



Speech by

Peta-Kaye Croft

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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MARINE PARKS BILL

Mrs CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (3.52 p.m.): I want to say a few words about the appalling display by the member for Burnett in this debate and how he addresses debates generally in this House. I raise some concern about the sources of his speeches. I recognise that he has quoted directly from an email that was addressed to members from the Queensland Seafood Industry Association. When the member is quoting directly from those kinds of emails, those sources need to be cited to bring some relevance. I now want to bring this debate back to where we were, because we were taken to a place that was beyond my belief.

It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak in support of the Marine Parks Bill 2004. The Broadwater electorate covers a substantial area of the Moreton Bay Marine Park which is zoned as a conservation zone. There are two small no-take areas zoned as protection zones in Swan Bay at the southern end of Stradbroke Island and Willes Island which is located between Russell Island and Stradbroke Island. This zoning reflects the unique nature of the area being one of four passage landscapes in Australia. These are narrow channels between the mainland and a large offshore sand island. The remaining three are also protected under marine park declarations and include Pumicestone Passage, the Narrows north of Gladstone and the Hinchinbrook Channel. They are unique formations of incredible importance for conservation, recreation and scenic amenity. They contain some of the most important habitats for migratory seabirds, dugongs, turtles and fishery production.

The environmental values of southern Moreton Bay Marine Park are in fact recognised as an internationally significant wetland under the Ramsar convention. The environment of southern Moreton Bay Marine Park, like the rest of Moreton Bay Marine Park, is a busy area which is also valued and used by many different people for many different purposes. In addition, south-east Queensland is the fastest growing area in Australia and much of this growth is focused on the Gold Coast. Adjacent coastal development and use of the waterways of southern Moreton Bay have resulted in declining environmental quality. There is, for example, increased seagrass dieback and incidence of disease in turtles. Credit should be given to the former Goss Labor government in coming to grips with the hard planning issues related to Moreton Bay when it approved the Moreton Bay strategic plan in 1993. This plan designated the areas from Coomera Island to Peel Island as habitat conservation with minimal infrastructure development. The strategic plan placed a similar zoning over the Moreton Banks and Pumicestone Passage. The declaration of Moreton Bay Marine Park also occurred the same year. For the past 10 years, this marine park has served a vital role in providing for the protection and management of southern Moreton Bay.

Research undertaken recently by PhD candidate Suzanne Pillans, for example, indicates the benefits provided by the highly protected areas of Moreton Bay Marine Park. Initial results from the Willes Island area in southern Moreton Bay indicate that 10 times as many legal size mud crabs occur inside the protection zone compared to outside the zone. Catch rates of yellowfin bream were also five times higher in the highly protected area than outside. This is in line with the findings elsewhere that species are larger and more abundant within highly protected areas. I am disappointed that the member for Burnett has left the chamber while I am raising these very important statistics. The declaration of the marine park provides hands-on local management to secure long-term viability of the slowly degrading areas and provides a

balance between areas of private and commercial development and areas set aside primarily for conservation and recreation.

Like the rest of the marine park, however, the conservation of the marine environment relies on the proper planning and management of adjacent areas. Therefore under the Marine Parks Bill, the purpose of the bill is to be achieved by a strategy that involves, amongst other things, the cooperative involvement of public authorities, other interested groups and persons as well as a coordinated and integrated approach with other legislation. This bill also recognises that since the introduction of the Marine Parks Act 1982 sound conservation principles have been adopted under other legislation operating in the marine environment such as fisheries management plans, coastal management plans and waterways management plans. The bill therefore puts in place mechanisms to adopt or recognise instruments made under other legislation.

It would be hard to find a better practice demonstration of the value of multiple use marine parks than southern Moreton Bay. The term 'multiple use' means that most areas in a marine park can be used for fishing, shipping, tourism, ports, aquaculture, extractive industry, marina development and so on. The marine park areas in southern Moreton Bay have had negligible impacts on recreation or commercial fishing but have achieved much through the EPA quietly working behind the scenes with other agencies on issues such as waterways development, dredging, sustainable fisheries, control of coastal development and improving water control.

This bill's development and introduction are a significant step in delivering the government's commitment to review and strengthening the state's regulatory protection of marine parks. I know that the staff who work for government agencies such as the EPA, QPWS and Boating and Fisheries are passionate about their work and the environment in which they work. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate all of them for the work that they do. I also want to particularly mention the research officers and the volunteers who assist them in many ways to promote the protection of our precious environment and its wildlife. I commend the bill to the House.