




Speech by

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NERANG RIVER, SPEED LIMIT

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (3.39 pm): This morning I tabled a petition from 692 signatories to have the maritime speed limit on the Nerang River between the Via Roma and Bermuda Street bridges lowered to six knots. The Nerang River is nothing more than a weekend speedway where people flout maritime laws and compromise safety. This is not 1968. Wooden speedboats no longer tow bikini-clad girls to the amusement of onlookers. This is the era of the wake boat and the personal watercraft, the jet ski. It is the era of the thunder boat and the jet boat. It is the era of boats designed to create maximum wash.

On the southern side of the Isle of Capri, boats travelling up to 40 knots, or 70 kilometres an hour, are confined to an average span of water not much longer than a school cricket pitch. In some places speeding vessels are restricted to less than 10 metres. As a result, maritime speed and distance rules are seldom adhered to and seldom enforced. It is physically impossible for passing vessels or boats towing skiers to stay within current speed and distance parameters. In fact, the river is so narrow on this section that personal watercraft have their own special rules. A PWC must transit the area in a straight line and stick as much as is practicable to the centre of the river. This is a rare occurrence indeed.

In July of this year a study was released by Transport and Main Roads into recreational boating safety. It found that the most prevalent type of PWC accident was between boats. From January 2012 yet another rule will be introduced. It states—

PWC driver to maintain a distance of 30 metres from other moving boats when travelling at more than 10 knots ...

Given that narrow width of the channel, the six knots within 30 metres of a wharf ruling and the ever-increasing boat traffic, it will therefore be impossible to operate a PWC on this section of the river without breaking maritime speed and distance laws. The Nerang River is part of our community. At present kayakers, paddle boaters, boarders, fishermen, hire boats and the wider rowing community are given little leeway. The river is there for the safe enjoyment of all who wish to travel on it. The speed needs to be set at a uniform six knots.