




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Aquaculture Industry, Pacific Reef Fisheries

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (2.28 pm): Since January 2015 more than 192,000 jobs have been created in Queensland by the Palaszczuk Labor government. We are working hard to make sure that this number keeps growing. It is only the Labor Palaszczuk government that is ensuring that industry is being developed in regional Queensland. We know that as a government the future prosperity of our region relies on having a diverse economic base. It is the Labor Palaszczuk government that is supporting agriculture, aquaculture, mining, advanced manufacturing, tourism, and small, medium and large businesses of all kinds. We are supporting industry.

I had the pleasure of meeting with representatives from Pacific Reef Fisheries, the proponents of a \$120 million aquaculture project which will generate 2,700 tonnes of North Queensland black tiger prawns annually. This project is a step closer to service after being granted prescribed project status by the Queensland government. The Guthalungra aquaculture project is located 40 kilometres north of Bowen and is adjacent to the Elliot River. It will be the second North Queensland aquaculture project for Pacific Reef Fisheries, which is already operating a facility in Ayr.

The project is expected to support 130 jobs during construction and a great 220 jobs once operational. The employment opportunities range from bioscientists to pond caretakers and a wide range of tradespeople and apprentices. This will give the local youth an opportunity to be able to stay in their home towns with sustainable jobs and careers. The high-quality black tiger prawns are the same ones on sale in our big supermarket chains in Queensland. They are grown for Queenslanders and sold in Queensland. All Queenslanders love a good prawn.

I must say that I am impressed by the sustainability of this company. This project will set a new global benchmark for aquaculture and water remediation, with algae to be used to remove nitrogen and phosphorous from waste water so the facility operates at zero net discharge. They also use algae ponds to produce fertiliser and health food products. This is a win-win for the project and for the environment. The prawns will be grown using a world-first bioremediation technology created in conjunction with our local Queensland James Cook University.