



Speech by

Andrew Cripps

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

Hansard Thursday, 19 April 2007

HINCHINBROOK SEAFOOD INDUSTRY INC.

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (9.51 pm): I rise to make the House aware of the recent formation of Hinchinbrook Seafood Industry Inc., an association comprised mostly of commercial fishermen in my electorate, although the association is also attracting membership from recreational fishermen and seafood retailers.

The annual general meeting of Hinchinbrook Seafood Industry Inc. was held on Sunday, 18 March 2007 in Cardwell. The catalyst for the formation of Hinchinbrook Seafood Industry Inc. was a strong view that a local organisation needed to be formed to allow for effective discussion of issues at a local level with respect to fishing issues in the Hinchinbrook area which are significant and complex.

The depth and breadth of local knowledge and experience that members of Hinchinbrook Seafood Industry Inc. have already demonstrated in a series of early meetings to form the association gives me confidence that the contribution of the association will be constructive, positive and significant to the ongoing development of arrangements for fair access for professional fishermen which will ensure a viable and sustainable commercial fishing industry, a fair go for recreational fishermen and the stable supply of quality, domestically caught seafood products to retailers for the benefit of Queensland consumers.

Certainly, the members of Hinchinbrook Seafood Industry Inc. have expressed a considerable amount of concern about what the eventual outcome of the review of the East Coast Inshore Fin Fish Fishery will be once the draft management plan is developed. They are concerned because they have suffered unfair treatment at the hands of state Labor governments in Queensland in the past. In fairness, the members are equally concerned about the growing interference of and the uncertainty created by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority in fisheries management issues as opposed to marine park conservation issues which is a federal issue and one about which I also have serious concerns.

I am pleased to advise the House that Hinchinbrook Seafood Industry Inc. is pursuing the development of a voluntary code of conduct for its members with respect to their fishing practices in the Hinchinbrook region to assist in the responsible management of the fishery in that area. I offer my congratulations to Hinchinbrook Seafood Industry Inc. for being so proactive and being determined to contribute to the development of practices to maintain sustainable commercial and recreational fishing.

To raise awareness of commercial fishing operations and practices in the Hinchinbrook region, Hinchinbrook Seafood Industry Inc. will have a public information display at this year's Cardwell Seafest between 3 and 5 August. I support Hinchinbrook Seafood Industry Inc. and its members in their stated intention to develop a framework for an economically and environmentally sustainable fishery for the Hinchinbrook area. I hope that when the opinion of this association comes forward to Queensland Fisheries, the department and the minister in relation to the East Coast Inshore Fin Fish Fishery and other matters as they arise this genuine effort is recognised and the collective wisdom of the local commercial and recreational fishermen of the Hinchinbrook region is given the consideration it deserves. I am confident that Queensland Fisheries would benefit from taking their views on board and I am lucky to have such a committed industry and community reference group in my electorate of Hinchinbrook.