



Speech By  
**Kim Richards**


**MEMBER FOR REDLANDS**

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Record of Proceedings, 23 August 2018

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

**War on Wrecks Task Force**

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (2.13 pm): Queensland is renowned for its magnificent coastline, beaches and waterways. We love the opportunity to recreate on the water and have a great love of boating. There are significant economic opportunities in tourism endeavours and fishing of our waters. Currently there are approximately 260,000 registered recreational ships and approximately 15,000 commercial ships operating in Queensland waters. In addition, there are assumed to be 100,000 recreational ships in Queensland that are not required to be registered.

Ships reach the end of their useful life for a number of reasons, including requiring maintenance which costs more than the vessel's value, requiring repairs and upgrades which exceed the ship's value, becoming obsolete through shifts in the economic and trading environment and through natural disasters such as cyclones. Disposing of vessels, in particular larger ships which cannot be removed from the water on a trailer, is costly and potentially difficult given the environmental regulations surrounding disposal of materials present in boats, including oils, acids, garbage and hazardous material such as asbestos.

Given the expense and difficulty of disposal compared to the low value of a vessel which has reached the end of its useful life, disposing of a vessel through abandonment appears to have become an attractive option to many, as is evidenced by the many abandoned vessels in our waterways up and down our coast. Derelict boats cause danger to navigation and potential environmental risks and are a blight on our spectacular shores and pristine waterways. Taxpayers have been picking up the bill for irresponsible boat ownership. This has not happened overnight, it has been happening for a number of years and we need to put a stop to it. The cost of removing these ships can be considerable, with previous ship removals ranging from between \$10,000 and \$950,000. Maritime Safety Queensland has spent significant funds and time disposing of large derelict vessels. Over the last four years 86 derelict vessels have been removed costing taxpayers around \$4.1 million. Our money could be so much better spent.

The Palaszczuk government is upping the stakes and commencing a war on boat wrecks and their negligent owners. We have established a task force that I will chair to prioritise the worst derelict vessels and remove them from our great waterways. The small minority of irresponsible boat owners who pollute our waterways are on notice. The task force is comprised and supported by experts in the field of waterways management, and together we will be making certain that it is clearly understood that it is the owner's responsibility to remove their vessel if it becomes unserviceable or wrecked. If an irresponsible boat owner refuses to clean up for themselves, our task force will be coming after them.

We will be seeking feedback from communities across Queensland to help us identify the worst derelict vessels and we will use the announced \$20 million War on Wrecks fighting fund to remove these ships. We want to ensure vessel owners understand and meet their responsibilities from maiden voyage to final mooring and, more importantly, we want to ensure negligent owners are held to account. I am looking forward to working with the task force and our community who will have a say in the effective management of our waterways.