




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

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FISHERIES (VESSEL TRACKING) AMENDMENT REGULATION

Disallowance of Statutory Instrument

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (6.17 pm): I rise this evening as a member of the SDC to speak against this motion. Queenslanders deserve a sustainable fishery. Queenslanders expect that our fisheries—because they do belong to each and every one of us, like any of our natural resources—are managed using modern tools and technology. In fact, they should be managed using the most modern tools and technology that we have at our disposal. We on this side of the House know that the use of modern technologies like vessel tracking will help ensure the sustainability of Queensland's fisheries. It will lead to more informed and responsive management which will benefit the marine resources upon which many operators and regional communities are dependent.

The regulation that we are talking about tonight is one small but important piece of the overall suite of fisheries reforms. The regulation that we are talking about does not operate in isolation. The regulation introduces a change to make vessel tracking compulsory within priority fisheries from 1 January 2019. The regulation complements the \$3 million in rebate funds made available by our government and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. The regulation complements the \$20 million that our Palaszczuk government has invested in better science and monitoring, better engagement and better compliance resources through the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy. The regulation complements our ultimate goal, which is a sustainable fishery now and as a legacy for our children and grandchildren.

In debating the regulation we need to be aware of the benefits of vessel tracking. For our officers on the ground, it means the real-time monitoring of commercial fishers to assist compliance officers target fishers who are not following the rules. Mr Deputy Speaker, you and I had the opportunity last year to go out with members of the compliance squad so that we can see how they go about undertaking their duties. I want to place on record my thanks to the secretariat for providing us with that opportunity. It was a unique opportunity and certainly very helpful in forming the overall suite of regulations.

We know that the information is already proving invaluable to our compliance officers in targeting people who are flaunting the rules. Removing this technology now would compromise the operation of our Fisheries officers going forward. Introducing vessel tracking allows us to validate commercial fishers' logbook information by crosschecking and referencing that fishers were in the spots they said they were in their logbooks on the days they nominated. From a governance perspective vessel tracking provides much better data on fishing efforts; for example, the number of hours fished in specific locations. As a government this helps us assess the status of fish stocks and demonstrates the sustainability of our fisheries in the community. It also helps us make better informed decisions about management changes, as we can use finer scale data on catch and efforts compared to the current logbook data, which is a whole day fishing on a grid up to 30 square nautical miles.

Vessel tracking meets international best practice standards. It is widely used in other Australian and international fisheries. This tracking also helps us demonstrate sustainability in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. We have seen this with the trawl fishery over the last two decades. Benefits

can also be seen for commercial fishers by acting as proof of legitimate activity and to continue to allow export approvals and other approvals to operate in ecologically diverse areas. The rollout of this reform was accompanied by a long program of consultation. Three million dollars has been made available in rebates. By maintaining our current course of reforms we can support a sustainable fishery and meet the needs of fishers, consumers and Queenslanders now and into the future.

I will conclude by making some observations about the importance of fisheries to an industry that is very familiar to me, and that is the hospitality and tourism industry. In my previous life as the restaurant and business manager at Restaurant Two, we were incredibly proud to feature beautiful Queensland produce on our menu. Most of that was Queensland seafood. We had Burdekin barramundi, beautiful plump Hervey Bay scallops, Mooloolaba prawns, gold band snapper and much more.

An honourable member interjected.

Ms PUGH: I take that interjection from the member. Many Queensland restaurants are really proud to serve Queensland produce. It is the best in the world; there is no other way to put it. That is why we serve it. We owe it to our hospitality and tourism industry to ensure that these beautiful species are there for generations to come. This suite of reforms will work to do just that, so I cannot support this motion.