

Gulf of Carpentaria Commercial Fishermen's Association (GOCCFA)

AGM Minutes

Date: 10 October 2025 **Time:** 8:00 AM start **Location:** Karumba, Queensland **Chair:** Michael Gater **Minute Taker:** Claudine Ward

Attendees (Present/Noted)

- Michael Gater (President)
- Harry Ward (Vice President)
- Claudine Ward (Secretary)
- Troy Kemeridis (Treasurer)
- In person : Steve Wilson, Julianne Ward, Stevern Lollo, Maddie Glackin (Fisheries Manager), Jeff Ikin (Fisheries Queensland), Julie Robins (DPI Science), Richard Pillans (CSIRO) Micah Chataway, Kallum Watson (Queensland Boating & Fisheries Inspectors) Ben Day (MSQ), Rick French, Dale Cooper, Rod Simpson, Steve Johnson, Dan Morgan, Matthew Lane, Katelyn Martin, Jack Bawden (Carpentaria Shire)
- Online: Karen Miller, Beth Ward, David Ward, Jamie Carroll, Shawn McAtamney, Bruce Davies, David Wren, Shane Batch, Kieren Howard, John Atha, Cathy Symonds, Tyrone Henson, Frank Formosa, Maria Formosa, DJ Lane, Luke Albury, Jack Hauser, David Kempton, Robbie Katter, Bevan Carrol, Terry & Scott Stevens, Lyn Bolton, Shane Ward,
- Guests speaker:(Police) Marcel Van der Bos,

Apologies

- Ian Wilson (resigned Secretary position earlier). Brad Bosel, Scott Bolton, Yvonne Tunney, Jeff & Sandi Newman, Russel Cooley

1. President's Report (Michael Gater)

- **Key Points:**
 - Busy year post-restructure; delegates attended multiple Brisbane meetings/forums on representation.
 - MoU signed with QSIA for additional government access and feedback loop; Executive noted QSIA received funding by DPI for additional resources (Noting Karen Miller is the on board).
 - Refreshed association website www.goccca.com.au / GoCCFA Facebook page established to communicate real time with fishers and broader community, introduction of the ¼ newsletter for the association to publish GoCCFA activities and allow DPI and others to communicate during the year with the industry
 - Hired an external accounting consultant to finalise previous years records and migrate all records across to a cloud based Xero package.
 - Gulf-specific issues: Water harvesting proposals (e.g., Mitchell River for cotton/agriculture); drafted responses with QSIA/NPF. Long-term impacts on barramundi/mudcrab unquantifiable for decades.
 - Membership changes: Tiered fees based on quota ownership (e.g., \$0.10/kg for mudcrab); N12 opted out but contributes to N3. Emphasized value of representation (e.g., retained 108t mudcrab quota, removed asset warnings on licences).
 - Advocacy: Lobbied for asset class restoration (now bankable); supported QSIA on N9 extension/MSQ pre-assessment (benefits Gulf gillnetters).
 - Challenges: Need ongoing projects (e.g., acoustics, female mudcrab harvest, stock assessments) for social licence; proactive funding essential amid government changes.
- **Discussion:** Fees too high (\$700); not all fisheries equally represented (e.g., N3 vs. crab). Suggestion: Pool funds by fishery (e.g., crab levy for crab issues); split payments; end-of-season billing.

- **Commitments:**
 - Executive to review/rewrite fee structure (e.g., \$300 L4, \$500 crab, \$700 N3; fishery-specific pools); consult members and present at next meeting.
 - Shawn McAtamney to continue background advocacy
 - Association to fund modest projects (e.g., PhD students) using levies.

2. Financial Report

- **Key Point:** Association account balance: \$24,447.58. Some outstanding fees; new invoicing system via Xero implemented for streamlining. Funds to support projects and operations post-restructure.
- **Discussion:** Acknowledged resistance to fee increases; funds depleted from prior restructure efforts (e.g., \$80,000 raised for N3 consultation).
- **Commitment:** Executive (Troy/Shawn) to tidy Xero system and chase outstanding fees; report to next meeting.

3. MSQ and Local Operations Update (Ben Day)

- **Key Points:**
 - Karumba base unmanned from February 2026; Cairns oversight.
 - Mining/phosphate projects: Leases near Green Beach (ramping end-2026); impacts beach access/haul-out. Alternatives: Private land arrangements or river sites (e.g., Norman River).
 - Moorings: Register via AMSA; lights/numbers required; avoid unregistered to prevent issues.
 - Sewage systems: State wide checks; ensure compliance (e.g., no maceration issues) by next year.
- **Discussion:** Concerns over mining vs. fishing access; need for ramp cameras/enforcement.
- **Commitments:**
 - Attendees to register moorings/apply for approvals; approach Dave Brandon for river access.
 - MSQ (Cairns-based) to maintain active patrols/investigations; guest to liaise on. spills/marine issues.

4. Queensland Police

- Discussion on unregistered trailers for seasonal operations.
- **Key Point:** Permits available via email to Karumba Police (karumba@police.qld.gov.au) for movement; include details like timing (e.g., 2 days). Emphasized legal compliance and safety (e.g., no interference with power lines).
- **Commitment:** Attendees to apply for permits as needed; Karumba police to process requests promptly. No questions raised.
- **Small dinghy trailers need to be registered**

5. Fisheries Inspectorate Update (Micah, Callum)

- **Key Points:** Open for questions; emphasized compliance (e.g., VMS trackers, fines up to \$3,600). No major issues reported; focus on education.
- **Discussion:** Tracker reliability concerns; need for leniency on technical faults.
- **Commitment:** Inspectors available for queries; promote awareness of rules.
- **Geoff Ikin to take issues to tracking group**

6. Harvest Strategy Working Group Update (Maddie Glacken, Jeff Irkin, Julie Robins)

- **Key Points:**
 - Proposed competitive TAC (2027 implementation): Historical harvest baseline (e.g., ~600t barramundi); +10% flexibility if TAC reached (up to 3x over 5 years); no decreases. King threadfin choke (modelling ongoing; stock assessments conflicting: 5% vs. 20-60% recovery).
 - Social licence emphasis; addresses uncertainty (e.g., water extraction, rec/charter). No rec/charter monitoring planned.
 - More catch reporting similar to shark unloading.
 - Data gaps: Juveniles, biomass in closed areas/rivers; transshipping complicates logbooks.
- **Discussion:** Too soon post-restructure (50% area loss); lacks flexibility for dry years/cycles; ignores rec/charter impacts (e.g., February ramp overloads, Facebook photos of excess catch). King threadfin data outdated; prefer live reporting over TAC. Suggestions: Area rotations, 5-year stability period, subsidies for research.
- **Commitments:**
 - Working Group (Shawn, Claudine, Bruce, etc.) to provide feedback by November meeting; explore delayed rollout/phased changes.
 - Dept. to model King threadfin further; consult Julie on management; prioritize juvenile/biomass research.
 - Association to lobby politicians against stringent TAC timing.

7. Election of Office Bearers

- **Resolutions (All Carried Unopposed):**
 - Chair: Michael Gater (retained).
 - Vice Chair: Harry Wilson (retained).
 - Secretary: Claudine Ward (retained).
 - Treasurer: Troy Kemeridis (retained).
 - Delegates: N3 (Kieren Howard);
 - L4 (Shane Batch);
 - Crab C1 (Brad Bosel);
 - Environment (Claudine Ward)
 - Emergency (Kyra Hill)
 - N12 Wren Fishing
- **Key Point:** Call for younger members; (water issues pending).
- **Julie Robins gave a presentation on King Salmon catch returns PDF attached**
- **Richard Pillans presented on the sawfish program and highlighted the need to return all tags as well as committing to present the Endangered Species workshop Karumba January 2026**

8. General Business

Gulf webpage www.gocffa.com.au latest actions are here plus access to newsletter

- **Key Points:** Need united voice; QSIA AGM 7 November (workshop). Continue representation amid cycles/uncertainties.
- **Discussion:** Frustrations with rec enforcement, data gaps; optimism post-closures (e.g., fish cannibalism observed).
- **Commitments:**
 - Members to attend QSIA AGM; provide harvest feedback to working group reps.
 - Executive to form subgroup on fees; update via email.

Meeting Close

- **Time:** 3.45 PM
- **Next Meeting:** AGM next October
- **Actions Summary:**

Action	Responsible	Due
Permit applications	Attendees	As needed
Chase fees/Xero tidy	Troy/Shawn	Next meeting
Fee structure review	Executive	Next meeting
Moorings registration	Attendees	Immediate
Harvest feedback	Working Group	November
Research prioritization	Dept. (Maddie/Jeff)	Ongoing