



The Hon Mark Furner MP
Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries
and Minister for Rural Communities

Our ref: CTS 16094/24

1 William Street Brisbane 4000
GPO Box 46 Brisbane
Queensland 4001 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3719 7420
Email agriculture@ministerial.qld.gov.au

10 September 2024

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
TableOffice@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to the petition received on 20 August 2024 by the Queensland Legislative Assembly No.4021-24 regarding a net free zone in the Mary River.

Recreational fishing in Queensland is estimated to contribute \$2.5 billion to the State's economy annually and the Queensland Government is supporting projects to help create new jobs and opportunities in the nature-based tourism and recreational fishing sectors. Initiatives in the region of the Mary River include installation of Fish Aggregations Devices, fish stocking at our stocked impoundments and the significant implementation of an updated Great Sandy Marine Park (GSMP) zoning plan on 17 May 2024.

The Government is delivering on its commitment to protect marine threatened, endangered and protected species and their habitats while supporting thriving regional economies by increasing environmental protections within the GSMP.

The updated zoning plan increased the proportion of marine national park (green) zones within the GSMP from 3.9 per cent to 12.8 per cent, meaning a total of 28.6 per cent of the marine park will be within highly protected zones (green and yellow zones). These zones are expected to provide significant benefit to marine park users, including recreational fishers in the adjacent Mary River. One of the identified opportunities for this region was to largely maintain the use of the marine park by the commercial trawl, crab, line and harvest fisheries, and those components of the net fishery that are of a lesser risk to threatened species or other sectors.

Sustainable catch limits and sectoral allocations have been set on key species such as barramundi for this area, which will continue to be assessed through stock assessments. Fisheries Queensland is committed to a sustainable wild-caught seafood industry that provides the quality products that consumers appreciate, while protecting our unique ocean environments. In 2023, the Federal and Queensland Governments announced a package to phase out gillnet fishing in the Great Barrier Reef world heritage area (GBRWHA), just to the north of the Mary River, by mid-2027 and transition to more sustainable fishing practices.

Fisheries Queensland will continue to monitor fishing effort following the implementation of the fisheries structural adjustment scheme to the GBRWHA and the GSMP.

If you require further information, please contact Mr Dan McIntyre in my office on 07 3719 7420.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Furner'.

MARK FURNER MP

**Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and
Minister for Rural Communities**