



*Fishing for the Future*

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## **MEDIA RELEASE 15 June 2011**

In response to recent misleading statements made by the President of QSIA, Sunfish would like to set the record straight on the events that have transpired in the trial process being developed for Regional Management in the Burdekin area.

The statements made were a minority view tailored to represent the wishes of some local residents and favouring local commercial fishermen. Sunfish Qld was requested by residents in the Burdekin community and recreational fishers in surrounding areas to ensure that an accountable and transparent consultation process was in place for all anglers in the area. It is a significant reason for concern when 2389 names on a petition requesting that the process be paused and consultation on the proposals from the original Ayr public meeting (that were endorsed by that meeting) be resumed. Regional management is extremely important to all stakeholders and was one of the proposals put forward in 1994 by SUNFISH but then rejected by the Commercial Sector. Getting the process right is vital for good sound fisheries management.

As is very clear in Dr. Gardner's release what QSIA have the greatest concern about is changes to netting boundaries to benefit their own members not what benefits the community. What the whole of the community wants is better management of regional fisheries in general. In other fisheries areas all stakeholders are working with scientists and taking a leading proactive role in minimising bycatch and ways to reduce interactions with protected species. They are certainly not using it as a lever to gain favours.

Sunfish Qld is currently working with a number of different types of commercial operators. These are family based operations who hope to be able to pass the family business onto the next generation. They are also the ones looking to work within their communities for a better outcome for all sectors. The Sunfish website [www.sunfishqld.com.au](http://www.sunfishqld.com.au) has all our submissions and media statements. Our position is to work with all users of the common fisheries resources to achieve a responsible equitable outcome.

There are members of the Burdekin Regional Management working group who are there with all the best of intentions, it is our belief however that the process has jumped ahead of where it should be. This should be the time to make sure that there is true and proper representation and building relationships within the committee and the community.

To achieve this –

1. The catchment limit of their area of consideration needs to be decided with consultation within the community.
2. A vision statement and a set of goals should also be determined.
3. The makeup of the committee should reflect all sectors of the catchment – population centres throughout the area including Townsville, tourism sector, conservation sector, Chamber of Commerce and of course Sunfish.

*Representing the interests of Recreational Fishing*

The committee of Sunfish NQ (based in the greater Burdekin catchment) is elected every year by its membership. Sunfish represents all recreational fishers within club memberships as well as the mums and dads who regularly have input to us either through their local branch or our website. We currently have 45,000 members through direct affiliation or membership.

The public meeting in Ayr identified important areas of concern with the whole catchment including the need for a locally based Boating and Fisheries Patrol officer. This would be an ideal place for the committee to start working as it is an issue that unites the community not divides it.

Sunfish Qld makes every effort to work with government & other sectors as well as the community towards a viable, harmonious and sustainable fisheries environment.

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