

Queensland Responsible Fisheries Code of Best Practice



Code alignment with principles of the UNFAO Code for Responsible Fisheries Practice

- International Code for Responsible Fishing is signed by 170 member countries including Australia
- Australian fisheries management has roots in the UNFAO code
- The FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries is viewed as a minimum mark of responsibility to many conservation groups
- Commitment to the Queensland Responsible Fisheries code helps to demonstrate sustainable and responsible fishing practice
- There is value in adoption, implementation and extension of industry commitment to the community and consumers

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The Queensland seafood industry acknowledges the right to fish carries with it an obligation to do so in a responsible manner, so as to ensure effective conservation and management of living aquatic resources

The QRFC has the following 6 overarching objectives:

- Establish principles that encourage sustainable and responsible fishing practices.
- Serve as an instrument of reference to guide implementation of sustainable and responsible practice.
- Improve compliance with relevant legislation, closures and marine protected areas.
- Promote co-operation in the conservation of living aquatic resources and their environments and coastal areas.
- Promote trade in fish and fishery products which maximise food quality and safety.
- Promote awareness of research on fisheries, ecosystems and environmental factors.

Queensland Responsible Fisheries Code of Best Practice

The QRFC comprises the following 5 key principles:

Principle 1 - Ensure fishing operations are carried out in accordance with regulations and endorsement conditions

P1a. Ensure familiarity and compliance with relevant fisheries legislation.

P1b. Be aware of any changes made to fisheries legislation.

P1c. Submit accurate records of fishing catch and effort, quota use and catch disposal.

P1d. Comply with commercial fishing closures and marine protected areas.

P1e. Comply with any other relevant codes, environmental management system, by-laws or regulations.

Queensland Responsible Fisheries Code of Best Practice

Principle 2 – Ensure responsible use of marine resources and ecosystems

- P2a. Conduct fishing operations and maintain vessels and equipment in areas, at times, and in a manner that minimise impact on the environment.
- P2b. Be familiar with listed protected and threatened species, populations and ecological communities that might be encountered during fishing operations, including methods of identification.
- P2c. Use selective and environmentally safe fishing gear and techniques that minimise bycatch and potential for interaction with protected or threatened species or ecological communities.
- P2d. Implement techniques, equipment or methods that maximise the survival of non-retained marine species.

Queensland Responsible Fisheries Code of Best Practice

Principle 2 – Ensure responsible use of marine resources and ecosystems

- P2e. Ensure any captured individual of a threatened or protected species are returned to the water as quickly as possible and with the least possible harm.
- P2f. Submit accurate records of any interactions with threatened or protected species.
- P2g. Use equipment or methods to release bycatch as quickly as possible and with the least possible harm.
- P2h. All litter and derelict fishing gear, generated or collected during fishing operations is stowed onboard and responsibly disposed using onshore facilities. Inform relevant authorities of a significant pollution incident or environmental impact.
- P2i. Spill containment materials should be stored on-board and used where required.

Queensland Responsible Fisheries Code of Best Practice

Principle 3 – Ensure responsible seafood handling, processing and distribution

P3a. Maintain the nutritional value, maximise quality of seafood products and reduce waste.

P3b. Ensure fish trade practices comply with relevant food safety and quality assurance plans to protect consumer health (e.g. Food Safety Plan).

P3c. Market seafood accurately using the Australian Fish Names Standard.

Queensland Responsible Fisheries Code of Best Practice

Principle 4 – Ensure fishing operations are conducted with an acceptable level of safety and conduct

P4a. Ensure that fishing is conducted with due regard to the safety of human life.

P4b. Ensure fishing operations are carried out according to an individually developed and implemented Safety Management System.

P4c. Be proactive and assist maritime search and rescue operations where directed.

P4d. Ensure that actions of the vessel master and crew do not bring the industry into disrepute.

Queensland Responsible Fisheries Code of Best Practice

Principle 4 – Ensure fishing operations are conducted with an acceptable level of safety and conduct

- P4e. Respect the public amenity of boat ramps by avoiding cleaning fish and gear in their vicinity and ensuring that access for other users is not unduly restricted.
- P4f. Be courteous and co-operate with any public official or member of the community.
- P4g. Be aware of and respect the customs of the Aboriginal people.
- P4h. Engage in activities designed to improve community awareness of the QRFC and implementation of responsible and sustainable fishing practices.

Queensland Responsible Fisheries Code of Best Practice

Principle 5 – Encourage personal development activities

- P5a. Be proactive and participate in relevant programs that help to develop training, skills and industry leadership.
- P5b. Maintain records of relevant training and education competencies.
- P5c. Be pro-active, co-operate and assist relevant fisheries research, development and extension programs.