



Speech by

Hon. HENRY PALASZCZUK

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard 9 September 2003

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Fisheries Management

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities) (10.11 a.m.): Yesterday the Premier and I announced a new management plan to ensure the future sustainability of the coral reef fin fish. Over the last five years, our government has introduced wide-ranging reforms to protect our fisheries for the future. While we have worked hard to overcome our inheritance of government inaction and indifference to fisheries management, we recognise the job is ongoing.

Therefore, today I can inform the House that the Queensland Fisheries Service will be issuing investment warnings covering the state's mud crab and sand crab fisheries and the rocky reef species, such as snapper, pearl perch and teraglin-jew. These warnings are issued to alert current commercial fishers, boat owners and potential investors that future catches and future investment in these fisheries will not be recognised in long-term management arrangements to be developed for these fisheries.

The warnings should be heeded. Unfortunately, the coral reef fin fish warning of 1997 was not heeded by all operators. Yesterday our government announced that it would be winding back the commercial catch of reef fish to pre-investment warning levels. We also announced that commercial fishers with licences who could not demonstrate history in the reef line fishery—representing the latent effort—would be limited to recreational fishing limits. The latent effort is as-yet-unrealised effort. It is those licensed operators who have had little if any history in the fishery. By removing the latent effort, we can ensure that the capped commercial catch limits are not exceeded by these operators moving in. The dramatic increase in the commercial catch has been driven almost solely by the export live fish markets in South-East Asia, not the domestic market.

In anticipation of the coral reef fin fish plan's introduction, an investment warning was issued for Spanish mackerel in February this year. The Queensland Fisheries Service's management advisory committees will examine each of the fisheries subject to these latest warnings to address the sustainability concerns. In particular, we are very concerned about the stocks of mud crabs and snapper.

This government has a strong record on fisheries management and protecting the fishing future for all Queenslanders. The actions we take now will save the fish and the jobs dependent upon those stocks for the future.