




Speech By
Rob Molhoek

MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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TRANSPORT OPERATIONS (MARINE SAFETY-DOMESTIC COMMERCIAL VESSEL NATIONAL LAW APPLICATION) BILL; TRANSPORT OPERATIONS (MARINE SAFETY) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (8.57 pm): It is my pleasure to stand to speak in support of these bills and confirm that the LNP will not be opposing their passage through the parliament. I want to acknowledge the great effort of the minister, the shadow minister and my fellow committee members in covering in incredible detail the more technical aspects of these bills before the House this evening. The wonderful thing about that is that I can talk about some of the other great benefits of this legislation, with particular reference to the fine electorate of Southport and the Gold Coast.

These bills are simply harmonisation bills that support commitments that were made in 2011 through an intergovernmental agreement. I am particularly pleased that neither of these bills has any effect on recreational vessels, vessels operated by community groups, such as surf clubs, and some of our rescue organisations and, probably more importantly and more personally, no impact on the use of personal watercraft such as jet skis. I am pleased to advise the House that the largest retailer of Sea-Doo jet skis in the world is located in the electorate of Southport—just opposite Harbour Town and just inside the boundary of my electorate. I am also pleased to say—and maybe I could be accused of gloating—that I acquired my first Sea-Doo this summer. For the first time I have had the great pleasure of enjoying firsthand, along with some other 200,000 boat owners in South-East Queensland, the pleasures of the Broadwater and the wonderful marine environment that we have on the Gold Coast.

I should point out, however, that the committee did hear submissions from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and we also sought advice from the Department of Transport and Main Roads in respect of this legislation. The presentations we had from both of these organisations were very clear, very succinct and certainly were cause for us to have a great deal of comfort around the adoption of this legislation.

I also want to particularly touch on the fact that this legislation has no effect on vessels operated by community groups. It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the great work undertaken by the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard, particularly the group that are located at Southport, and some of the great members who volunteer their time there, people like Ken Stanley, a longstanding family friend, who does a great job giving up his time to make sure that those thousands of Queenslanders who flock to the Gold Coast to enjoy our waterways from Brisbane and from all across the city are safe and sound. As a child growing up on the Gold Coast I can remember times when the old Southport Bar was anything but safe and boaties were very dependent on the work of volunteer organisations such as the Southport Coast Guard or the Gold Coast Coast Guard and also the old Air Sea Rescue based at Main Beach. Things have changed and it is certainly a little safer.

It would be remiss of me to not also acknowledge the great work of the many volunteers that man the seaway tower and have been doing so for many years not only keeping an eye on vessel

movements in and out of the seaway but also keeping a bit of a watchful eye out on all those young lads and perhaps mid-life crisis baby boomers of my vintage that paddle across the seaway often at great risk.

Mr Rickuss: Are you a baby boomer, are you? Are you that old?

Mr MOLHOEK: Thank you for that interjection, member for Lockyer. The member for Lockyer does look like Kenny Rogers in the House tonight. I do just creep into that bracket, as much as it pains me to confess that. On my first excursion on the new Sea-Doo over the Christmas break I actually ventured out through the seaway and it was my great pleasure to rescue a young guy who was on his surfboard and completely out of breath and struggling against the current. I was able to tow him across to the stairs and have a bit of a chat to him about perhaps reconsidering his decision to go paddling when he was not quite as fit as he thought he was.

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr MOLHOEK: Unfortunately he was not a constituent, but he was very grateful. Thank you for that interjection, member for Glass House. He did assure me, however, after I told him that I was the local member of parliament, that he would tell all his friends to vote for me at the next election so we will see how that goes.

I particularly want to draw attention to the fact that there have been a great many changes on the Gold Coast in the last few years. The introduction of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority has been a significant move in restoring greater cooperation, coordination and management of our waterways. I do not say that flippantly. It is quite important. What we saw previously was years of conflict between the various authorities. No-one was really quite in charge. Nobody was coordinating efforts and it was a challenge both for the police and the Department of Fisheries in terms of who was responsible for what out on the waterways. Even the Gold Coast City Council on many occasions had real difficulty in working out what its responsibility was in terms of recreational boating.

On the Gold Coast there are some 50,000 registered recreational boats, including jet skis, so it is important that we have good regulation in place and that we constantly review legislation to make sure that we are taking the best possible care and creating the right framework for a safe boating environment. As South-East Queensland continues to grow this will continue to be a great challenge for us.

I also want to make mention of the fact that in our time in government we committed to building a fantastic new boat ramp and boat launching facility on the Broadwater, a kilometre away from the CBD of Southport. It will be really pleasing in a matter of weeks to go to the official opening of that new facility.

Mr Rickuss: You got an invite?

Mr MOLHOEK: I did get an invite from Mayor Tom Tate and I am really looking forward to going to the opening of that facility, not only because it will be great for all those Brisbanites who make the trek down the M1 and clutter up our boat ramps at Charis Seafoods and the one at Land's End and the ramp halfway down at Paradise Point, in the Broadwater electorate, and the challenge that others have getting across the old Sundale Bridge and around onto The Spit to the other boat ramp, it means that there will be greater access for everyone and that is an important step forward. I am delighted to have been part of a government that was able to deliver, with council, that new facility and also to put in place the Gold Coast Waterways Authority.

In closing, I acknowledge the work of the secretariat. They always do a great job in terms of keeping us well briefed and informed. They certainly guided us through this, although this certainly is not the most onerous legislation we have had to deal with, but it is pleasing to have that support. It is my pleasure to advise the House that we will be supporting both of these bills here tonight. Thank you.