



*Fishing for the Future*

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## MEDIA RELEASE

### Sunfish Qld Fishes for Answers on Gladstone

Mr. John Crone OAM, chairman of Sunfish Qld, said that it was about time some realistic answers were forthcoming from all involved in the investigation of the “diseased fish” outbreak in Gladstone Harbour, which has virtually brought recreational and commercial fishing activities to a halt.

“Conflicting reports from Government and private organisations are not helping, especially when the common government theme seems to be, ‘We are unable to definitely say what the cause was or how it happened, let alone how to prevent it in the future,’” he said.

“We need answers urgently, so that all businesses and residents that are being affected can get some stability back into their lives. If it is attributable to some development activities, then it is essential that some “business arrangements” need to be put in place to ease the stress on fishing commerce and instigate an “offsets scheme” to provide alternative fishing enhancements for anglers in the Gladstone area,” Mr Crone said.

“What has happened in Gladstone is only the” tip of the iceberg” and Sunfish Qld has major concerns as many more Port expansions are proposed right along the coastline. Without answers or mitigating strategies, the same could be repeated state wide,” he said.

Sunfish Qld is calling on all the Agencies working on the Gladstone problem to be more open in their findings and adopt a more practical approach to affected users.

Sunfish believes that all parties need to rebuild confidence in the current situation, and insists that a totally independent investigation by an internationally recognised firm or scientist be commissioned and paid for by the Government. A panel including recreational and commercial interests must have oversight over the terms of reference and the execution of the project.

A “Real Time Response Strategy” also needs to be developed urgently in case the same thing occurs in the future. Mr. Crone said that at present, the public perception is one of a “government cover up” and delays only fuel this position.

End of release

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*Representing the interests of Recreational Fishing*