



Dear Industry Members,

Last night I attended the CommFish NSW meet and greet on behalf of the Wild Caught Fishers Coalition. As part of WCFC's commitment to transparency and evidence-based fisheries management, I provided every CommFish member in attendance with a copy of the WCFC Issue Pack, which outlines the key issues affecting our industry and the reforms urgently required.

Throughout the event I spoke with a wide range of stakeholders about several pressing concerns. These conversations made it very clear that CommFish members must be properly informed by the fishers they represent before voting on any matter.

### **Key Issues Raised**

#### **1. Blue Swimmer Crab Size Increase and the Need for Proper Consultation**

The decision by CommFish to support increasing the commercial minimum size for Blue Swimmer Crabs from 60 millimetres to 65 millimetres remains a clear example of poor consultation and a lack of evidence-based decision making.

Previous stock information showed that most crabs harvested in Wallis Lake naturally fall within the 60 to 65 millimetre range, meaning the size increase removed most of the available legal catch. The resulting drop in landings was not caused by stock decline but by the regulation itself. Had CommFish members spoken directly with Wallis Lake operators before voting, this could have been avoided.

#### **2. Misuse of Cultural Fishing and Unregulated Commercial Activity**

I raised ongoing concerns about significant quantities of product entering the commercial market on the South Coast under the banner of cultural fishing. WCFC supports genuine cultural practice, but the current framework lacks oversight, reporting and clarity. This has allowed unregulated commercial scale activity to expand, which affects stock assessments, market stability and confidence in the rules.

#### **3. White Spot and the Need for Transparency in Biosecurity Responses**

The Clarence River White Spot response again highlighted the importance of clear communication, proper data release and meaningful engagement with affected operators. The lack of transparency created confusion, financial damage and distrust.

Industry expects better safeguards and greater accountability in future biosecurity responses.



### **A Clear Expectation for CommFish NSW**

One message from last night was consistent. CommFish cannot vote without understanding the practical impacts on the fishery involved.

WCFC is calling for a simple change.

**Before CommFish NSW votes on any matter, members must speak directly with the fishers who will be affected.**

This is a reasonable expectation and is essential for good governance. It ensures that decisions reflect real conditions on the water rather than incomplete information or assumptions.

### **Moving Forward**

WCFC will continue to advocate for transparent and evidence-based regulation. We will push for genuine consultation, fair and practical rules and decision making that protects the future of the fleet and the supply of local seafood for NSW communities.

Our commitment is to represent industry honestly and constructively. We expect the same commitment from those who vote on decisions that shape our livelihoods.

If any fisher would like to discuss the matters raised at the meeting or the contents of the Issue Pack, please contact me directly.

**Kind Regards**

**Dane Van Der Neut**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Van Der Neut', is placed over a light blue wavy graphic that spans the width of the page.

President

Wild Caught Fishers Coalition

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