

**Question on Notice
No. 1756
Asked on Thursday, 13 November 2008**

QUESTION:

MR WEIGHTMAN asked the Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation (Mr McNamara) –

As the Bligh Government recently released the new zoning plans for the Moreton Bay Marine Park and part of the plan refers to a 'Structural Adjustment' package available to commercial fishers affected by the changes-

How will this package be administered, who will be eligible to access it and how can they do so?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Cleveland for these questions regarding the Structural Adjustment Package for Moreton Bay Marine Park.

The \$15.1 million Moreton Bay Marine Park Structural Adjustment Package has been developed jointly by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries to ensure that both conservation and fisheries management issues have been fully considered during the implementation of the program.

The Structural Adjustment Package is being administered as a voluntary competitive tender process to ensure both wise use of public funding and that commercial licence holders receive fair current market values for their licences.

The Structural Adjustment Package is being jointly administered by the EPA and the QRAA – formerly the Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority. QRAA's primary role in the Structural Adjustment Package process is to verify and compile information about fishing licences offered for surrender. QRAA will also notify licence holders of the EPA's decision to accept or decline their Surrender Applications and coordinate payments to licence holders whose fishing licences are accepted.

The EPA has established a Technical Working Group that will provide advice to the Agency on matters associated with the Structural Adjustment Package. These matters include how offers should be assessed and which combinations of offers should succeed through the surrender application process.

There are two components to the Structural Adjustment Package. The main component has been established for any commercial licence holders who have a recent history of fishing activity within the marine park. This component is designed to remove commercial fishing effort within the marine park in proportion to the estimated impacts of the new zoning provisions which commence on 1 March 2009.

The second smaller component is open to any licence holder with fishing symbols that would enable them to operate within the marine park. This component seeks to reduce the risk of low priced licences from relocating into the marine park after the completion of the Structural Adjustment Package.

Commercial fishers who surrender their licences under the package will not be able to fish in Moreton Bay under another licence unless that licence was actively working in Moreton Bay prior to the rezoning and was eligible for the Structural Adjustment Package. This will prevent fishers from buying a licence with no Moreton Bay history and re-entering the Moreton Bay fishery after receiving the structural adjustment.

Commercial fishing licence holders who wanted to participate in the Structural Adjustment Package were required to complete a surrender application and submit it to QRAA by 28 November 2008.

This deadline did not apply to the aquarium fish fishery which will suffer the most significant loss of fishing operations from the new zoning arrangements. The Environmental Protection Agency will be working with the aquarium operators in early 2009 to determine how best to assist this industry adapt to the new zoning arrangements. These operators already have access to a four year transitional period when their operators can continue unaffected from the new zones.