



Speech by

JEFF KNUTH

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Hansard 28 October 1999

CORAL REEF FINFISH FISHERY

Mr KNUTH (Burdekin—IND) (10.28 a.m.): I rise to comment on the QFMA draft management plan for the coral reef finfish fishery. I also note that the member for Cairns raised sensible issues on this draft plan in September, and I commend her input. As I have been a frequent reef fisherman myself, I can fairly say that I have more knowledge on this subject than half the academics who are trying to justify their positions in the QFMA.

After having a lengthy conversation with one such person, who was quite intent on questioning the democratic process of the Legislative Assembly, I realised that I was speaking to a man with his own agenda. On his own admission, he agreed that the average reef fisherman fished the reef only two to four times a year. He also admitted that recreational reef fishermen account for less than one quarter of all reef fish taken. Considering that a reef fisherman, managing as much as four trips a year and catching his current legal bag limits equates to 2.5 fish per week on which to feed his or her family, that is hardly an overkill. The reef fisherman is the basis of a \$2 billion recreational fishing industry—worth far more than the commercial industry and also employing more. One must question the QFMA's logic in targeting the recreational industry.

I am pleading with the Beattie Government to knock this QFMA proposal on the head right now, because such blatantly biased attitudes cannot be in the public interest. If the Labor Government does not do this, then obviously it has not learnt from its mistakes of the Goss era, when Molly Robson tried to close down national parks to recreational fishing, which left hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders carrying the bumper stickers: "I fish and I vote."

Every reef fisherman in Queensland is outraged by this QFMA proposal, and the QFMA knows this. I am asking the Beattie Government to leave the \$2 billion recreational industry alone, or jobs will be lost. Boat, outboard motor and tackle shop sales will plummet. I ask the Beattie Government to be fair and pressure the QFMA to target the facts and take a closer look at the thousands of tonnes of reef fish that are being exported by the commercial fishing industry. Great leaps have been made by aquaculture for the live fish trade. That is where we should be heading. I am asking the Beattie Government to reconsider its stance on attacking the recreational industry.

Time expired.
