

## **Question on Notice**

**No. 39**

**Asked on 23 February 2021**

**MR M HEALY** ASKED MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES (HON M FURNER)—

### **QUESTION:**

Will the Minister advise how the Queensland Boat and Fisheries Patrol (QBFP) is ensuring compliance on the water?

### **ANSWER:**

I thank the Member for the question.

In 2019-20, the Queensland Government invested over \$13.2 million into the State's fisheries compliance program. This investment increased to \$15.2 million in 2020-21.

The Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol (QBFP) monitors fishing activities and investigates alleged illegal activity along 7 000 km of coastline and hundreds of freshwater rivers and impoundments. The QBFP has over 100 authorised officers active across the State.

The QBFP continues to achieve efficiencies in its fisheries compliance program by promoting 'cross-decking' with the Queensland Police Service, Maritime Safety Queensland, the Department of Environment and Science and several Commonwealth agencies, including the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the Australian Fisheries Management Authority. In 2019-20, the QBFP conducted more than 220 joint patrols. For the year to date in 2020-21, 102 joint patrols have been conducted, the majority of which have been conducted with the Queensland Police Service.

Surveillance services undertaken by the QBFP provide a critical intelligence function to inform fisheries investigations. These services include, but are not limited to: the covert and overt surveillance of premises, boat ramps and waterways; the extraction and examination of data from mobile telephones and computers; the monitoring, interrogation and profiling of vessel tracking data; and the interrogation and profiling of quota monitoring data. Specialist investigators conduct complex investigations into activities such as black marketing.

Matters of non-compliance are addressed through field cautions and education, written cautions and fisheries infringement notices. More serious offences are prosecuted through the court system.

In 2019-20, the QBFP: conducted more than 21 000 inspections; issued over 1 000 fisheries infringement notices; issued over 1 600 cautionary infringement notices; and finalised 55 court prosecutions resulting in more than \$430 000 in fines. The QBFP also seized four vessels with two vessels still subject to matters before the court; the court ordered one vessel to be returned to the owner; and the remaining vessel was forfeited to the Crown by the court, but is currently subject to an appeal in the District Court.

The black marketing of fisheries resources continues to be a compliance priority. New powers that were introduced in 2019 were used in the successful prosecution of two separate matters. The first involved a commercial fisher being fined \$25 000 by the court for trafficking in a priority fish and the second involved a fish wholesaler being fined \$18 000 by the court for unlawfully purchasing recreationally caught fish.

Both matters were able to be successfully prosecuted because of new compliance powers that enable fisheries inspectors to inspect, without a warrant, any premises that deals in the buying, selling, processing or dealing in fisheries resources, while the place is open for business.

In addition to the above compliance action, the QBFP also seized more than 1 400 unattended, unmarked, or derelict fishing apparatus, such as crabpots and commercial fishing nets. Abandoned fishing apparatus that is left in the water can continue to indiscriminately trap and kill crabs, fish and other animals such as turtles and birds.