




Speech By
Barry O'Rourke

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Record of Proceedings, 4 September 2018

ADJOURNMENT

Rockhampton, Fishing

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (7.24 pm): Rockhampton will no longer be known as the beef capital; it is also the home of the barramundi and threadfin salmon. Since the fishing nets were removed from the Fitzroy River as part of the Palaszczuk government's 2015 election commitment, we have seen record numbers of trophy fish being caught and they are of a good size.

There are very few places where people can fly in, put their gear into a first-class motel and be out on the water in as little as an hour. Honourable members should imagine a place where they can catch a metre-long barra with the Rocky CBD in the background. Fishing identity John Haenke, owner of Guided Fishing DownUnder and also director of Offshore Productions, believes that Rocky is right up there, if not better, than the rest as a great destination to catch good barra and threadfin.

The Fitzroy River was the only Australian location to feature on World Fishing Day. We are fortunate that there are so many other options available. We have the islands and Port Alma just down the road. There are a lot more options in Rockhampton than there are in most areas in the country. People are not aware of how good the fishing is around Rocky. It would be great if more people came to Rockhampton to experience how good the fishing is. The islands have all the tropical species such as coral trout, red emperor and Spanish mackerel to name a few. Pretty much every tropical species that exists in Australia can be caught in Central Queensland.

The weather in Central Queensland is also a major drawcard. No matter what the weather is doing—even if it is windy—there are so many places to go. Rocky is an easy, accessible location. It is just a quick trip out of Brisbane or a reasonable drive. A lot of other locations have very expensive flights or people may need to catch a couple of flights to get there.

It is exciting to see that across the region there is a whole lot of new charter businesses being established. There are now eight charter boats running on the Fitzroy River. If people do not want to go on a fishing charter, the Rockhampton Regional Council, in conjunction with the Palaszczuk Labor government, has invested in land based fishing platforms. Last week I had the honour of opening the new north-side boat ramp to further cement Rockhampton's potential as a well-known fishing hub.