

# Impact Analysis Statement

## Summary IAS

### Details

<b>Lead department</b>	Department of Primary Industries
<b>Name of the proposal</b>	<i>Fisheries and Other Legislation (Aquaculture Authorities) Amendment Regulation 2026</i> Amendment of <i>Fisheries (General) Regulation 2019</i> to prescribe fishery symbol fees for N15 and NX fishery symbols
<b>Submission type</b>	Summary IAS
<b>Title of related legislative or regulatory instrument</b>	<i>Fisheries and Other Legislation (Aquaculture Authorities) Amendment Regulation 2026</i>
<b>Date of issue</b>	April 2026

Proposal type	Details
<b>Regulatory proposals where no RIA is required</b>	<p>Existing regulations have established the N15 and NX fisheries as a replacement for other fisheries that have been phased out. The proposal establishes licence fees for the N15 and NX fisheries at rates that are no higher than the fisheries that have been phased out. As a result, the proposal is minor and machinery in nature as it is consequential to existing regulations and does not increase costs or regulatory burden on business or the community.</p> <p><b><u>Background</u></b></p> <p>On 28 November 2022, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) released a report on the reactive monitoring mission to the Great Barrier Reef (GBR). The report recommended the GBR be listed as 'in Danger' on the World Heritage List. The report included 18 recommendations. A priority recommendation was to "phase out destructive gill net fishing through appropriate mechanisms, including purchasing, and/or retiring all remaining industrial gill-net licences; retiring of other gill-net fisheries and the establishment of net-free sub-zones in areas of high conservation value for protected species".</p> <p>On 5 June 2023, the previous Commonwealth and Queensland Governments announced that over \$160 million will be delivered to significantly reduce net fishing and other high risk fishing activities impacting the GBR, including ensuring the GBR is gillnet free by mid-2027. On the 17 July 2023, the previous Queensland Government announced the establishment of the independent Future Fishing Taskforce (the Taskforce) to provide expert advice to government on the best approach, design and implementation of a structural adjustment package for the GBR.</p>

	<p>The Taskforce sought input from subject matter experts, stakeholders and peak bodies and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. The results of targeted consultation with affected commercial fishers and processors was also provided for consideration. The previous Queensland Government implemented legislative changes to support the transition to phase out gillnets in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, including the removal of N1, N2, and N4 fishery symbols that allow gillnet fishing on the east coast of Queensland, and issuing a new temporary fishery symbol, NX, to ensure the continuity of supply of wild-caught seafood. A new perpetual symbol, N15, was also created to maintain net fishing in south-east Queensland, which is outside the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.</p> <p>When written on a primary commercial fishing licence (PCFL), a fishery symbol authorises the PCFL holder to operate in that fishery in accordance with the authorisation and conditions prescribed in the Fisheries (Commercial Fisheries) Regulation 2019. The N1 fishery symbol allowed for general netting targeting king threadfin, grey mackerel, other mackerel, and shark along the east coast. The N2 fishery symbol allowed for set mesh gillnetting in inshore rivers and creeks, which primarily targeted barramundi. Finally, the N4 fishery symbol allowed for offshore waters gillnetting over 20m in depth, which primarily targeted grey mackerel and shark.</p> <p>On 1 January 2024, regulations commenced which removed the N1, N2 and N4 fishery symbols entirely. The N15 fishery symbol was implemented to maintain net fishery access in south-east Queensland. The removal of the N1, N2 and N4 fishery symbols means that PCFL holders can no longer undertake the commercial fishing activities authorised by the symbols.</p> <p>To mitigate the impact to commercial fishers from the removal of the N1, N2 and N4 fishery symbols, the previous Queensland Government announced a structural adjustment package to financially assist eligible fishers and supply-chain businesses. This package included payments for licence packages, relevant symbols, relevant individual transferable quota (ITQ), nets and their disposal, boat refits, payments acknowledging loss of future income, and support for seeking independent advice.</p> <p>In place of the N1, N2 and N4 fishery symbols, the new N15 and NX fishery symbols have been established.</p> <p>The N15 fishery symbol is a modified N1 symbol confined only to Management Region 5 in Southeast Queensland. The N15 symbol allows the take of the same regulated fish as the previous N1 symbol, with the addition of barramundi. Like longstanding arrangements for the N1 fishery, the N15 fishery will also be accessible to holders of N10 fishery symbols (tunnel netting) and K1-8 fishery symbols (beach netting) as an as of-right component, without an N15 being written onto the licence.</p> <p>The purpose of the NX fishery symbol is to maintain a degree of seafood supply while allowing for a pathway towards alternative, more sustainable gear in east coast inshore management regions 2-4 which are in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. The NX fishery symbol allows the take of the same regulated fish as the retired N2 fishery symbol, although different conditions apply to fishers when taking regulated fish such as attendance and monitoring requirements. The NX fishery symbol is temporary and will operate only between 1 January 2024 and 30 June 2027, after which point,</p>
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it will expire to meet the commitments made by the previous Queensland Government and upheld by the current Crisafulli Government to UNESCO to ban all gillnetting by 30 June 2027.

Allocation of the N15 and NX fishery symbols was undertaken in accordance with the approved Policy for the allocation of N15 net fishery symbols (no. 15) and NX allocation and operational requirements policy. Holders of the N15 and NX fishery symbols are former holders of either an N1 or N2 fishery symbol.

### **Proposal**

While the new N15 and NX fishery symbols have been established under the *Fisheries Act 1994*, annual fees for these symbols have not been prescribed in the Fisheries (General) Regulation 2019. Commercial fishers are required to pay annual fees in advance for licences (including symbols). Revenue from annual licence fees contribute to the management, compliance and enforcement of commercial fishing activities. Annual fees are determined by multiplying the value of the fee unit prescribed under section 2 of the Acts Interpretation (Fee Unit) Regulation 2022, currently \$1.096 to be updated to \$1.1331 on 1 July 2026, by the corresponding number of fee units prescribed for each fishery symbol in Schedule 6, Part 2 of the Fisheries (General) Regulation 2019. The annual fees for the removed or modified N1, N2 and N4 fishery symbols as of 31 December 2023 were:

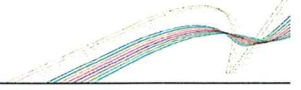
- N1 – 402.35 fee units, annual fee of \$426.49
- N2 – 804.65 fee units, annual fee of \$852.98
- N4 – 3051.90 fee units, annual fee of \$3235.01

It is proposed to amend Schedule 6, Part 2 of the Fisheries (General) Regulation 2019 to insert fee units for determining annual fees for the N15 and NX fishery symbols. The objective of introducing such fees is to ensure the management, compliance and enforcement of activities under the N15 and NX fishery symbols receives a level of funding.

The annual fee for the new N15 and NX fishery symbols is proposed to be based on the fee for the previous N1 fishery symbol, which was 402.35 fee units (402.35 fee units / \$455.90 as of 1 July 2026). Basing the new annual fees on the retired N1 fishery symbol is considered appropriate given the limited tenure of the NX fishery symbol, and the N15 fishery symbol being based on the previous N1 fishery symbol with similar entitlements. This fee structure does not, however, represent a cost recovery model for the NX fishery symbol.

Previous N1 fishery symbol holders who now hold either an N15 or NX fishery symbol will pay fee units equivalent to their previous fees. This is not an increase in costs or regulatory burden on business or the community.


Previous N2 fishery symbol holders who now hold either an N15 or NX fishery symbol will experience a decrease in their annual fee compared to their previous fee units, as the annual fee has effectively decreased (804.65 fee units / \$911.75 of 1 July 2026). This is a decrease compared to previous fee unit charges for the similar fishery symbol.



	<p>No commercial fishers concurrently hold both an N15 and NX fishery symbol, and therefore none will be required to pay both licence fees.</p> <p>An <u>exemption from a full IAS</u> was approved for amendments to fisheries regulations to retire the N1, N2 and N4 net fishery symbols. As a result, an assessment of impacts to government through the loss of revenue from annual fees collected for these symbols has not been undertaken. Impacts to revenue for the Department of Primary Industries due to the retirement of these symbols was considered significant as costs are not being recovered for the management, compliance and enforcement of commercial fishing activities. The prescription of annual fees for the N15 and NX fishery symbols will reduce some of these impacts to government by providing a replacement of part of the revenue lost through the retirement of the N1, N2 and N4 fishery symbols.</p>
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\*Refer to *The Queensland Government Better Regulation Policy* for regulatory proposals not requiring regulatory impact analysis (for example, public sector management, changes to existing criminal laws, taxation).

**Signed**

  
**Graeme Bolton**  
 Director-General

Date: 10/04/2026



**The Honourable Tony Perrett MP**  
 Minister for Primary Industries

Date: 13/04/2026