



Speech by

**Mrs J. SHELDON**

**MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA**

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Hansard 26 May 1999

**SPANNER CRABS; FISHERIES REGULATIONS**

**Mrs SHELDON** (Caloundra—LP) (10.20 a.m.): The issue of quotas for spanner crab fishers is a concern in a number of electorates. There is a long history to this issue. A considerable length of time went into the review and the draft management plan and there is now a regulation that the Government has put in place. However, there is a lot of concern about the outcome. I am not advocating that we go back to square 1, but I think the quota system that has been put in place does treat certain fishers unfairly. I think these people should have some right of appeal to ensure that their concerns are looked after.

I will cite a case in my own electorate of a very genuine fisherman, whose family have been fishing now for three generations. He lost his living, one could say, when the Pumicestone Passage was closed to any form of trawl fishing. He was paid some compensation. He put that compensation into building a boat. During the time he was building that boat, spanner crab quotas were put in place. This man now finds himself in the situation in which he cannot make a living by his normal method. That is hardly fair and just.

I think we should look at the appeal system currently in place under the Fisheries Act. It needs to have its grounds broadened so that genuine fishermen can have an avenue of appeal. At the moment it is most unlikely that any appeal by a fisherman on the grounds of equity, fairness and any loss of income due to changes in a regulation, such as that brought in to regulate spanner crab permits, would succeed, so fishers with a very genuine case have no recourse to justice.

I have spoken to the Minister, but I have not had a formal response from him. I have spoken to him about broadening the grounds for appeal. I ask him to act before time runs out for any form of disallowance. By acting now and changing the regulation, the Minister would show that he is quite genuinely going to look after the concerns of the spanner crab fisherpersons. So far the Minister has not acted and by 2 June time will have run out.

Time expired.

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