



Hon Tim Mulherin MP
Member for Mackay



**Queensland
Government**

Reference: 03798/09

**Minister for Primary Industries
and Fisheries**

28 MAY 2009

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000


Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 28 April 2009 concerning petitions received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly No. 1204-09 and No. 1205-09.

I have written to the Principal Petitioners of these petitions and enclose a copy of my letters for your information.

Yours sincerely



TIM MULHERIN, MP
**Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries
and Rural and Regional Queensland**
Member for Mackay

Att (2)

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80 Ann Street Brisbane
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and Fisheries**

28 MAY 2009

COPY

Mr Michael Hale
Head Ranger
Yuku-Baja-Muliku
PO Box 478
Cooktown Qld 4895

Dear Mr Hale

I refer to your recent petition to the members of the Queensland Legislative Assembly concerning a number of issues, including the commercial netting in the Cooktown area. As this issue falls within my ministerial portfolio your email has been forwarded to me for direct reply.

I would like to advise that Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries (QPIF) within the Department of Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) has undertaken a significant consultation process over the past two years on new management arrangements for the inshore finfish fishery, which includes the commercial net fishery. New arrangements for this fishery were approved following an extensive consultation process, including over 140 public meetings and 3 000 written submissions. The Inshore Finfish Fishery Management Advisory Committee (Inshore MAC) was a primary source of advice to the Government in the development of the new arrangements.

While there have been some concerns in relation to new management arrangements for the fishery, the overall feedback about the new arrangements and the process to develop them has been very positive. In making the final decisions the Government had to balance the needs and desires of all stakeholder groups including recreational fishers, commercial fishers and environmentalists. I believe that the final package provides this balance.

QPIF has advised that conflict over fisheries resource access is a widespread issue that is yet to be fully addressed in the inshore finfish fishery. For this reason a second stage of the review of this fishery will commence later this year, seeking to find appropriate mechanisms to deal with this conflict on a regional basis. All stakeholders will be advised of this process in due course.

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The second stage is being delivered through a Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) project to establish a process for co-operative fisheries management approaches at a regional level. As part of that project three areas will be used for pilot studies. I am advised that Port Douglas will be one of those pilot areas and that the consultation phase of the FRDC project will commence in September this year. It may be possible to use the results from this project to resolve issues in other regional areas such as the Cooktown area.

I appreciate your concern with respect to the interaction of commercial fishing nets with dugong and turtles. This was considered as part of the new management arrangements for the inshore finfish fishery. The majority of the new commercial netting arrangements commence on 1 July 2009 and include more stringent restrictions with respect to attendance at nets that are set in offshore waters. From 1 July 2009 fishers will be required to be within 200 metres of the net at all times and it is believed that this will be a key factor in reducing impacts on dugongs and turtles.

Notwithstanding the introduction of the new attendance requirements fishers are currently required to report all interactions with protected species and a specific Species of Conservation Interest Logbook has been issued to fishers for this purpose.

You can be assured that one of my key objectives is to ensure sustainable fisheries and QPIF is working to continually improve the management of our fisheries, including the reduction of impacts on non-target fish species and protected marine species.

If you require any further information regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Phil Gaffney of DEEDI on telephone 07 3239 0436 or email phillip.gaffney@dpi.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



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**Minister for Primary Industries
and Fisheries**

28 MAY 2009

Mr David Cass
Cooktown Fishing Restoration Group
PO Box 28
Cooktown Qld 4895

Dear Mr Cass

I refer to your recent petition to the members of the Queensland Legislative Assembly concerning a number of issues, including the commercial netting in the Cooktown area. As this issue falls within my ministerial portfolio your email has been forwarded to me for direct reply.

I would like to advise that Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries (QPIF) within the Department of Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) has undertaken a significant consultation process over the past two years on new management arrangements for the inshore finfish fishery, which includes the commercial net fishery. New arrangements for this fishery were approved following an extensive consultation process, including over 140 public meetings and 3 000 written submissions. The Inshore Finfish Fishery Management Advisory Committee (Inshore MAC) was a primary source of advice to the Government in the development of the new arrangements.

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