Impact analysis statement

Summary

Options to implement independent onboard monitoring in Queensland trawl fisheries

What is an impact analysis statement?

An impact analysis statement is an assessment of a regulatory proposal. It should be completed for new and amendment regulatory proposals, with the level of information and analysis proportionate to the likely impact of the proposal.

For more information on this process, visit **qpc.qld.gov.au**.

Reasons to implement independent onboard monitoring

Independent monitoring and validation of commercial fishing activities is critical to improve the understanding of protected species interactions, the ecological risks associated with fishing activities and confidence in the logbook information being reported, as well as ensuring that accurate and reliable information is available to inform evidence-based management decisions.

At present, there are limited strategies in place that can support the monitoring or validation of some commercial fishing data from trawl fisheries, specifically interactions with protected species and bycatch.

Independent onboard monitoring (IOM) methods, including e-monitoring systems and onboard observers, independently validate commercial fishing interactions with threatened, endangered and protected (TEP) species and bycatch.

Failure to implement IOM is expected to have several implications for the commercial fishing industry and broader Queensland economy, including:

- loss of export approvals and protection from prosecution for unintentional interactions with TEP species (under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*)
- potential review of access arrangements within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park under Commonwealth legislation
- reassessment implications regarding the World Heritage status of the Great Barrier Reef.

The objective of government action is to maximise the social, economic and ecological values of Queensland's fisheries resources through improved monitoring and independent validation of commercial fishing data, which requires balancing between competing uses both now and through the future.

Options for consideration

Several options were considered but either found not found to be feasible or not as beneficial as others, including a voluntary approach or using onboard observers instead of e-monitoring systems.

There are 2 main options presented in the IAS.

Option 1: Maintain the status quo

This means NOT implementing IOM across high-risk trawl fisheries (failure to implement IOM is expected to have several consequences for east coast trawl fisheries).

Option 2: Implement IOM in the commercial fin fish trawl fishery (CFFTF) and east coast otter trawl fishery (ECOTF)

This would mean the use of e-monitoring systems to monitor at-sea fishing operations (with a review after 2 years) across:

- 100% of CFFTF and ECOTF vessels (level 1)
  or
- 100% of CFFTF vessels, and ECOTF vessels that account for 90% of fishing effort (level 2)
  or
- 100% of CFFTF vessels, and ECOTF vessels that account for 25% of fishing effort (level 3).

Summary of proposed program for each level of ECOTF vessel coverage

East coast otter trawl fishery	VESSEL COVERAGE Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Annual effort (days fished)	**100%**	**90%**	**25%**
Fishery symbols	T1, T2, M1, M2	T1, T2, M1, M2	T1
Number of vessels required to have e-monitoring	243–361	166	30
Effort threshold for e-monitoring system (no. of days fished)	0–1	72	204
Proportion of active vessels required to have e-monitoring	100%	68%	12%

Overview of proposed program responsibilities

Program components	Government	Licence holders
Installation and maintenance of onboard camera systems	✓	–
Operation of systems during fishing events	–	✓
Submission of footage and data	–	✓
Data storage	✓	–
Footage review, validation and reporting	✓	–
Fisheries management, science and data management	✓	–
Artificial intelligence research and development	✓	–
Project implementation	✓	–

Other	✓	–

Proposed program objectives

- Support monitoring of commercial fishing activities and validation of commercial fishing data, with a primary focus on TEP species interactions.
- Provide accurate and reliable data to support the sustainable management of the fishery through ecological risk assessments, harvest strategies, stock assessments and protected species management strategies.
- Increase the accuracy of commercial fishing data and support fisher improvements in the identification, reporting and handling of TEP species.
- Reduce non-compliance with regulatory requirements, focusing on the use of bycatch mitigation devices and monitoring actions that would have perverse outcomes for the sustainable management of catch, bycatch or TEP species.
- Increase community confidence in commercial fishing practices and help improve the economic performance of commercial fishing businesses.

Costs

The introduction of IOM is **not expected to result in any additional costs to licence holders**.

It is proposed that:

- the **government covers all establishment costs** of an IOM program for the **first 4 years**
- the **program is reviewed after 2 years**, using updated data and information to inform ongoing program costs. Further consultation will be undertaken as part of the 2-year review.

Implementation schedule

It is proposed that a risk-based, staged implementation of an IOM program occurs over 4 years (beginning 15 June 2026), prioritising active CFFTF and ECOTF vessels.

Have your say

The impact analysis statement is available online and we will be holding information sessions at all major ports along the east coast to answer questions, support stakeholders respond to the online survey and understand next steps.

To register your interest in attending a session, and to have your say, visit our eHub site.

Consultation closes **5pm, Sunday 24 August 2025**.

More information

More information, including a video explaining the IAS process, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) and information on the onboard camera filed trial is also available on online, visit our eHub site.