

**MEDIA RELEASE
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Queenslanders support their Net Fishermen

Commercial net fishermen and the Queensland Seafood Industry are humbled by the show of support from the community. 'Over 20,000 Queenslanders have indicated their support for continued commercial net fishing in the central and north of the state' said Kevin Reibel, Director, Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA).

With the imminent tabling of regulation that will deny Queensland and Australian consumers over 1.2 million serves of fresh local fish the ALP and Minister are faced with a dilemma – does the government of the day want to support the idea that the rights of recreational fishing zealots (approximately 2-3 percent of the fair minded recreational fishers) right to access fish are more important than the access to fresh local fish being taken away from the community?

How can over 20,000 identifiable Queenslanders be not given support to continue to enjoy fresh caught local fish? 'The net free zone policy is and always has been the desire of a few selfish individuals hell bent on denying hard working people their right to fish commercially; Queenslanders have seen this for what it is and have strongly indicated they want access to local fish' said Mr Reibel.

The so called consultation process run by the Minister was not consultation but a way to draw lines on maps and in effect crippling productive food producing regions in central and north Queensland. To what end? The 6,300 so called submissions could have come from anywhere in Australia or could have been submitted multiple times – the community will never know because there is a deafening silence coming from the Minister's office on the issue.

The net free zone policy was never meant to be scrutinised as it was launched less than 2 days before the state election. 'So much for open and transparent government. What's the saying – you can fool some of the people some of the time Minister but your fellow Queenslanders are sending you a very clear message – hopefully the backroom policy 'experts' in the government have picked up on the message' said Mr Reibel.

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