



GoCCFA
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October 12, 2025

The Hon Brent Mickelberg MP Minister for Transport and Main Roads transportandmainroads@ministerial.qld.gov.au

The Hon Tony Perrett MP Minister for Primary Industries primaryindustries@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Mayor Jack Bawden Carpentaria Shire Council mayor@carpentaria.qld.gov.au

Mr Robbie Katter MP Member for Traeger rob.katter@parliament.qld.gov.au

Mr David Kempton MP Member for Cook david.kempton@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Minister Mickelberg

Urgent Action Required - Loss of Access to Vessel Maintenance Facilities in the Gulf of Carpentaria

I am writing to you on behalf of the Gulf of Carpentaria Commercial Fishers Association (GOCCFA), which represents commercial fishers operating in one of Queensland's most vital seafood production regions.

As President of GOCCFA, I urge your immediate attention and collaborative intervention on a critical issue threatening the safety, compliance, and economic viability of our industry: the impending loss of access to careening facilities for vessel maintenance.

For many years, commercial fishers in the Gulf have relied on the careening beach leased by Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) from Ports North to remove our vessels from the water for annual hull maintenance, inspections, and repairs.

This facility is indispensable for ensuring our boats meet stringent safety standards, prevent biofouling, and comply with regulatory requirements under the Department of Primary Industries and MSQ guidelines. Without this access, our operations grind to a halt, exposing vessels to accelerated deterioration in the harsh Gulf waters and endangering crew safety.

We were advised on Friday 10/10/25 at the associations' annual general meeting that Ports North has leased this area to a mining interest, effectively denying commercial fishers the ability to haul out and maintain our vessels.

This decision, while perhaps driven by broader economic priorities, overlooks the foundational role our industry plays in regional employment, food security, and revenue—contributing millions annually to the North Queensland economy. The sudden revocation of this access point creates an existential risk for small-to-medium operators who cannot afford to transport vessels hundreds of kilometres to alternative facilities in Cairns or Townsville.



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We require your assistance to identify and secure an alternative careening site that meets the following specifications:

- Capacity to dry dock vessels 10 -20 metres in length;
- Sufficient surrounding space (at minimum 5-10 metres clearance) to allow safe access for fishers to conduct comprehensive annual maintenance, including antifouling application, propeller servicing, and structural repairs;
- Mooring posts suitable to tie vessels to, to hold upright when tides runs dry
- Proximity to the Gulf ports to minimise transport costs and downtime; and
- Long-term tenure to provide stability for our industry.

In addition, we would call for a review to the previously successful grant application approved 17/8/23 to Wren Fishing by the Department of State Development, for the construction of suitable slipway facility at Lot 103 Yappar Street Karumba. This project would represent a long term solution that was previously not realised owing to ;

- Unsatisfactory contract conditions to protect Wren Fishing co-investment
- Unsuccessful negotiations to secure long term water lease adjacent to proposed site between Ports North and Wren Fishing

Yours sincerely,

Michael Gater

President

Gulf of Carpentaria Commercial Fishers Association