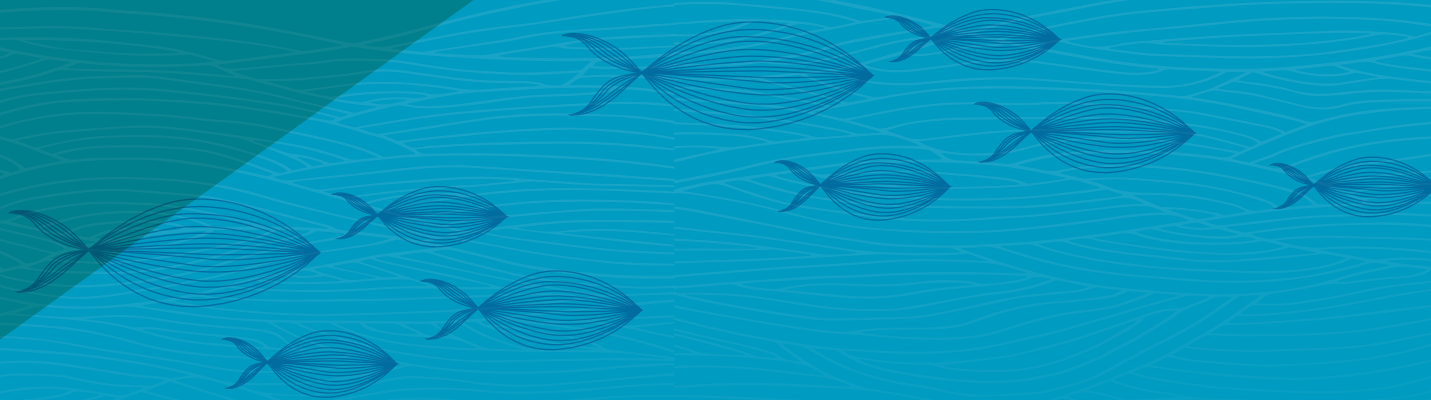


Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy

2017–2027

Progress report

Year 3





Queensland
Government

Key achievements


 Sustainable Fisheries Expert Panel met once

 Working groups met **10** times


 Commercial fisher engagement project outcomes finalised and engagement plan in development

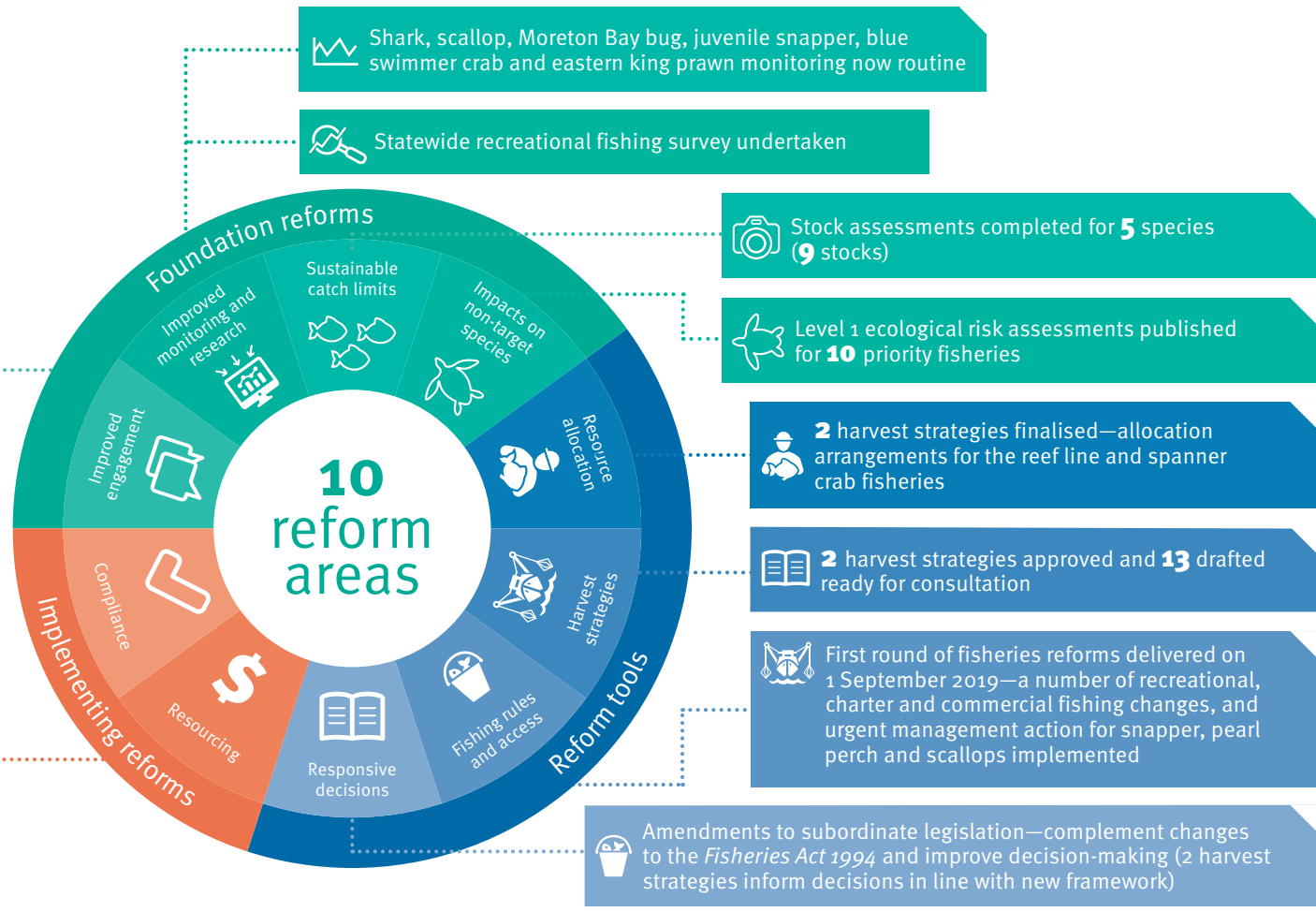
 Commercial fisher social and economic report commenced

 More than **100 000** Facebook followers

 Vessel tracking now operational in major Queensland commercial fisheries

 **20** new Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol (QBFP) officers authorised and operational







 QBFP cultural liaison officers working closely with Traditional Owners and land and sea rangers







In June 2017, the Queensland Government released the *Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy: 2017–2027*, paving the way for our state to have a world-class fisheries management system. These reforms will ensure healthy fish stocks that will support thousands of Queensland jobs. The strategy outlines 33 actions to be delivered across 10 reform areas, and sets targets to be achieved by 2020 and 2027.

On track 

Progress report

Reform area	Delivery on track	Comments
1. Improved monitoring and research	On track 	Good progress on new monitoring, including 2 new species added to existing 5 reef fish species, and monitoring moved to routine for shark, scallop, Moreton Bay bug, juvenile snapper, blue swimmer crab and eastern king prawn. New statewide recreational fishing survey, and social and economic monitoring program is nearing completion. Collection of economic and social indicators from the commercial and charter fisheries for 2017–18 and 2018–19 financial years, and quarter 1 and quarter 2 of 2019–20 financial year was undertaken. Monitoring of the fish aggregating devices has commenced. The Advance Queensland innovation challenge (which investigated electronic automated monitoring of fishing operations using cameras, sensors and image recognition) has now concluded. Final reports from the challenge are undergoing evaluation to identify and trial potential e-monitoring solutions.
2. Setting sustainable catch limits	On track 	New stock assessments completed for 5 species (9 stocks) in 2019–20. These stock assessments will help set sustainable catch limits and inform the development of harvest strategies.
3. Improved stakeholder engagement	Work continuing 	Significant efforts have been made to improve engagement approaches, with implementation of new <i>Commercial fishing update</i> , <i>Aquaculture update</i> and <i>Charter fishing update</i> e-newsletters to deliver targeted information to commercial fishing businesses. A new spanner crab working group was also established to provide operational advice on the management of this fishery. Economic and social indicators from the commercial and charter fishers were collected to give direction to where further improvements are needed. Collection of information in relation to satisfaction with engagement was also completed.
4. Environmental risk assessments	On track 	Good progress has been made, with level 1 ecological risk assessments (ERAs) published for 10 priority fisheries. A species-specific level 2 ERA has been published for the crab fishery, 2 other level 2 ERAs are in review and a further 2 are in preparation. This work has supported the development of bycatch and protected species management strategies.
5. Resource allocation	On track 	Existing catch shares are to be set out explicitly in harvest strategies. The recently approved reef line and spanner crab harvest strategies now formalise the catch shares for a number of important species in Queensland. Since the reallocation policy was implemented in 2018, no formal requests for reallocation have been received for consideration.
6. Harvest strategies	On track 	Harvest strategies have been approved for reef line and spanner crab and are in place to guide management of these fisheries. Another 13 harvest strategies have been drafted, in consultation with fishery working groups. These will be released for public consultation following consideration of the remaining fisheries reforms.

Progress report (cont.)

Reform area	Delivery on track	Comments
7. Fishing rules and access	On track 	The first stage of fisheries reforms was implemented on 1 September 2019 to implement a number of changes to recreational, charter and commercial fishing rules, and allow urgent management action to be taken for snapper, pearl perch and scallops to ensure we have fish for the future. An <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander commercial fishing development policy</i> has been completed to support economic development opportunities for Indigenous peoples and communities by providing flexible pathways to participate in commercial fishing businesses.
8. Responsive decision-making	On track 	Changes to the <i>Fisheries Act 1994</i> , to allow more responsive decision-making, enabled 2 harvest strategies to be approved. Catch limits for the 2020–21 reef line and spanner crab fishing seasons were set based on the new harvest strategies and were implemented by the Chief Executive. As part of the 1 September 2019 fisheries reforms, a number of structural changes to fisheries legislation were also made to support more modern, effective and efficient regulation of our fisheries.
9. Compliance	Achieved 	Twenty new Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol (QBFP) officers are now authorised and operational, and the Gladstone QBFP office has reopened. New compliance powers and stronger penalties are in place to help address black-marketing of fisheries resources. New tools have been provided to QBFP officers (e.g. drones and surveillance kits). QBFP cultural liaison officers are working closely with Traditional Owners and land and sea rangers to enhance surveillance capacity in remote areas and support education and other community initiatives. Vessel tracking is now operational in major Queensland commercial fisheries.
10. Resourcing	On track 	Additional funding has been allocated through the state budget to support fish aggregating devices in South East Queensland, to support the roll out of additional recreational fishing grants, for ongoing support of digital transformation projects, and to enable a new Market Diversification and Resilience Grant program to run to support commercial fishers impacted by COVID-19 and the loss of export markets.

Overall comments

Industry engagement remained a strong focus in 2019–20, as we considered all feedback in relation to the consultation on proposed amendments to the Fisheries Regulation 2008. There were 10 fishery working group meetings to discuss the consultation feedback and provide advice on the final proposed regulatory changes. As a result of the consultation processes, including three separate discussion papers in 2018–19 and 2019–20, fisheries legislation underwent major structural reforms in September 2019 to allow responsive decision-making:

- The *Fisheries Act 1994* sets out Fisheries Queensland's responsibilities for the economically viable, socially acceptable and ecologically sustainable development of Queensland's fisheries resources.
- The Fisheries Regulation 2008 was reworked into the Fisheries (General) Regulation 2019, which outlines general regulatory requirements relevant to the management and use of Queensland's fisheries resources.
- The new Fisheries (Commercial Fisheries) Regulation 2019 outlines the regulatory requirements that apply to Queensland's commercial fisheries, including how activities are to be carried out.
- The new Fisheries Declaration 2019 outlines restrictions on particular fishing activities across all sectors.
- The new Fisheries (Quota) Declaration 2019 outlines the quota entitlements for particular commercial fisheries, including the commercial catch limits.

Along with the changes to the structure of the legislation, a number of changes were made to fishing rules across all sectors, including management action to rebuild depleted snapper, pearl perch and scallop stocks. Management arrangements for black jewfish continued this year with the reopening of the fishery on 1 January 2020 and a closure of the east coast black jewfish fishery, including recreational take, in March 2020. New management arrangements for snapper and pearl perch commenced this year, with commercial catch now determined under the total allowable commercial catch for each species. The 2020–21 fishing season recommenced on 1 July 2020.

New commercial fishing, charter fishing and aquaculture e-newsletters are in place to better communicate updates and changes to key stakeholders. These complement the existing *CatchNews* e-newsletter, which will target recreational fishers and the broader community.





Areas for focus over the next 12 months

Over the next 12 months, we will focus on delivery of the remaining fishery reforms and regulatory changes to enable harvest strategies to be finalised for the priority crab, trawl, east coast inshore and harvest fisheries. Once harvest strategies are implemented for these fisheries, work will commence on the remaining fisheries, including the Gulf, east coast Spanish mackerel and rocky reef, to move them to management under the new harvest strategy framework. Fisheries Queensland will continue to focus on improving our engagement and communication, educating fishers about the changes to rules and processes, and building effective relationships with all stakeholders to connect them with the management of Queensland's fisheries. This will include a particular focus on charter fishing (to progress actions under the *Charter fishing action plan: 2018–2021* to complement harvest strategies) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fishers (to develop resources and policy on traditional fishing), and improving both sectors' participation in the management of our fisheries. We will also continue to innovate, focusing on new technologies and improving data to support effective and sustainable fisheries management. Work will continue to streamline fisheries stock assessments to realise the benefits of new data, including new biological data, as well as improved recreational and commercial catch and effort data.

Measuring progress against targets



To measure our performance over time, targets were set for 2020 and 2027. This helps track our performance and ensure we are achieving the outcomes identified.

2020 targets

Target	Baseline in 2017–18	Progress 2018–19	Progress 2019–20
Sustainable catch limits based on maximum sustainable yield (around 40–50% biomass)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stock assessments completed for 28 species (43 stocks) in 2007–17 Stock assessments completed for 2 species (2 stocks) in 2017–18 8 catch-based quotas, but not explicitly set using biomass targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stock assessments completed for 13 species (22 stocks), including 6 new species 9 catch-based quotas, but not explicitly set using biomass targets 	<p>Work continuing </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New stock assessments completed for 5 species (9 stocks) 9 catch-based quotas, 2 now using harvest strategies to set catch in line with best practice (spanner crab and reef line), while the remainder are not explicitly set using biomass targets
Harvest strategies for all fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No harvest strategies in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13 harvest strategies in development 	<p>On track </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 approved harvest strategies (spanner crab and reef line fisheries) 13 draft harvest strategies prepared
Export approvals maintained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% export approvals in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% export approvals in place 	<p>Achieved </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% export approvals in place
Improved stakeholder satisfaction with engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall satisfaction with Fisheries Queensland engagement: 56% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction survey to be completed in 2019–20 to assess progress against the baseline Independent contractors engaged to better understand barriers to engagement with commercial fishers—an action plan is being developed for implementation in 2019–20 	<p>Work continuing </p> <p>Second survey completed in December 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall satisfaction with Fisheries Queensland engagement: 50% Different stakeholder groups exhibited different satisfaction ratings Satisfaction with engagement increased for recreational fishers, government agencies and non-fishers Satisfaction with engagement declined for commercial, charter and Indigenous fishers, with commercial fishers continuing to have a low level of satisfaction with engagement





2020 targets (cont.)

Target	Baseline in 2017–18	Progress 2018–19	Progress 2019–20
Increased satisfaction of recreational fishers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall satisfaction of recreational fishers in Queensland: 62% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction survey to be completed in 2019–20 to assess progress against the baseline Statewide recreational fishing survey to be completed to revise information on recreational fishing participation and harvest 	<p>Work continuing </p> <p>Second survey completed in December 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction with engagement by recreational fishers increased from previous survey in 2017 to overall satisfaction of 64% The 2019–20 statewide recreational fishing survey collected information on participation rate, economic and social indicators (results will be released in 2020–21)
Better data for key fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 67 key species (98 stocks) considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 27 species (30 stocks) undefined – 5 species (5 stocks) with minimal data – 1 species (1 stock) not assessed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 67 key species (98 stocks) considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 27 species (31 stocks) undefined – 5 species (5 stocks) with minimal data – all species assessed 	<p>Work continuing </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of Australian Fish Stock assessment is completed once every 2 years—the next assessment will be in 2020–21 Significant improvements in data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Additional biological data for over 50 species – Shark species composition for retained and discarded sharks catch in some net fisheries – Age samples collected for 7 new fish species that will be processed and analysed in 2020–21 – Completion of the first comprehensive economic and social data for commercial and charter fisheries – Completion of the statewide recreational fishing survey for recreational fishing (this data will be analysed to provide recreational catch and effort estimates in 2020–21) – Vessel tracking data for fishing effort and logbook validation for major commercial fisheries






2027 targets

Target	Baseline in 2017–18	Progress 2018–19	Progress 2019–20
Sustainable catch limits based on maximum economic yield (around 60% biomass)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stock assessments completed for 28 species (43 stocks) in 2007–17 Stock assessments completed for 2 species (2 stocks) in 2017–18 8 catch-based quotas, but not explicitly set using biomass targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stock assessments completed for 13 species 22 stocks), including 6 new species 9 catch-based quotas, but not explicitly set using biomass targets 	<p>Work continuing </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stock assessments completed for 5 species (9 stocks) 9 catch-based quotas, 2 now using harvest strategies to set catch in line with best practice (spanner crab and reef line), while the remainder are not explicitly set using biomass targets
No Queensland fisheries overfished	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 overfished stocks (scallop and snapper) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 overfished stocks (scallop, snapper and pearl perch) Further management actions proposed to take pressure off snapper and pearl perch, and rebuild scallops 	<p>Work continuing </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All stock status assessments for Queensland species now incorporated into the biennial National Status of Australian Fish Stocks (SAFS) report Next report being prepared for release in October 2020 Assessing the status of 69 species for the 2020 SAFS report In 2018, assessed 54 key fish species from 80 stocks—of these 80 stocks, 8 currently considered to have sustainability concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 stocks considered to be depleted or overfished—snapper, saucer scallops and pearl perch 3 stocks considered to be depleting—spanner crab, king threadfin (Gulf of Carpentaria) and barramundi (southern Gulf of Carpentaria) Mangrove jack considered to be recovering in the Gulf of Carpentaria Grey morwong also assessed as depleted at the national level—this is a minor species in Queensland (mainly occurs in southern Australian waters) Streamlined stock assessments being developed for all tier 1 and 2 priority management species (approx. 38 species) to inform fisheries management reference points



2027 targets (cont.)


Target	Baseline in 2017–18	Progress 2018–19	Progress 2019–20
Increased certainty for commercial operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No data yet (to be collected in 2018) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New social and economic monitoring program developed to collect baseline data in 2019–20 	<p>On track </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed collection of baseline data for social and economic monitoring program
Reduced volume of fisheries regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 933 pages of regulations—733 pages in the Fisheries Regulation 2008 and 200 pages in the Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Management Plan 2010 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 839 pages of regulations—579 pages in the Fisheries Regulation 2008 and 260 pages of declarations Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Management Plan 2010 incorporated into the Fisheries Regulation 2008 and declarations ready for harvest strategies 	<p>On track </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 845 pages of regulations—554 pages in the fisheries regulations and 289 pages of declarations
Improved trends of compliance rates*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 91% compliance rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 89%—rate is lower due to shift to intelligence-based compliance, which targets non-compliant operators rather than random inspections 	<p>On track </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 89%—rate is lower than normal due to a shift to intelligence-based compliance, which targets non-compliant operators rather than random inspections Total inspection numbers were down due to an increase in the number and complexity of investigations being conducted The decline in compliance rates can also be attributed to restrictions imposed during COVID-19

* QBFP has moved to an intelligence-based approach to compliance, which may result in lower compliance rates due to targeting non-compliance rather than random on-water inspections.

2027 targets (cont.)

Target	Baseline in 2017–18	Progress 2018–19	Progress 2019–20
Responsive and consultative approach to fisheries management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall satisfaction with Fisheries Queensland engagement: 56% Other measures to be developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction survey to be completed in 2019–20 to assess progress against the baseline Changes to the <i>Fisheries Act 1994</i> to establish framework for responsive decision-making—focus in 2019–20 will shift to finalising harvest strategies with pre-agreed decision rules 10 fishery-specific working groups in place and meeting regularly to provide operational advice on respective fisheries Responsive decisions about sustainability concerns for black jewfish, and molluscs in Moreton Bay 636 responses to the discussion paper about allocation approaches with very constructive feedback provided—as a result, a number of changes made to improve allocation approaches Data validation of logbook history undertaken in the crab and east coast inshore fisheries as a result of stakeholder concern about inflated catch ahead of allocation 	<div style="background-color: #008060; color: white; padding: 2px; display: inline-block; border-radius: 10px;">On track </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction survey to assess progress against the baseline completed 10 fishery-specific working groups in place and meeting regularly to provide operational advice on respective fisheries Responsive decisions about sustainability concerns for snapper, pearl perch and scallops 989 survey responses and 167 written submission responses to the discussion paper on proposed changes to the Fisheries Regulation 2008 were received, with feedback informing decisions on reform implementation Fact sheets developed to explain why certain regulatory changes were made on 1 September 2019 and support improved understanding of fisheries management decisions

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