

# Vessel tracking policy – draft for consultation

Version: 1

## 1 Introduction

The *Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017-2027* (the Strategy) outlines the Queensland Government's vision for the future management of the State's fisheries resources. The Strategy aims to create a modern, responsive and consultative approach to fisheries management ensuring fishing is a low risk to Queensland's aquatic resources; and that these resources are used in a way that optimises benefits to the community.

The Strategy sets out clear targets to be achieved and a range of actions to deliver on the vision and these targets, including rolling out vessel tracking across all commercial and charter boats by 2020.

Vessel tracking will help Fisheries Queensland carry out real-time monitoring of the commercial fishing fleet. Data from vessel tracking is used to:

- monitor quota in near real time (e.g. deducting fishing days from individual's quota);
- monitor compliance with area and seasonal closures (including marine park zones);
- provide intelligence and evidence for investigations;
- help validate logbook data on where and when fishing occurred;
- provide fishing effort data that is used in stock assessments to estimate the biomass of a fish stock;
- help inform fishery management changes that may be needed.

A number of Queensland fisheries have been required to have vessel tracking for numerous years. This policy outlines how it will be extended to all commercial and charter boats.

It is acknowledged that the process of implementing vessel tracking will evolve over time. As a result, this policy will be regularly reviewed as improvements and issues are identified.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the *Vessel Tracking Guidelines and Installation and Maintenance Standards*, which outline in more detail the requirements for vessel tracking in Queensland.

## 2 Policy statement

Vessel tracking will be required on all commercial fishing and charter boats by 2020, with a requirement for all net, crab and line boats (including tenders) to have vessel tracking in place by the end of 2018.

## 3 Objective

This policy describes:

- Which commercial fishing boats will be required to have vessel tracking units installed and operational;
- When commercial fishing boats will be required to have vessel tracking units installed and operational;

- What management arrangements will be in place to address operational issues such as unit malfunctions at sea or in port.

## 4 Vessel Tracking Obligations

### 4.1 Vessel tracking requirements for all Commercial Fishing Boats

Unless otherwise provided for under this policy or the *Vessel Tracking Guidelines*, all commercial fishing boats (including primary and tender boats fishing under Commercial Fishing Boat Licences, Commercial Harvest Fishing Licences and Charter Fishing Licences) are required to have a vessel tracking unit installed and operational while undertaking commercial and non-commercial activities. This obligation will commence from 1 January 2019 for all crab, net and line boats, and from 1 January 2020 for all other commercial fishing boats.

The vessel tracking unit must be an approved unit and installed and maintained in accordance with the Fisheries Queensland's *Installation and Maintenance Standards*.

Penalties apply for using a commercial fishing boat without an approved and operational vessel tracking unit.

### 4.2 Moving vessel tracking units between commercial fishing boats

If an approved unit is able to be moved between boats while remaining compliant with the *Installation and Maintenance Standards* then a vessel tracking unit may be moved between commercial fishing boats in accordance with the *Vessel Tracking Guidelines*. All movements must be reported to Fisheries Queensland as per the *Vessel Tracking Guidelines*.

The tracking unit must be operational before returning to sea.

Penalties apply for failing to notify Fisheries Queensland of movements of vessel tracking units between commercial fishing boats.

### 4.3 Ensuring that the vessel tracking unit is working

To comply with section 4.1 of this policy, the licence holder and the person in control of the operation must ensure the vessel tracking unit is installed and operational before:

- undertaking a commercial fishing trip; or
- undertaking any other non-commercial trip using a primary fishing boat.

### 4.4 Vessel tracking unit failures at sea

If a vessel tracking unit malfunctions on a primary boat whilst at sea, the person in control of the operation must cause the boat to travel to a port area within five (5) days from the day the malfunction is identified, or, if the chief executive allows a longer period, the longer period. During the time the primary boat is at sea without an operational vessel tracking unit, the person in control of the operation must manually report the location of the primary boat as per the *Vessel Tracking Guidelines*. Once the boat returns to a port area, the person in control of the operation must ensure the boat does not return to sea unless section 4.1 of this policy is complied with.

If a vessel tracking unit malfunctions on a tender boat whilst at sea, the person in control of the operation must ensure the tender boat remains attached to the primary boat and does not take any fisheries resources for the remainder of the fishing trip.

If the vessel tracking unit stops malfunctioning on a primary boat or tender boat, the requirement to return to port and requirement to attach a tender boat to a primary boat stops applying.

## 5 Responsibilities and accountabilities

This policy applies to the holders of Queensland's commercial fishing boat licences, commercial harvest fishery licences and charter fishery licence. The holders of these licences are required to install and maintain a vessel tracking unit on any commercial fishing boat(s) operating under the licence.

The Manager, Licensing and Fisheries Information is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

Fisheries Queensland is responsible for administering and enforcing this policy. Fisheries Queensland is also responsible for ensuring the information that is provided via vessel tracking is kept and released in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2009* and *Standard Operating Procedure – Release of Fisheries Information*.

## 6 Source documentation

*Fisheries Act 1994* and *Fisheries Regulation 2008*.

Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017 – 2027.

## 7 Related and reference documents

### 7.1 Vessel Tracking Guidelines

Refer to the Fisheries Queensland *Vessel Tracking Guidelines* for more detailed information on the rules for vessel tracking.

### 7.2 Installation and Maintenance Standards

Refer to the Fisheries Queensland *Installation and Maintenance Standards* for approved vessel tracking units and their installation and maintenance standards.

### 7.3 DAF Standard Operating Procedure – Release of Fisheries Information

For information on how vessel tracking information may be used, refer to the Fisheries Queensland *Standard Operating Procedure – Release of Fisheries Information*.

## 8 Abbreviations, acronyms and definitions

**Chief Executive** – means the chief executive, or delegate, of Queensland Government Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

**Commercial Fishing Boat** – means any mechanically driven or powered ship, boat or other vessel of any size or type that is ever used to take or store fish for trade or commerce.

**DAF** – means the Queensland Government Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

**Fisheries Queensland** – means the organisational unit within Queensland Government Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF).

**Fishing Trip (Trip)** – means from the time a commercial fishing boat leaves a port to undertake non-commercial or commercial activities, to the time the commercial fishing boat ceases non-commercial and commercial activities – returns to port.

**Installation and Maintenance Standards** – means the vessel tracking installation and maintenance standards published by DAF.

**Licence holder** - means the holder of a Queensland Commercial Fishing Boat Licence (CFBL), Commercial Harvest Fishery Licence or Charter Fishing Licence.

**Person in control of the operation** – means the licensed commercial fisher operating under a commercial fishing boat licence or a listed nominee operating under a commercial harvest fishery licence or the person operating under a charter fishing licence.

**Primary boat** – means a boat identified as the primary boat on a commercial fishing boat licence or any boat used as the principle boat for a commercial harvest fishery licence or a charter fishing licence.

**Take** – for fisheries resources means catch, gather, kill or obtain from water or land; and attempt to catch, gather, kill or obtain from water or land; and land (from a boat or in another way), bring ashore or tranship.

**Tender boat** - means other than a primary boat, a boat that may be used under sections 246(1-4) of the *Fisheries Regulation 2008* or a boat that is actively used as a secondary boat to assist a primary boat for a charter or commercial harvest fishery operation.

**Vessel tracking unit** – means a unit that sends locational positions via a telecommunications network and is listed as an approved unit in the *Installation and Maintenance Standards* and is also known as a VMS.

**Vessel tracking guidelines** – means the vessel tracking guidelines for Queensland commercial fishing boats published by DAF.

**Vessel tracking policy** – means this policy.

**Author** Name: Director  
 Title: Operations

**Endorsed by** Name: Executive Director  
 Title: Fisheries

**Approved by** Name: Deputy Director-General  
 Title: Fisheries & Forestry

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