



Speech by

**Paul Hoolihan**

**MEMBER FOR KEPPEL**

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## **FISHERIES AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr HOOLIHAN** (Keppel—ALP) (12.40 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Fisheries Amendment Bill 2006. Before I deal with the substantive issues that I want to cover, I congratulate the minister on the decision in relation to fees. Last week a commercial fisherman in my electorate came to see me and said, 'I think they've finally got it right. It's only going to cost me a small amount. Those who are making the most out of it will have to meet some additional cost, but overall the new fee structure is pretty good.' Coming from people in the industry who have been critical of government, that really is a pat on the back for the department.

In relation to certain matters that were raised by the members for Toowoomba South and Hinchinbrook, perhaps when they have a chance they should talk to their senator, Ian Macdonald, about the off-shore constitutional settlement, which is referred to also as the Emerald agreement. Ian Macdonald did not know very much about that, yet he was the minister for fisheries at the time the changes were made to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act, and that was the introduction of the green zones. That is what caused the major dislocation. There were negotiations between Queensland and the Commonwealth in relation to that and as a result the entitlement for trawling was to reduce the total catch to 3,062 tonnes. There was compensation provided by the Commonwealth in relation to those trawlers that went out of business. I believe that it is in excess of the amount, but the original figure was \$100 million.

Another issue which will show up if someone cares to have a look at the history of the whole matter is that there were not a lot of trawler operators who made application under that compensation arrangement. The Commonwealth, as late as three to four months ago, was still calling for people to lodge their submissions. I believe that now it is either closed or quite close to closing.

There are a number of issues addressed in the amendment bill, but I would like to deal with one in particular which does have some bearing on my electorate because we have drum lines off Capricorn Coast beaches, and that is in relation to the shark control program. This program has been used in Queensland since approximately 1962, but owing to some negotiations with a local fisherman who was, in fact, carrying out the program in the Capricorn Coast area, it was confirmed to me—and it is something that the department has had to deal with—that the act does not actually make provision for a shark control program. It has been undertaken under a section of the act which deals with the right of the department to act in emergency or extraordinary situations.

That program has, in fact, offered major protection. I know that there are people who do have some criticism of nets. Those people and the groups who are affected or feel that the environment is affected always have the option of speaking to the department about that. The drum lines which operate off the Capricorn Coast have been very successful over the years. There has not been any threat or any danger to swimmers for the last 30 years at least. It does remove some large sharks.

One of the issues that does concern me slightly about the shark control program—and it is good that we can bring it under the act, because the conservation requirements in relation to our ocean resources and the sharks can be adequately dealt with—is that there are now some environmental studies which

show that some species of sharks are, in fact, in danger of extinction. I do not think a lot of the people who have advocated removing sharks from the ocean have given a lot of thought to the end result.

Certainly the act will allow for the shark control program to be implemented and it will provide a legislative anchor for that program. It will broaden the declared purposes of the act to provide for the program. One of the other aspects of it which I just touched upon deals with ecological sustainability. As many people are aware, sharks are caught for consumption. Although the major objective is to remove the threat of shark attack at specified coastal beaches, it will also achieve ecological sustainability once the program is fully implemented. I am pleased to support the implementation of the act in relation to the introduction of that area which allows the program to proceed.