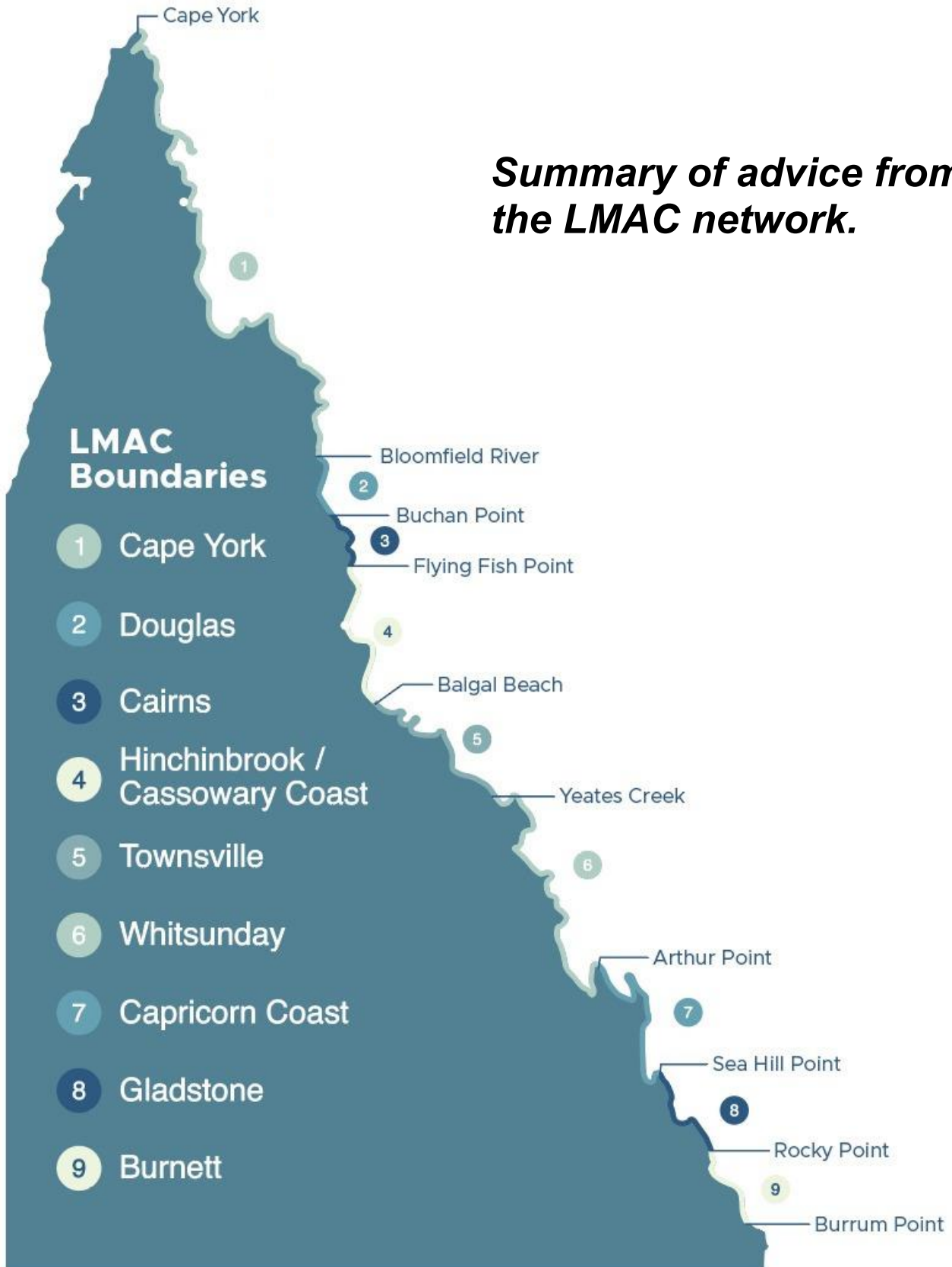


LOCAL MARINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

MAY 2026



Summary of advice from the LMAC network.



The eighth meetings of the Local Marine Advisory Committees (LMACs) for the 2024–2027 term were held in May 2026.

The Reef Authority’s Chelsea McLennan and Matthew Smith presented an overview of the [Fish for the future](#) campaign.

Fish for the Future is a values-led campaign focused on encouraging voluntary stewardship among recreational fishers. It promotes simple, practical actions that help protect the Great Barrier Reef while supporting a strong and sustainable fishing culture - particularly important as the Great Barrier Reef faces increasing pressure.

The campaign focuses on behaviours many fishers already practice, including:

- Fishing in the right zone
- Anchoring in sand or using moorings
- Taking only what you need for a feed
- Switching up target species and locations
- Moving on if sharks move in
- Responsible handling of catches

Collective LMAC member discussion points included:

- The increase in the number of expensive boats on the water and with technology.
- Greater encouragement for people to use the ‘Report and Incident’ page on the website.
- Electric anchors are becoming popular, and with this technology, no one needs to anchor while fishing.
- Fishers behaviours are changing considering the fuel prices.
- Ongoing issues with people fishing in Traditional Owner Sea Country without connection or permission.
- Increase of the number of people moving to the regions with boat ownership and they don’t necessarily know the rules.
- Increasing fishing pressure in Lockhart River region, including growth in commercial fleets and tourism activity.
- Intergenerational influence – kids teaching their parents about fishing sustainability. Kids know the zones.
- Many regions have ‘science in the pub’ nights which are a popular way of getting messages to the community.
- Many recreational fishers are keen to support stewardship and sustainable practices. The broader sector is aware that their peers are keeping an eye on them.
- Messaging specifically for migrants is not very accessible.
- Normalising best practice behaviours. Eg: A person in 1770 caught an 18 kg red emperor. He already had two, so he released it. The footage was uploaded on Tik Tok and got 540,000 views.
- People are aware of bag / size limits.

- People need to understand what bara trauma needles are and how to use them.
- Promotion of the campaign at community days would be beneficial.
- Adding push notifications to the Eye on the Reef app would be beneficial (like Great Sandy and Moreton Bay apps).
- Social media is a big influence with younger people.
- Tag-and-release education.
- The Eye on the Reef App is a big part of how people access zoning information.
- The use of drones increasing the risk of detection. Drones and fines work well and are highly effective.
- YouTube videos are a useful tool for high school teachers.

Recommendations:

The current campaign

- Change the message 'drop it where it's soft' to 'drop it in the sand'.
- Focus on empowering guides to collect data on shark predation.
- Focus on visitor behaviour in Cape York during peak tourism periods.
- Incorporate messaging:
 - rubbish / line disposal to educate the impacts of discarded line on coral ecosystems
 - the purpose/benefits of green zones and data from spill-over effect
 - the use of tackle that doesn't become marine debris
 - on approaching marine life.
- Identify local fishing influences, or respected community figures who could support peer-to-peer education and campaign promotions.
- Needs stronger regulatory messaging and future legislative direction.
- Highlight local stewardship activities / actions.
- Partner with organisations to share the messages.
- Provide collateral / information for fishing competitions in the regions.
- Target messages
 - to young people – use the Reef Guardian School network
 - for migrants through multicultural and migrant resource centres
 - farming community
 - people traveling from southern regions
 - women who fish
 - hook size and hooks used for certain species.
- Use the TUMRA and IRAC to get the messages out to Traditional Owners.
- Use videos on Tik Tok as research to find people / personalities to share the messages.

Future campaigns

- Explain what is 'in your possession' (compared to bag limits).
- Focus on the positive messages.
- Guidance regarding fish finders/sonar, underwater noise and best practices.
- Keep the 'non-government speak' style and the messages short and simple.

- Highlighting the use of drones.
- Promotional ideas: branded drink coolers carrying campaign messaging, brag mats, removable core flute signage, QR codes.
- Use storytelling / case study approach.

Within the community

Encourage:

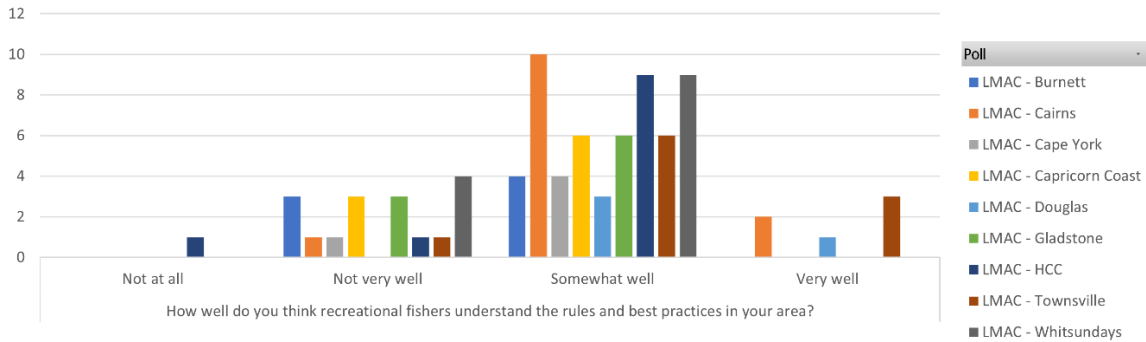
- DAF to reduce the bag limits – especially on red emperor. schools to use locals who are doing the ‘right thing’ and reinforce best practises.
- community to report people fishing in the wrong area.
- the use of electric anchors.
- PADI / spearfishing / free diving courses to include module on sustainable catch.
- recreational fishers to be the “eyes and ears” and provide reporting.
- Hold workshops – e.g.: best practice for reducing barotrauma.

The Reef Authority

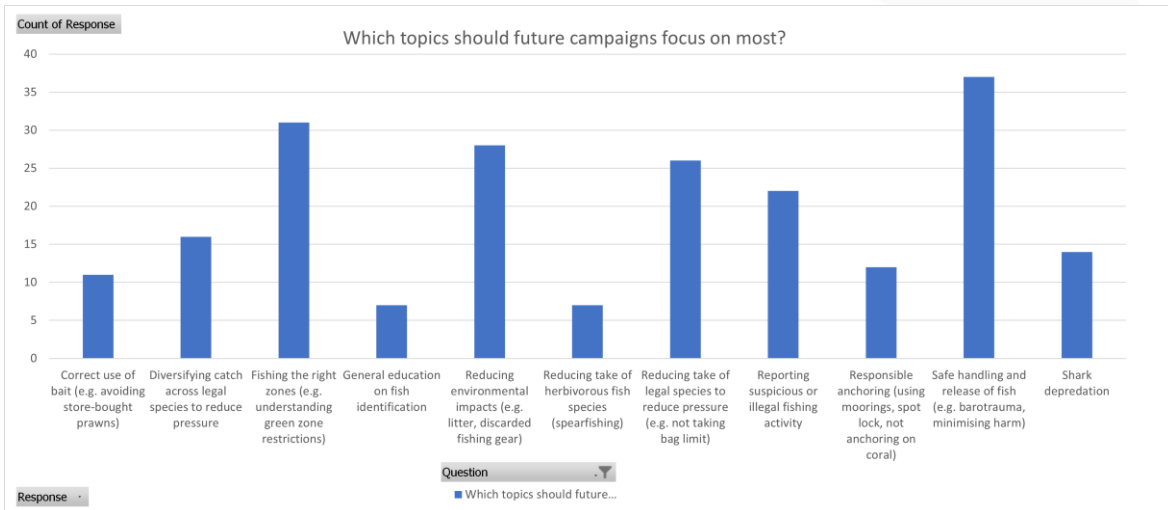
- Collateral / information at tackle stores and service stations.
- Design a reporting mechanism for recreational fishers (similar to commercial fishers).
- Design heat maps (where illegal fishing has been detected).
- Signage on digital billboards and at boat ramps.
- Add push notification to the Eye on the Reef App.
- The special management area offshore Cairns to have a targeted education element for spearfishing.

Results of the survey:

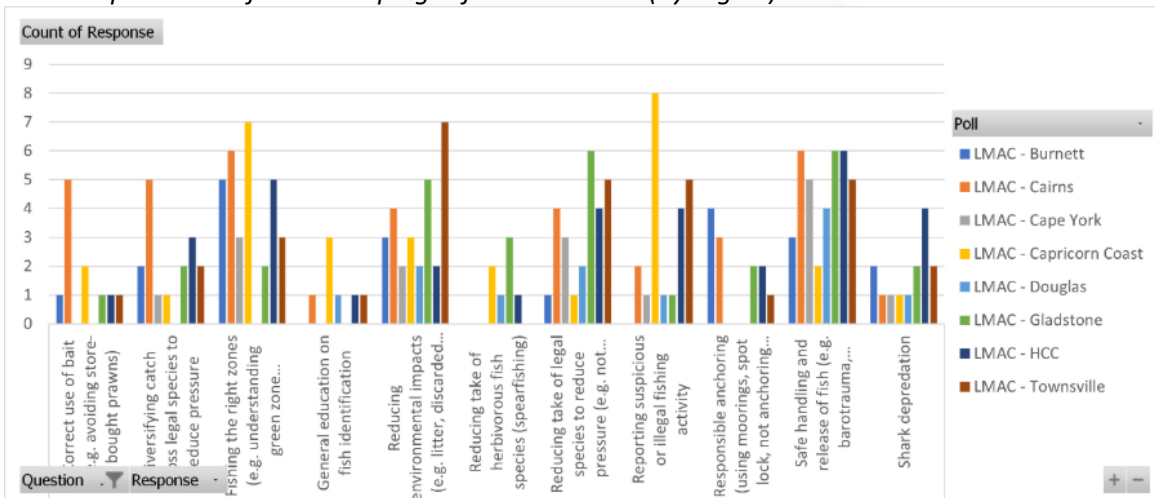
How well do you think recreational fishers understand the rules and best practices in your area?



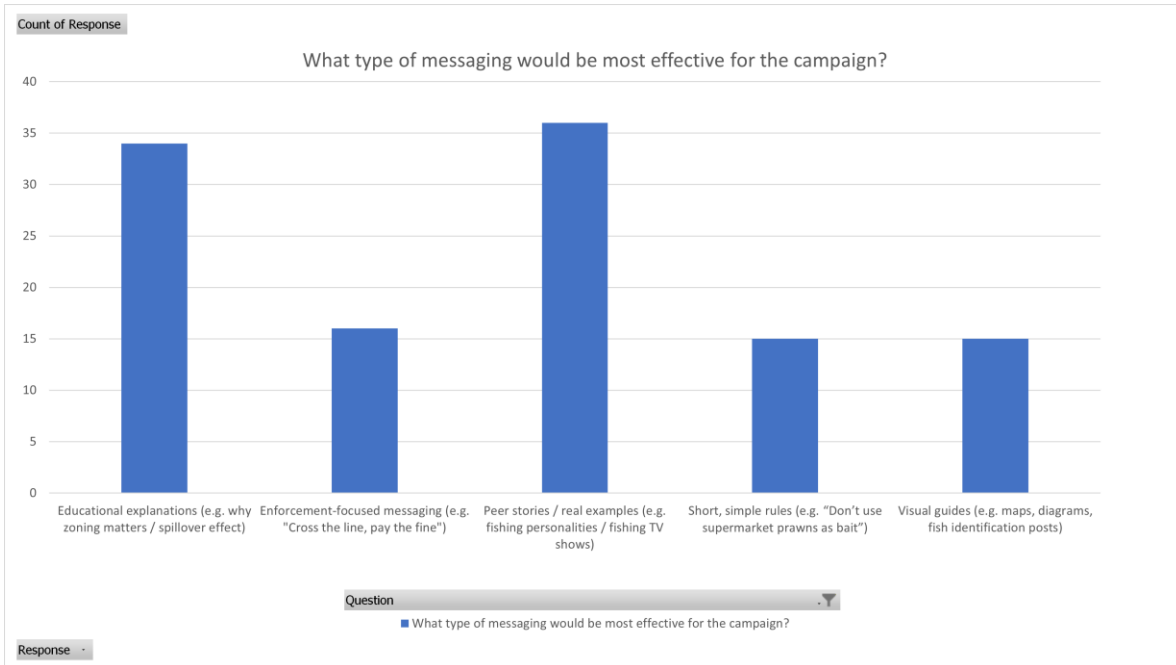
Which topics should future campaigns focus on most? (combined)



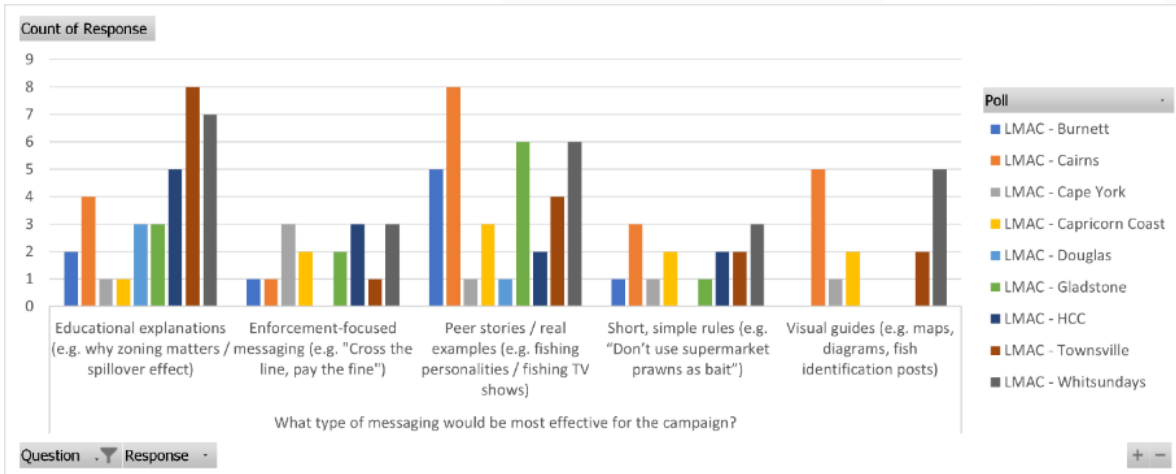
Which topics should future campaigns focus on most? (by region)



What type of messaging would be most effective for the campaign? (combined)



What type of messaging would be most effective for the campaign? (by region)





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