



Department of
Agriculture and Fisheries

Our ref: CTS 19701/20

17 September 2020

Mr Alex Scott
Branch Secretary
Together Queensland
Industrial Union of Employees
PO Box 3272
SOUTH BRISBANE QLD 4101

Dear Mr Scott

Thank you for your letter of 7 September 2020 regarding the 2019 updated risk assessment and report into workplace, health and safety risks for the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol (QBFP).

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) remains committed to working with all agencies to enhance the workplace health and safety risk environment of QBFP members specifically, and all departmental staff generally.

Senior DAF representatives, including myself and Mr Graeme Bolton, Deputy Director-General Fisheries and Forestry, recently met with Queensland Police Service (QPS) Commissioner Ms Katarina Carroll, who confirmed in-principle QPS support for the recommendations in the report noting a number of legislative and operational issues that require further consideration.

QPS and DAF representatives are already working to resolve legislative and technical challenges to the implementation of the recommendations, particularly in respect of near real time information sharing across existing platforms and the ability to carry restricted items. Work also continues on the development of an Information Sharing Agreement, pursuant to the *Fisheries Act 1994*, to facilitate the sharing of information at officer level.

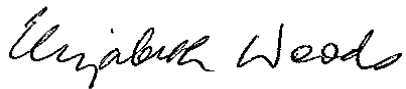
I can advise DAF is similarly working on a number of other initiatives identified in the report to minimise any risk of violence towards QBFP officers. This includes introducing policies that will see recidivist offenders and those that have demonstrated aggressive, threatening and violent behaviour towards officers, excluded from the industry. Other initiatives include obtaining approval from QPS for an exemption, pursuant to the *Transport Operations (Road Use Management – Vehicle Standards and Safety) Regulation 2010*, for QBFP officers to use a siren in a QBFP vehicle to enhance the safety of officers and clients when conducting roadside inspections.

I appreciate the concerns of the Together Union on this matter. As you may be aware, DAF has been providing regular updates to the Together Union and the Australian Workers Union through the DAF Agency Consultative Committee meetings and at separate standalone meetings requested by Together Union representatives. As previously advised, QBFP staff will be invited to participate in working groups to develop operational policies and procedures that will be required to ensure appropriate and safe use of any items approved for use in the future.

Finally, I would like to reassure you that the QBFP has a longstanding and strong safety culture. All officers are acutely aware of the need to stay safe and to ensure the safety of their colleagues.

If your organisation requires any further information please contact Mr Mark Doohan, Director Fisheries Queensland on telephone 0407737207 or email mark.doohan@daf.qld.gov.au. Mr Doohan would be happy to arrange a meeting with your organisation, if this is still required following this update.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Elizabeth Woods". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Elizabeth Woods
Director-General
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries