



Speech by

**JEFF SEENEY**

**MEMBER FOR CALLIDE**

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### **FISHERIES AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr SEENEY** (Callide—NPA) (5.08 p.m.): I have much pleasure in making a few brief comments in support of the comments made by my colleague the shadow minister in relation to the Fisheries Amendment Bill. At the outset I support the comments that the shadow minister made in relation to the delay in dealing with this piece of legislation. Some members of the 49th Parliament—the parliament before the last election—had some doubt and scepticism about the reasons that parliament was closed down when it was, when this piece of legislation and so many others were on the list to be debated. The fact that this piece of legislation and most of the others have been introduced so early in this parliament bears out the doubts and scepticism that we had about why the parliament was closed down. The fact that we are debating this legislation today is in itself an illustration of the falsehoods and misinformation perpetuated by that callous move to close down the parliament when this legislation was previously on the list for debate.

As the shadow minister has indicated, we certainly support the concept of management plans that have integrity and that ensure sustainable fisheries. I think everyone in this House supports that concept. I think everyone in the industry and in the general community in Queensland supports the concept of a well managed, sustainable fishery. I do not think there is any doubt that action needs to be taken to achieve a well managed, sustainable fishery in terms of all the commercial catches that are the basis of Queensland's fishing industry. Almost without exception achieving that is going to require a reduction in the effort that is involved in fishing those fisheries at the moment. Almost without exception every one of those fisheries is going to have to have a reduction in the fishing effort. That is going to mean that, without exception, people's livelihoods are going to be impacted upon and that the amount of money that individuals can earn from the businesses they have built up is going to be reduced.

There is a principle at stake here that needs to be reinforced today, and that principle is the reason that I chose to enter this debate. It is the same principle that applies in a whole range of other legislation—a whole range of legislation in terms of resource management that was introduced in the previous parliament by the then Minister for Natural Resources, who is now the Attorney-General. The principle has never been acknowledged by this government. It was never acknowledged by the then Minister for Natural Resources. It has not been acknowledged now by the Minister for Primary Industries. It has not been acknowledged by this government, but it is a principle which I will argue for and I will defend whenever I am in this place and whenever I get to speak in any forum in Queensland.

When a government makes a decision for the greater good which impacts on an individual's ability to sustain their business or to sustain their living, that government has an ironclad obligation to compensate those people. Sometimes it is necessary for individuals to be impacted upon for the greater community good, and in this case that is to reduce the effort they are allowed to make in the fishery to make their living—and we support that; the effort has to be reduced for the greater good, for the purpose of sustaining a fishery.

In the case of the legislation that the disgraced former Minister for Natural Resources introduced into this House, once again, there was an argument that individuals had to be impacted upon for the greater good. Whether or not that argument was sustainable and whether or not it was right is open for debate. But the argument was upheld simply because of the numbers in the House. In upholding that argument and in impacting upon those individuals, the responsibility to compensate them for their

individual loss was totally ignored by the Minister for Natural Resources, as he was in that particular instance.

I implore this parliament today and I implore the Minister for Primary Industries, who I know is a fairer man than the disgraced former Minister for Natural Resources, today to recognise that principle of fairness and justice so that if individuals are going to be impacted upon for the greater good, if businesses are going to be impacted upon, or if what people rely upon for their living is going to be reduced or taken away from them, then we as a community have a responsibility to make sure that they are compensated. This legislation certainly has the potential to do that. In fact, to be successful, it has to impact on individuals and established businesses because the effort has to be reduced, otherwise it is not going to achieve anything. We have to reduce the effort that is being applied to fisheries that are unsustainable. We have to reduce that effort, and that is going to impact upon people—on families and on people who in some cases have been in that business for generations.

I am not arguing that that should not be done. As I said at the beginning, most fair-minded people support the concept of sustainable management of natural resources of all types. In this case most fair-minded people will support the concept of a sustainable fishery but, equally, every fair-minded person must support the principle of compensating those who suffer to achieve that. That was totally ignored by the former Minister for Natural Resources. I implore the Minister for Primary Industries today to make sure that he demonstrates to the people of Queensland that he has an understanding of the fairness and the justice that is implicit in the recognition of that principle.

It is worth putting on record today the importance of recreational fishing. I guess that is one of the reasons why every fair-minded person would support a management plan that guarantees a sustainable fishery. Recreational fishing is very important to a range of people from all parts of the socioeconomic strata. Recreational fishing presents great opportunities for quality family time together. An implicit part of the management plans for these fisheries should be the recognition of the incredibly important part that recreational fishing plays in the social fabric and the way of life of so many Queensland families. An important part of that recreational fishing industry is more and more the put and take fisheries of the inland impoundments. I have some great examples of that in my electorate.

Last weekend the Australian Bass Fishing Championship was held at Cania Dam, just north of where I live. It is a great fishing spot. I invite the Minister for Primary Industries quite genuinely—if he ever gets the chance to visit Monto and Cania Dam—to come with me. We will go fishing and I will ensure that the Minister for Primary Industries understands the great benefits—

**Mr Purcell:** You wouldn't be able to bait a hook.

**Mr SEENEY:** If I took the honourable member fishing, I would use him as bait, but even the fish would not take him.

I would like an opportunity to get across the enormous importance of these put and take fisheries. They are incredibly important. Cania Dam is not the only one. In my electorate there are the Callide Dam, Boondooma Dam and the Bjelke-Petersen Dam. They are great fisheries. As the fishing comes under more and more pressure on the coast, the importance of those types of fisheries increases proportionately. In terms of the state budget, they cost a pittance to maintain, but what they contribute to the way of life of the people who live in those areas and what they contribute to the economic activity in those areas in terms of attracting tourists and adding to other tourist attractions is something that cannot be underestimated. I have spoken about this subject in this parliament before and I take the opportunity of the debate on this legislation to speak about it again today.

I urge the minister to use whatever influence he has with the Treasurer in the upcoming budget negotiations to make sure that there is an adequate allocation in the budget not only to maintain these fisheries but also to expand them into other areas, because they are a great asset to the Queensland lifestyle. I hope that we can have some bipartisan support on that. If the price of that bipartisan support is taking the minister fishing, then I am quite prepared to pay that price any time at all. I extend that invitation to him quite genuinely.

I think I have made all the points that I need to make so far as this legislation is concerned. I thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for the time.

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