




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

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FISHERIES (SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES STRATEGY) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (12.03 pm): I rise to speak to this legislation today as a member of the committee and as somebody whose livelihood once relied very heavily upon the seafood industry. I want to begin my contribution by acknowledging yet again the wonderful work of our secretariat in organising the briefings, the hearings and the excursions that we went on. We had the opportunity to go out on Moreton Bay and to visit fisheries in Cairns. I had to wear my bright pink boots to ensure that I met all the workplace health and safety requirements. The committee secretariat does an absolutely sterling job. We have had a very heavy legislative workload. The calibre of the excursions that we have been able to go on to support our legislative agenda deserves acknowledgement and commendation. I am sure that all of my fellow committee members would join me in giving that acknowledgement.

Successive Queensland governments have recognised the need to reform Queensland's fisheries management system. We on this side of the House know that these changes are long overdue. The amendments in this bill will modernise fisheries management in Queensland and give effect to the government's Sustainable Fisheries Strategy, which was developed by the government following extensive consultation. Queensland's current fisheries management framework is outdated, it is cumbersome and it is not really capable of responding to the sustainability issues that we know that our fisheries are facing. The decision-making processes are slow, they are unclear and Queensland's ability to respond to issues raised by members of the public, such as black marketing, lags behind that of other Queensland jurisdictions. That is a crying shame, because we all know that the very best seafood in not just Australia but in the whole world is right here in Queensland. We were very proud to sell a lot of it at my former home, Restaurant Two.

This bill will ensure that the public's fisheries resources are sustainable into the future. It will ensure that my children and my grandchildren—God willing—can enjoy recreational fishing and local, sustainable Queensland seafood. I know that the majority of the community is going to support these changes. As custodians of the community's fisheries resource, which belong to each and every one of us, they expect us to take appropriate action now to ensure that it is protected for future generations. It is important to note that this bill is not going to affect the average fisher. The changes are consistent with other legislation and will bring Queensland into line with other Australian fisheries jurisdictions.

A key component of this bill—and something that I am really passionate about—is its ability to provide stronger compliance powers and penalties for serious offences, such as seafood black marketing. We know that there is big money to be made from seafood black marketing, so it is important that there are penalties to match that activity. During the consultation on this bill, more than 90 per cent of respondents supported the adoption of stronger compliance powers and penalties to address such serious fisheries offences.

It was interesting to hear those opposite talking about the powers of entry being problematic. We cannot have stronger compliance unless we can enforce those stronger measures. I have heard those opposite raise the argument that the powers are too strong and that businesses will be unfairly

subjected to searches. I come from a hospitality background and I disagree. Many in this House would be aware that, before I was elected, I was a manager at Restaurant Two. That was my family's restaurant. Restaurant Two, along with every other restaurant in the Brisbane City Council area, was subject to random inspections from food safety and compliance officers under the Brisbane City Council's Scores on Doors program. A compliance officer would show up unannounced at the business. There was absolutely no notice whatsoever. We would be expected to fully comply with a random inspection of our venue. That inspection included inspections of our fridges, or our floors. Anything the inspector wanted to look at would need to be open to the inspector at that time. We did not feel offended by this inspection program. We did not feel like our rights were being impinged. As a venue, we understood that it was impossible to get an accurate rating system unless the compliance officer had an accurate idea of the cleanliness of the facility right then, right there—and not be given five days notice in which we could clean up, fix the floors, or do whatever we needed to do. We welcomed the opportunity to have an independent arbiter verify what we knew to be true, and that is that our venue had the cleanest kitchens in Brisbane.

Like the Scores on Doors program that is operated by our Brisbane City Council, the additional compliance in this bill is surely needed. We need an independent arbiter to make sure that compliance is up to scratch. That means having powers of entry then and there—not giving people five days notice in which to get rid of any of their black market goods. Of course, we are not going to find anything if people get five days notice. When it comes to compliance, the LNP cannot have it both ways. We know that 90 per cent of respondents support tougher compliance. Why suggest that officers need to give five days notice? We know that, five days from then, there will be nothing to find. I commend the bill to the House.