

Question on Notice

No. 1463

Asked on 15 November 2023

MR S KNUTH asked the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the tabling of a petition with more than 10,000 signatures, requesting the development of a balanced solution that protects the Great Barrier Reef whilst allowing sustainable fishing practices including N2 inshore gillnet licences and to properly reimburse fishers for the resumption of their business enterprises—

Will the Minister stand up for the fishing industry and delay the decision to ban Gillnet fishing by 12 months to properly consult with industry and those affected to develop a sustainable model to continue N2 inshore gillnet fishing?

ANSWER:

On 16 November 2023, I announced that commercial fishers will receive generous financial assistance including buy backs, reskilling and financial advice following an announcement that gillnet fishing in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area will be phased out by mid-2027.

The assistance is part of a \$185 million joint Federal Government and Queensland Government package, which adopts all the recommendations made by the Future Fishing Taskforce. The phasing out of gillnets and transition to more sustainable fishing practices is a key measure to prevent the Great Barrier Reef from being listed as “in danger” by UNESCO.

Stakeholders have had an opportunity to provide submissions to the Future Fishing Taskforce, and industry representatives also met with the Taskforce. Several professional fishing industry representatives from the east coast provided their direct input and industry expertise. Licence, quota and business owners, and leaseholders from Cairns, Townsville, Ayr, Cardwell and the Sunshine Coast and the Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA) Executive Officer attended the meeting. Senior officials from Fisheries Queensland attended the QSIA Annual General Meeting in Townsville recently to meet with fishers impacted by the proposed changes.

Transition to the new arrangements will commence from 31 December 2023.