

Recommendations from Queensland Recreational Fishers to the Future Fisheries Taskforce.

These recommendations are being made by the members of the Queensland Recreational Fishing Network, Fraser Coast Fishing Alliance, Mackay Recreational Fishers Alliance, CAREFish and the Recreational Fisher representatives from the East Coast Inshore Fin Fish Working Group.

The recommendations provided below address the following Key issues identified by the Future Fisheries Taskforce (see Appendix 1: *Future Fisheries Taskforce, Meeting 5, 25 August 2023, 2:00pm to 4:00pm, Surveyor's Room, Treasury Brisbane (George St) / Teams*)

- Effort transfer to other fisheries and species of high recreational and ecological significance
- Transitional net fishery arrangements
- Trialling and use of alternative gears
- Current and future zoning requirements

Key Recommendations

1. The East Coast Inshore Fin Fish Working group is maintained and supported as described in the Queensland Sustainable fishing Strategy and current Queensland government legislation.
2. The processes and compensation packages are designed to remove N1, N2, N3, N4 fishing licences/endorsements from the Queensland East Coast Inshore Fin Fish and Gulf Fisheries (ECIFF&GF) and offer commercial fishers the opportunity to sell their entire package of licences (Whole Fishing Platform) and quota holdings including those licences/endorsements and quota other than the targeted N1, N2, N3, N4. (ECIFF&GF)
 - a. Commercial fishers receive compensation packages that are fair and equitable allowing them to leave the industry with dignity and not having to worry about their immediate future.
 - b. An immediate halt on the sale of Quota is put in place (effective September 1, 2023) to ensure all processes and compensation packages are fair, equitable and free from market manipulation.
 - c. An immediate halt on the sale of commercial fishing licences or endorsements is put in place (effective September 1, 2023) to ensure all processes and compensation packages are fair, equitable and free from perceived market manipulation.
3. For the East Coast Inshore Fin Fish fishery, no more than 30 large mesh N1 licences should remain after 31 December 2023 to support the transition phase (September 1, 2023 – June 2027).

- a. No large mesh net fishery should exist in the East Coast Inshore Fin Fish fishery after June 2027
4. The N3 large mesh net fishery of Gulf of Carpentaria must be included in the buyback process to address the recognised stock depletion issues for King Threadfin, the conservation of SOCI and CITES species including Saw Shark species, the Spear Tooth shark, Turtle species and Dugong.
 - a. No more than 30 large mesh N3 licences should remain in the Gulf of Carpentaria fishery.
5. Quota, and effort removed from the fisheries during the buyout/compensation process should not be transferred or allocated by the Queensland Government or their departments to other fishers within the existing zone requirements, new fishing endorsements or other existing fishing endorsements including line fishing before or during the transition phase (September 1, 2023 – June 2027). (ECIFF&GF)
6. Quota, and effort removed from the fishery during the buyout/compensation process should not be transferred or allocated by the Queensland Government or their departments to new fisheries or new fishing symbols, established in the new fishery following the transition period (June 2027 and beyond). (ECIFF&GF)
 - a. Quota, and effort removed from the fishery during the buyout/compensation process should not be transferred or allocated to existing licences/endorsement (e.g. N11 or K fisheries), issuing of new licences for existing gears (e.g. N11, K, Tunnel nets), establishment of fisheries using new gear such as traps, line or other apparatuses.
 - b. A standard procedure is established within the act and regulations consisting of comprehensive research and gear/fishing trials to support the understanding of the catch composition/CPUE/released fish survival and stock assessments for:
 - proposed new fisheries, or new fishing symbols.
 - existing licences/endorsement (e.g. N11 or K fisheries)
 - issuance of new licences for existing gears (e.g. N11, K, Tunnel nets)
 - establishment of fisheries using new gear such as traps, line fisheries or any other apparatus
 - c. Following the above research and publication of findings rec fishers support a review of effort and quota redistribution/allocation takes place as per the current processes

identified in the Queensland Sustainable Fishing Strategy. This process prioritises a thorough consultation process engaging all affected stakeholders.

7. Stock assessments on all T1 and T2 species are completed during the transition period (January 2024– June 2027). (ECIFF&GF) – This process below is Critical to ensure sustainability for T1/T2 species.
 - a. The precautionary principles should be adopted by fixing Regional TACC and Quota allocations for Tier 1 and 2 species at their current levels during the transition period (January 2024 – June 2027) or until such time as the stock assessments are completed.
 - b. Following the completion of the stock assessments, the reallocation of TACC and Quota between regions should follow the current processes supported by the Queensland Sustainable Fishing Strategy and involve thorough consultation engaging all affected stakeholders.
 - c. Following the completion of the stock assessments the reallocation of TACC and Quota catch share arrangements between recreational and commercial sectors should follow the current processes supported by the Queensland Sustainable Fishing Strategy and involve thorough consultation engaging all affected stakeholders.

8. Tier 3 (T3) species that are considered to have high Recreational fishing values (including social, community, economic (local, regional, state) are referred to as High Value Recreational Fish species in all new Queensland Fisheries Management documents/legislation/planning/consultations supporting the new fishery and are recognised as such during the transition period (1 September 2023 – 2027) and the planning for the new fishery beyond June 2027. These species include:
 - a. Queensland East Coast Inshore Fin Fish and Gulf Fisheries
 - i. *Trachinotus sp* (Permit both *T. anak* and *T. blochii*)
 - ii. *Carangidae sp* (Trevally species)
 - iii. *Scomberoides sp* (Queenfish species)
 - iv. *Pomadasys sp* (Barred Javelin fish and Small spotted Grunter/Javelin)
 - v. *Lutjanidae sp* (Mangrove Jack *L. argentimaculatus* and Fingermark *L. johnii*)
 - vi. *Sillago sihamma* (Northern sand whiting)
 - vii. *Thunnus tonggol* (Longtail Tuna)

 - b. In addition to these in the Great Sandy Straights Marine Park this list should include T1 and T2 species:
 - i. *Platycephalus fuscus* (Dusky Flathead)
 - ii. *Acanthopagrus australis* (Yellowfin Bream)
 - iii. *Sillago ciliata* (Sand Whiting)

9. New fisheries should not be established that target T3 species that have high Recreational fishing values. (Includes line, tunnel nets, other apparatuses (net and traps) during the transition period (2024 – 2027) and in the new fishery beyond 2027. (ECIFF&GF)
10. The precautionary principle should be adopted from September 1, 2023, fixing Regional commercial TACC allocations for these T3 species that have high Recreational fishing values at their current levels during the transition phase. This commercial TACC should be calculated using the following formula. (ECIFF&GF)

Annual commercial catch totals = average commercial catch (all fisheries and symbols) from the 5 years prior to the Federal government announcement of the GBR net buyback June 5, 2023.

 - a. The precautionary principle is required as the tool used by Fisheries Queensland to trigger fisheries management actions on Tier 3 and Tier 2 species when these species demonstrate catch trends that are increasing above average catch rates are insufficient. The current time frame used allows for continued rapid increase in commercial catch over short time frames (1-2 years e.g. Black Jew Fish) and Recreational fishers are concerned about immediate stock depletions and localised population depletions impacting recreational fisher's immediate and ongoing access to these species.
11. T3 species that have high Recreational fishing values should be identified as "in need of stock assessment". (ECIFF&GF)
 - a. Stock assessments for these T3 species must be completed before new fisheries/gears/effort transfer/quota or TACC targeting these species is implemented.
 - b. Following the completion of stock assessments, a minimum Quota/TACC catch share allocation of **85:15**, recreational: commercial, should be introduced for these T3 species in recognition of their high recreational fishing values and the traditional catch share distribution in favour of recreational fishers.
12. Recreational fishers are opposed to the expansion of the Tunnel net fishery including the issuing of new licences or the modification of gear affecting the size or length of any aspect of the gear during the transition period (2024 – 2027) and in the new fishery beyond 2027 (ECIFF&GF) (Please see Appendix 2 for our detailed concerns)
13. Recreational fishers do not wish to see one destructive form a fishing (Large mesh gillnets) replaced by another in the new fishery that may have unintended consequences. (ECIFF&GF)
 - a. A standard procedure is established consisting of comprehensive research and gear/fishing trials to support the understanding of the catch composition/CPUE/released fish survival and impacts to stock assessments for any new fishing gears proposed to be introduced to the fishery.

14. Commercial line fisheries for species not traditionally targeted by line are introduced with caution and closely monitored for impacts such as focussed localised effort, access conflict between all stakeholders, localised depletions, and discard mortality, notwithstanding points 3 and 4 above. (ECIFF&GF)
15. The current Net free zones located in Rockhampton, Makay and Cairns are retained.
 - a. All commercial fishing is excluded from these existing Net free zones.
16. Dugon Protection areas A and B are to be classified as Net and Trap free including the use of N11, permanent fishing structures/traps and long set fishing apparatus e.g. Tunnel nets/traps and or other apparatuses. (ECIFF&GF)
17. Recreational fishers support the proposal tabled by AMCS and WWF for an expansion of the number of net free zones to include the areas they have identified. (ECIFF&GF) (Appendix 3)
 - a. In addition, Recreational fishers would like to see the area from the tip of Cape Cleveland to the most eastern point of Lucinda are considered to be a net free zone due to the significant numbers of recognised protected species in this area including interactions of the SNUBFIN Dolphin, Whales and calves, Crocodiles, Green Turtle and scalloped hammerheads (recognised breeding grounds).
18. Commercial line Fishing (other than for Mackerel species, as they are a traditionally line caught fish) in any new Net Free Zones is allocated a limited catch/quota (15% of the regional allocation across all net free zones in the region) to ensure a premium value for the fish is retained for the commercial fisher. (ECIFF&GF)
 - a. Wholesalers, retailers, and restaurants handling fish must be able to identify the point of purchase, method of capture and point of capture of all fish they handle.
 - b. Traditional owners are provided with assistance to set up high value line fisheries through training and business planning from state Government that supports engagement with the community and local retailers and restaurants.
19. Significant new investment is made immediately to boost the quality and diversity of data collected on recreational fishing in Queensland. (ECIFF&GF)
 - a. The investment is directed to regional not for profit groups and/or councils to implement, manage and report on recreational fisher monitoring and data collection. Community owned programs have a greater capacity to build trust in data sharing than government programs.
 - b. Such a program would welcome government oversight (e.g. Government chaired steering group) to ensure data needs to support fisheries management are met.

- c. State ambassadors should be allocated to bring on board the greater recreational fishing community for data collection purposes.
20. New investment in the development of the Queensland east coast and Gulf of Carpentaria inshore charter fishery is needed to ensure the development of this fishery is sustainable and realises its maximum economic potential/return.
- a. This investment should support business planning and development for established operators, the marketing and promotion of the fishery and the diversity of regions, and business planning for new charter fishing businesses.
21. Funding to support the development and or review of local/regional action plans that support a community's transition to, and adaptation to, the Future Fishery is made available to regional not for profit groups and councils. (ECIFF&GF) e.g.
- i. Douglas Shire Council
https://douglas.qld.gov.au/download/environment/Action-Plan_Fish-for-the-Future-Draft.pdf
 - ii. Cairns Regional Council
https://douglas.qld.gov.au/download/environment/Action-Plan_Fish-for-the-Future-Draft.pdf
 - iii. Mackay Region
https://www.mackay.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/215419/Mackay_Fishing_Strategy_-_Final_219.7v3.pdf
 - iv. Rockhampton Region
<file:///C:/Users/Phil%20Laycock/Downloads/Rockhampton-Recreational-Fishing-Development-Strategy-Update-1.pdf>
- b. Additional funding is made available to support the implementation of these plans.

This document was prepared by the following recreational fishing stakeholder representatives:

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Appendix 1

**Future Fisheries Taskforce
Meeting 5
25 August 2023 2:00pm to 4:00pm
Surveyor's Room, Treasury Brisbane (George St) / Teams**

Title:	Recreational and conservation sector engagement	Agenda Item:	2
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Recommendations

That the Taskforce:

- **Note and discuss** issues with key representatives from the recreational and conservation sectors.

Key Issues:

- The purpose of the Future Fishing Taskforce is to provide recommendations to the Government on the best approach, design and implementation of structural adjustment packages to achieve the outcomes for the Great Barrier Reef and Great Sandy rezoning.
- It will also be considering the arrangement for the 'transitional' net fishery (between 1 January 2023 and 30 June 2027) and also guiding investment into future sustainable fishing methods after gill-nets are no longer permitted in the Great Barrier Reef (30 June 2027).
- Through submissions (attached), recreational and conservation sector representatives have identified concerns regarding:
 - Effort transfer to other fisheries and species of high recreational and ecological significance
 - Transitional net fishery arrangements
 - Trialling and use of alternative gears
 - Current and future zoning requirements
- The following representatives have been invited to brief the Taskforce:

Phillip Laycock, Rhyce Bullimore, John Bennett, Kim Martin are members of the East Coast Inshore Fishery Working Group since July 2021, the above recreational sector representatives have been engaged in fisheries management discussions and provided advice supporting the delivery of the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy and the East coast



inshore fishery harvest strategy: 2021-2026. They have provided a submission to the Taskforce (attachment 2.1).

Simon Miller (Australian Marine Conservation Society) is a member of several fishery working groups as a conservation representative, providing advice supporting the delivery of the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy and several harvest strategies.

Richard Leck (World Wide Fund for Nature Australia (WWF)) is WWF Australia's Head of Oceans and Sustainable Development, and has been involved in various Great Barrier Reef and climate change campaigns.

Paul Aubin (Cairns Recreational Fishing Industries Stakeholders – CAREFISH) is a constructive voice on recreational and environmental issues in Queensland, and sits on the Reef 2050 Long Term Sustainability Plan Advisory Committee for the recreational fishing and boating sector, and holds similar positions on other committees. He is founder and coordinator for CAREFISH, and was involved in the consultation for Trinity Bay net-free zone.

Scott Mitchell (Fraser Coast Fishing Alliance) is the Chairman for the Fraser Coast Fishing Alliance, and has been active in the consultation for the Great Sandy Marine Park rezoning. Mr Mitchell also discussed recreational fishing issues and opportunities earlier this year with the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy Expert Panel.

Mr Miller, Mr Leck, Mr Aubin, and Mr Martin have also provided a joint submission from a variety of recreational fishing and conservation groups (attachment 2.2). Please note for the recommendations for unspent funds, that Mr Miller has indicated that the first recommendation should also include the N3 symbol, which represents inshore net fishing in the Gulf of Carpentaria.



Attachment 2.1 Recreational fisher representation

Attachment 2.2 Joint position statement

Responsible officer: Jeffrey Ikin

Position: Secretariat

Agency: Fisheries Queensland

Appendix 2

Recreational Fishers are opposed to the expansion of the Tunnel net fishery.

1. We are concerned about the Potential impact to entire spawning schools that use the relatively small areas suitable for Tunnel Nets along much of the east coast.
 2. Impact on existing GBRMPA Zoning and SOCI interceptions for areas where tunnel netting may work under certain conditions.
 3. Potential to catch significant numbers of T3 species with High Recreational Fishing Values. E.g. Recreationally valuable spots fish such as Permit, Golden Trevally, Giant Trevally and Queenfish
 4. Tunnel nets have the potential to cause T3 species with High Recreational Fishing Values to modify their behaviour due to the disturbance to their normal behaviour created by capture and avoidance of Tunnel net such that it limits Recreational fisher access to these species.
 5. We have concerns about release mortality because of poor practises and or the prioritisation of the retention of commercially important species. (Pers comm Rhyce)
 6. Tunnel nets have the potential to interact with significant numbers of CITES species and species of high ecological significance thus modifying their behaviour and use of suitable habitats.
 7. Concerns about user conflict – suitable locations for Tunnel nets are often high use recreational fishing areas (beaches etc). Gear size limits access to the area by other users.
 8. A comprehensive study of all aspects of the Tunnel net fishery (catch/CPUE/discard mortality/ecological impacts/released fish mortality/impacts to fish, CITES/ecologically important species behaviour) is completed before any expansion of this fishery is considered.
 - a. Must be followed by a full public consultation period and process.
 9. Negative impact on the immediate seabed/mudbank/root system that is needed to peg and retrieve the wing net. This is likely to result in significant scaring of sensitive benthic habitats such as sea grass and diverse communities of mud biota.
- ii. Recreational Fishers ask that any new gears being considered in the new fishery note and or address all the dot points above. *East Coast and Gulf*

Appendix 3

Expansion of the number of net free zones to include the following areas.

1. All existing Dugong Protection Areas (A and B) are made net-free
2. Additional new Net-Free Zones are established in the following areas
 - a. Expansion of the Net-Free North south to Fitzroy Island and Wungu Beach, incorporating the existing Cairns NFZ
 - b. From Cape Upstart to the mouth of Plantation Creek
 - c. From the existing Net-Free Zone at St Helens Beach NW to Cape Conway
 - d. From Cape Palmerston to Perpetua Point
 - e. From Clairview to the southern end of Mangrove Island
 - f. From the edge of the Conservation Park Zone of the Mary River upstream to the freshwater barrage
 - g. Northern Gulf of Carpentaria from Crab Island south to Cape Keer Weer and west to the boundary of Queensland State waters
 - h. From Pompokuraaw to Topsy Creek and 30km offshore to create a 30km buffer around the Mitchell River
 - i. From Brannigan Creek to Flinders River and 30km offshore to create a 30km buffer around the Norman River
 - j. From the Leichhardt River north around the South Wellesley Islands, Bountiful Islands, Mornington Island and Wellesley Islands south to Gangalidda.
3. In addition, Recreational fishers would like to see the area from Cape Cleveland to the most eastern point of Lucinda considered for a net free zone