



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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EMBLEMS OF QUEENSLAND BILL

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (2.43 pm): I am pleased to rise to speak to the Emblems of Queensland Bill and do so with some degree of guilt. Having been elected to this place to put forward the views of the Surfers Paradise community on a number of issues, I am here speaking about the value of the not-quite clownfish and discussing a children's movie. But who am I to criticise the priorities of this government. I am sure that this is a very important bill that must be debated at the beginning of this sitting week.

I was interested to do some reading on the family of the anemone fish, particularly when I discovered that the Barrier Reef Anemonefish is not the only member of this family that is found in Queensland waters. It made me think about why the government decided to choose the particular anemone fish that it did over a number of other members of the anemone fish family. The Barrier Reef Anemonefish grows to about 13 centimetres in length and is generally darker in colour than its most famous brother, the clown anemone fish, made famous in the film *Finding Nemo*. Larger adult Barrier Reef Anemonefish are more orange in colour than the smaller adults and their stripes tend to be slightly bluer in colour. Coincidentally, these are the same colours of the Gold Coast Rugby League bid, the Gold Coast Dolphins. Perhaps if the bid was called the Gold Coast Nemos, the bid might have received assent in 2005, rather than the NRL delaying the Dolphins' inevitable entry into the competition.

However, we are here to talk about the Barrier Reef Anemonefish as the newest member of the Queensland emblem family. When the nominations for the position of Queensland aquatic emblem were announced last year, the anemone fish would have easily opened up as a short-priced favourite. With the success of the movie *Finding Nemo*, the other 10 species were hard pressed to beat the not-quite clownfish and, of course, they did not.

So almost assured that this species would win, why did the government choose this particular member of the anemone fish family? No doubt the fact that it is named after one of Queensland's and the world's most recognised landmarks, the Great Barrier Reef, had a great deal to do with it. I also think that the behaviour of the Barrier Reef Anemonefish is perhaps something easy for the Premier to relate to. The fish spends the first part of its life building up immunity to the possible threats of the stinging cells of the anemone. Then for the remainder of its life, the Barrier Reef Anemonefish uses that same anemone that posed a threat to protect itself from any other predators. However, I digress. As I mentioned before, this is not the only member of this fish family that is found in Queensland waters.

Swimming off the coast of the Great Barrier Reef is also the clown anemone fish, or clownfish as it has become affectionately known. However, this member of the Barrier Reef Anemonefish family could most definitely not be used, because if one goes to the Get Active in the Smart State web site, they will see that one of the criteria for choosing the emblem is that it cannot be used for commercial purposes. Now that this clownfish is a movie star, one would think that it is far too commercial for this purpose. Instead, the Queensland government has rung the agent of Nemo's younger brother, the Barrier Reef Anemonefish, to see if he was interested in the part and, of course, he was.

Perhaps, though, considering the events of the last few weeks, the Premier may have considered changing the emblem to another member of the anemone fish family, namely, the amphiprion Clarkii, or the Clark Anemonefish. This fish, one of the largest members of the family, is a striking black fish with an orange mouth and tail growing to about 14 centimetres. It is not quite the same looking fish as Nemo. However, the name alone would have been a fitting tribute to another Clark, as I note that we have two members of this name in the House: the member for Clayfield and the member for Barron River. So it would seem perhaps the Premier does not want to give the naming rights of the new emblem to a former minister or other member. He may want to give it to one of the anointed ex-union representatives that the Queensland Labor Party seems to roll out from time to time. Another member of the anemone fish family is the McCulloch Anemonefish, although this would be a tenuous appointment as the fish is mainly found off the north coast of New South Wales.

I must also say that, on International Women's Day, perhaps the Spine-cheek anemone fish, which is also found in the Barrier Reef, could have been a good choice. The female of this species grows to 16 centimetres while the male of the species grows to just seven centimetres. I am sure that there are many women out there who would be happy to see such a strong womanly presence lifted to emblem status. I must also add that, as the representative for Surfers Paradise, I am disappointed that the Wide-band Anemonefish was not considered. This is the member of the anemone fish that swims off the Gold Coast in northern New South Wales. As much as the Barrier Reef Anemonefish is distinctly Queensland, I have to mention the fact that his sister, the Wide-band Anemonefish, makes her home in my electorate.

In all seriousness, I am happy to see the addition of an emblem put forward in this place. It is very good to have symbols that bind us as Queenslanders. I am not sure, though, with the raft of issues that need legislative remedies that making this bill such a high priority is necessary. It is all very well and good to use the fame of a character from a movie as a way of promoting the new emblem. However, it may also be worth while for the government to consider putting some effort into helping Queensland film-makers make their own lovable movies. I commend the bill to the House.