



Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Furner**


**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

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## **FISHERIES (SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES STRATEGY) AMENDMENT BILL**

### **Introduction**

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (12.13 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Fisheries Act 1994, the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010 and the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Fisheries (Sustainable Fisheries Strategy) Amendment Bill 2018 [[1254](#)].

*Tabled paper:* Fisheries (Sustainable Fisheries Strategy) Amendment Bill 2018, explanatory notes [[1255](#)].

Today, I am pleased to introduce the Fisheries (Sustainable Fisheries Strategy) Amendment Bill 2018. The modernisation of Queensland's Fisheries Act is a significant step in implementing the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy that the Palaszczuk government released in June last year. The delivery of the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy was—and is—a key election commitment of the Palaszczuk government. This bill is a critical step in making the goals and objectives of the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy a reality.

This bill complements the government's delivery of other key aspects of the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy over the past year, including the funding of 20 additional Queensland boating and fishing patrol officers; the establishment of working groups for priority fisheries; the establishment of a sustainable fisheries expert panel; greater recognition of fishing sectors, like the charter fishing industry; and funding for monitoring and vessel tracking rebates. These achievements are detailed in the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy progress report, tabled earlier this year at estimates.

The bill will help support the thousands of jobs that rely on sustainable fisheries resources, deliver more responsive decision-making and help protect fisheries in the Great Barrier Reef. This bill puts the structures in place to allow for best practice management in Queensland fisheries.

Queensland's current fisheries management framework has become outdated and cumbersome. Decision-making processes are slow and unclear and Queensland's ability to respond to issues such as black marketing lags behind other Australian jurisdictions. A contemporary framework is required to appropriately respond to sustainability issues. Queenslanders are passionate about this issue and have taken the opportunity, offered by our government, to have their say about the management of this iconic public resource.

In 2016, more than 11,000 Queenslanders took the opportunity to comment on the *Green paper on fisheries management reform in Queensland*. The overwhelming message from all stakeholders was that they wanted reform in the way we manage our fisheries. I have encountered the same feedback in my own travels around the state, whether it was meeting recreational and charter fishers in Weipa, commercial fishers on the Fraser Coast, or launching the Australian Fish and Chips awards at Southbank.

The Palaszczuk government released the discussion paper on the proposed amendments to the Fisheries Act in March this year, with strong support for the changes that are outlined in the bill that I am introducing today. The bill is consistent with recommendations made by independent consultants MRAG Asia Pacific, commissioned by the LNP government in 2014, so I look forward to bipartisan support for this bill.

The bill focuses on four key elements: modernising the objectives of the Fisheries Act to recognise the interests of key stakeholder groups; clarifying the decision-making processes and establishing harvest strategies to guide decisions; strengthening the compliance powers and penalties to address serious fisheries offences such as black marketing; reducing complexity; and removing redundant provisions.

A key component of the bill is to provide stronger compliance powers and penalties for serious offences such as seafood black marketing. During consultation earlier this year, more than 90 per cent of respondents supported the adoption of stronger compliance powers and penalties to address such serious fisheries offences. The bill will provide fisheries inspectors the powers needed to effectively investigate such offences. Individuals convicted of trafficking in priority fish species could face a maximum penalty of up to 3,000 penalty units—currently \$391,650, or three years imprisonment. These penalties are in line with those in place in other Australian states where they have proven effective in combating black marketing. Queenslanders want action taken to stop the black marketing of seafood in this state, which undermines legitimate fishing businesses, and the bill delivers on this.

While fisheries inspectors will have greater powers to inspect commercial premises, these changes do not provide fisheries inspectors with powers beyond those granted to inspectors under other Queensland legislation. Importantly, there are no changes that would allow access to tents, campsites, or any places used for residential purposes without a warrant.

This bill will also introduce a new penalty for not complying with vessel tracking requirements. This will help give effect to the government's commitment to require vessel tracking equipment to be fitted to all licensed commercial and charter boats by 2020. Importantly, the bill also strengthens protections for individual's private data, including their vessel location data, with penalties for anyone disclosing that private information.

The bill also provides for more responsive decision-making on fisheries matters through the use of harvest strategies that set out pre-agreed and approved rules for each fishery to achieve the agreed ecological, economic and/or social objectives. The minister will be responsible for strategic oversight through the approval of harvest strategies, while the chief executive will be responsible for day-to-day management and making fisheries declarations in accordance with the approved harvest strategy. The bill provides a safeguard with the minister having the option to direct the chief executive to make a different decision in relation to a harvest strategy.

The minister will also retain responsibility for decisions around reallocating access to fisheries resources from one sector to another, like establishing net-free zones. This approach is also consistent with contemporary best practice fisheries management and is one of the major commitments in the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy to have harvest strategies in place for all major fisheries by 2020. The bill also establishes a 20-metre exclusion zone around the nets and baited drumlines used by the Shark Control Program to help prevent people interfering with the gear and ensure the safety of people swimming on Queensland beaches.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to consultation. We believe there is an important place for all stakeholders in managing our fisheries resources, which is why they are being more formally recognised in the act. We support sustainable commercial fisheries in Queensland to provide local seafood and jobs. We support improving the recreational fishing experience and we support maintaining access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities to fisheries resources. The proposed changes are consistent with other Queensland legislation and will bring Queensland in line with other Australian fisheries jurisdictions and best practice management. The changes being made through this bill are part of the government's long-term strategy to ensure our fisheries resources are managed in a sustainable and responsible manner. The bill will provide the framework to ensure that our fisheries will continue to provide economic, social and cultural benefits to the Queensland community well into the future.

I would like to welcome all members of parliament to join me outside at lunchtime to celebrate the graduation of our 20 new Queensland boating and fisheries patrol officers. It is fitting that today we introduce this bill which will give our new officers the tools they need to do their job effectively. I commend this bill to the House.

## **First Reading**

**Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (12.21 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

## **Referral to State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee**

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Pugh): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee.