's access to local wild caught seafood.

3.2 Commit to immediately review the Queensland State Government's structural adjustment and environmental offset policies. This is particularly important given the massive developments occurring in coastal habitats causing loss of fisheries habitat impacting the commercial fishing industry. As already demonstrated in Gladstone these developments have the capacity to severely impact on the supply of fresh local seafood.

4. **INVESTMENT** IN OUR **INFRASTRUCTURE**

Work with the commercial fishing industry to conduct an audit of existing commercial fishing industry marine infrastructure including berthing and unload facilities in an effort to address any identified infrastructure gaps.

5. **FUTURE PROOFING** THE SEAFOOD SECTOR

Work with the seafood industry to prepare for the impacts of climate change.

6. **MARINE** PARKS

Commit to a moratorium on the introduction of any more marine parks in state waters.

7. QUEENSLAND SUSTAINABLE TRAWL FISHERY

Expeditious completion of the Trawl Plan Review. The Review began in early 2010. The TAG (Technical Advisory Group) providing advice to Fisheries Queensland reached a position in 2011 that it was necessary to remove substantial Effort Units from the fishery. An initial approach to the current Government for funding to buy out these Effort Units was rejected; the response at the time was — there are no funds available. The QSIA, GBRMPA, WWF and DEEDI have since prepared a joint funding proposal for a reduction of effort units via a buy-back. The QSIA seeks a commitment from all parties they will commit to the completion of the Trawl Plan Review as soon as possible so that those remaining fishermen can be profitable and can move to the next review phase, - co-management in an effort to ensure economic profitability.

8. OUR INSHORE NET AND CRAB FISHERIES

8.1 Work with industry to develop suitable terms for a buyout in the Inshore N1 and N2 fishery - profitability is down, industry has been devastated by combination of factors – GBRMP zoning plus DERM complimentary zoning in state waters and a symbol removal by Fisheries Queensland. A buyout was agreed by the inshore working group established during stage one of the Inshore Plan. It was also acknowledged that before industry and government could move to stage two of the Inshore Plan – that being regional management – the impact caused by the state complimentary closures needed to be addressed as this caused significant displacement from foreshores and bays right along the coast into to smaller areas, including the little remaining creeks and rivers open to commercial net fishing. This has put significant pressure on the resource and caused conflict between recreational and commercial sectors. There are 159 N2 endorsements and this proposal endorses removing 50%. N2 endorsements would attract between \$50 000 and \$60 000. There are 163 N1 endorsements and it is proposed to remove 50% to ensure profitability and sustainability in the fishery. N1 endorsement would attract between \$10 000 and \$20 000. This would protect sustainable harvest rights, add to biodiversity and reduce the number of licenses currently accessing these fisheries. It would also remove conflict between recreational and commercial fishers. The great benefits are – sustainability of fish stocks, reduced conflict with recreational fishers, improved economic viability, and possibly a first step in moving to a regional management model which is seen as the future of the inshore fishery. This fishery is very important in the provision of local seafood to the community – it must be modernized and supported.

8.2 For commercial fishers to continue to use an N11 in yellow zones in state marine parks as well as general small mesh nets to collect bait for their own purposes. This means that commercial fishers will be able to continue to take fish (other than bream, whiting and flathead) for sale.

8.3 Commit to the expeditious completion of the C1 Crab Review in 2012.



For further information on actions to achieve sustainable and economic fisheries contact:

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Party/Candidate Q & A

Please provide a response to the following questions. These questions focus on the priority issues that require action now. As part of the information being sought by the seafood sector QSIA has prepared a series of questions for all politicians and candidates. The answers will then be provided to members and stakeholders in the seafood industry throughout Queensland prior to 24th March.

A. Fisheries Queensland is significantly underfunded with staff recently being offered redundancies further reducing the number of frontline fisheries management personnel. What will you and your party do to reverse this trend and restore the necessary funding to ensure first class fisheries management outcomes?

B. The information, data collection and monitoring systems currently used by Fisheries Queensland are slow, cumbersome and out-of-date. These systems are unnecessarily time consuming, do not take into account user circumstances and so are regularly user problematic. How will you and your party address this issue to ensure real time data collection for Queensland's fisheries?

C. Fisheries was recently separated from the Primary Industries portfolio and merged with Main Roads. Will you and your party restore the status of Fisheries Queensland to where it rightly belongs as an important primary industry food producing sector - within the Primary Industries portfolio?

D. The lack of investment in critical port and unload infrastructure for the commercial fishing industry has been neglected for many, many years. If elected, what plans do you have to address this lack of investment and will you commit to work with the professional fishing industry to attend to this important issue?

E. The impacts of catastrophic climate events such as Tropical Cyclone Yasi demonstrated in 2010/11 that commercial

fishing operators need assistance to adapt to the impacts of climate change. How do you plan to assist the commercial seafood industry adapt to climate change?

F. Queensland fisheries are under intense regulatory pressure stemming from both Fisheries Queensland and DERM. Will you commit to a full strategic and operational review of how commercial fisheries are managed in Queensland? Can you commit to moving government away from resource exclusion on the whim of non-commercial fishing interests to real and equitable resource sharing?

G. The Queensland government does not have a displaced fishing effort policy for state waters to ensure that our fisheries remain balanced, and that industry and the community is assisted in the event of any reduction of access of our commercial fishing grounds? Will you commit to develop a displaced fishing effort policy in consultation with the seafood industry?



About Us

The Queensland Seafood Industry Association is the peak body representing commercial fishermen in Queensland. Our organization started in 1974 and consists of commercial fishers, post harvest sector operators including from the wholesale, export and processing and the retail sectors. There are 2297 licensed commercial fishers operating in Queensland in four major fisheries; crab, line, net and trawl. QSIA provides representation to these food producing primary sector businesses.



Queensland's Major Fisheries

There are four major commercial fisheries operating sustainably in Queensland. These are the:

- East Coast Trawl Fishery (species include prawns, scallops and bugs);
- Queensland Crab fisheries (species caught in pots and dillies including mud and blue swimmer crabs and spanner crab);
- East Coast and Gulf of Carpentaria Inshore Fin Fish Fisheries (species caught in nets including barramundi, grey mackerel, tailor, whiting, bream and flathead); and
- Queensland Line Fisheries including;
 - The Coral Reef Fin Fish Fishery (species include coral trout and red throat emperor);
 - The Rocky Reef Fishery (primary species being snapper);
 - The Pelagic Fishery (species include Spanish mackerel); and
 - The Deep Water Multiple Hook Fishery (species include various cods, groppers, perch and blue eye trevalla).

For more detailed information on each of the major fisheries operating in Queensland please follow these links to the Fisheries Queensland website.

East Coast Trawl Fishery:

http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/28_15511.htm

Queensland's Line fisheries:

http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/28_16065.htm

Queensland's Net fishery:

http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/28_16066.htm

Queensland's Crab fisheries:

http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/28_16067.htm

These major fisheries provide an income for professional fishermen, the seafood wholesale, retail and restaurant sectors as well as the many allied industries that support the professional fishermen. Seafood is also a substantial attraction and major draw card to the states massive tourism industry valued in excess of \$5 billion per annum with 3 out of 4 tourists surveyed stating the local seafood was a major reason to visit Queensland and the Great Barrier Reef.

Gross Value of Production (GVP)

The 2009-10 Fisheries Statistics Report identifies the gross value of Queensland fisheries production increased by 6 per

cent (\$17.1 million) in 2009–10 to \$323.7 million; wild-catch production accounted for \$222.5 million, or 69 per cent, of this value and the aquaculture sector made up the remaining \$101.2 million, or 31 per cent. In volume terms, total fisheries production in Queensland increased by 4 per cent (1423 tonnes) to 33 356 tonnes. In 2009–10, the Queensland wild-catch sector produced 25 562 tonnes of seafood, which was a slight increase of 1 per cent (149 tonnes) compared with 2008–09. (Source: Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences) Economists, when calculating the real value to the community that includes the post-harvest sectors, applies a multiplier of 3 which puts the economic contribution of the seafood industry to the Queensland economy just under \$1 billion dollars annually.

Health Benefits

This food producing primary industry is a major employer in regional Queensland supporting jobs and families that supply one of the recognised best forms of protein with a litany of health benefits. Established health benefits derived from regular consumption of seafood (two to three serves per week) include significant reduction in the risk of coronary heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes, which are the major causes of mortality and morbidity in the Australian population. Scientific research also has shown the importance of seafood in the diet for brain development and reduction in the degenerative brain changes occurring with age including dementia. There is also evidence for reduced risk of a number of other serious ailments, including bowel and other cancers, asthma, Crohn's disease, and depression. Mothers' consumption of seafood is vital for healthy development of infants (before birth and for the period of breast-feeding), and seafood has been shown to be a significant contributor to the development and maintenance of good health at all ages and stages of life. Many of these health benefits are derived from Omega 3 oil. This long-chain polyunsaturated oil - an essential nutrient that must be included in the human diet for good health - is most commonly derived from seafood. However, at the same time, seafood is also regarded as a low-fat, protein-rich food. This is the type of food nutritionists recommend to help avoid obesity, a growing cause of health problems in Aus-

-tralia, and one with serious implications for personal wellbeing and public health costs as the Queensland population ages.

Seafood Consumers

Commercial fishermen catch seafood on behalf of the wider community. Queensland has more than four million seafood consumers: Queensland's population is currently some 4.6 million and a number of surveys indicate more than 90% of the community regularly eat commercially-caught seafood. (About 5% of people surveyed say they eat no seafood and a little under 5% say they catch enough seafood for their own needs.) Surveys also demonstrate consumers prefer local seafood and wild-caught seafood over imported seafood. For example, an independent survey conducted by researchers from James Cook University reported that: "*Consumers clearly stated they preferred Queensland wild-caught seafood over any other type of seafood. Over 90% preferred Australian seafood and 70% preferred seafood caught in Queensland. Buyers agreed that buying Queensland wild-caught fresh seafood benefits their community and the Australian economy. They also agreed that Australian fresh seafood was much more expensive than imported products; however, most (more than 70%) were willing to pay more for Queensland wild-caught seafood.*" The legitimate requirement of Queensland seafood consumers for continued access to Queensland fisheries resources must be taken into account when determining fisheries management rules and regulations and when deciding on access to fishing grounds by commercial fishermen.

Management

Queensland's fisheries are managed by Fisheries Queensland in the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) on behalf of the Commonwealth via an Offshore Constitutional Settlement (OCS). Commercial fisheries have been classified according to areas, each represented by a fishery symbol i.e. areas where licensed fishers are authorised to fish using specified gear. There are legal size limits for many species and these are based on research into the biology of fish species, and to help protect the reproductive capacity of fish populations. There are many fishing closures, both by season and by area along

the Queensland coastline including marine parks with no take zones and recreational only fishing zones. These include the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, the Great Sandy Marine Park, the Moreton Bay Marine Park plus the current proposals to close the Coral Sea, significant closures proposed by the Commonwealth for the Gulf of Carpentaria and continuing uncertainty over proposed closures off Fraser Island and the Tweed Heads. The State Government is also proposing another marine park in state waters in the Gulf of Carpentaria off the Wellesley Islands. There are also 17 Dugong Protection Areas along the Queensland coast, where net fishing is either prohibited or restricted. Restrictions on fishing gear apply, and are enforced by Fisheries Queensland. For example, in the East Coast Inshore Fin Fish Fishery, the design, length and drop sizes of nets, size of mesh, and number of nets used, deployment and attendance of nets are regulated. Queensland's fisheries are heavily regulated operating under what is often described and recognised as one of the best fisheries management regimes in the world. Today, there are just 2297 licensed commercial fishers in Queensland compared to more than 750 000 recreational anglers.

Environmental Accreditation

The Australian Government's [Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation \(EPBC\) Act](#) requires the management of all Commonwealth-managed fisheries and state-managed fisheries to be assessed for sustainability. This is another layer of environmental protection on top of the state fisheries regulations which are declared under the Fisheries Act 1994 (<http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/F/FisherA94.pdf>).

Each of the major fisheries must meet the conditions imposed by the Commonwealth or their approval to operate can be removed. The general public can participate in the review of fisheries accreditation for each individual fishery along with stakeholders and the community. For more information on environmental accreditation of Queensland's fisheries go to: <http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/fisheries/index.html>