




Speech By
Julianne Gilbert

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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MOTION

Shark Control Program, Inquiry

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (5.43 pm): What I have heard tonight from those opposite is that everybody who has an opinion different from theirs must be wrong. There was a very important meeting last Friday where people expressed their opinions. Those opposite do not agree with them and what they have said about them has been quite appalling. Let's talk about damaging tourism, because they have said a lot about that so far tonight.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr Costigan interjected.

Mrs GILBERT: You should move into your own electorate. Let's talk about—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Mackay, you will put your comments through the chair. Members to my left, I believe that members have been listening to my directions and listening to members in relative silence until this current speaker. I ask you to hear the member who has the call.

Mrs GILBERT: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to quote from the *Gold Coast Bulletin*. The article states, 'Mr Langbroek said his family had ruled out a Whitsundays holiday and would look at Bali or Fiji.' The LNP prefers to talk down tourism rather than talk up Queensland, yet the shadow 'anti-tourism' minister went further, alleging that the government 'may look to reduce the net program over time at the Gold Coast because surely the same principle applies'. How terrible! What an absolutely disgusting and disingenuous statement to make about the Gold Coast.

There has never been a suggestion of removing the Shark Control Program from the Gold Coast or from anywhere else in Queensland, yet the LNP has no hesitation in spreading fear among tourists and locals alike. What is so very surprising is that the LNP has politicised this tragedy. The program has been a success at 86 beaches across Queensland, and this government has been and will continue to be supportive of the program. What we need to hear clearly from those opposite is genuine support for the program, because when the government backed in the program at estimates in 2015 and 2018 the LNP said nothing.

Mr Costigan: You've got it in your own electorate.

Mrs GILBERT: I will take that interjection from the member for Whitsunday, who likes to live in Mackay. We do have shark nets and drum lines and the locals know where they are. They are at patrolled beaches and everybody is safe. If you don't get how it works, then we will have to say it slower.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mackay.

Mrs GILBERT: When the government increased its funding to the program by \$2.1 million earlier this year, the LNP said nothing.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Mackay, I remind you to put your comments through the chair.

Mrs GILBERT: Yes, Mr Speaker. Sorry. When the government—

Mrs Frecklington: The member is already speaking pretty slowly.

Mrs GILBERT: Has she finished? Okay. When the government increased the total number of beaches protected from 85 to 86 by adding one on Stradbroke Island, the LNP said nothing. When the government said in September that it was too dangerous to swim in Cid Harbour what did the LNP say? Nothing! Now that the LNP is wanting to make the program political, it is making up its own facts. The member for Broadwater should be supporting the government's approach on the recent attacks rather than playing politics through the media.

When we had tourism operators and scientists in the room listening to the facts, the member for Broadwater was self-promoting rather than being positive about the tourism opportunities in Queensland. At the summit we had Tourism Whitsundays, Whitsunday tourism operators, Whitsunday Marine Advisory Group, Whitsunday Charter Boat Industry Association, Whitsunday Bareboat Operators Association, commercial fishermen, police, the University of Queensland, James Cook University, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Maritime Safety Queensland and Surf Life Saving Queensland. Apparently all those sitting opposite know more than these people.

Mr Costigan interjected.

Mrs GILBERT: It is really appalling that these people will hear the way that you are talking about them, and they are in your electorate. The tourism experts, scientists and lifesavers have already listened and we have acted. If we listened to the LNP we would not talk to locals, we would not talk to the experts and we would not talk to the tourism industry. We had scientists say that Cid Harbour was too dangerous to swim in—

(Time expired)