



Speech By  
**Julianne Gilbert**


**MEMBER FOR MACKAY**

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**FISHERIES (COMMERCIAL FISHERIES) REGULATION, FISHERIES (GENERAL)  
(VESSEL TRACKING) AMENDMENT REGULATION, FISHERIES AMENDMENT  
DECLARATION**

**Disallowance of Statutory Instruments**

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (5.41 pm): I rise to oppose this disallowance motion. Firstly, the opposition has presented no compelling reason to disallow these regulations. If it is one of consultation, the consultation began under the LNP in 2014—that is right, in 2014! If five years of consultation is insufficient or rushed they are the snails of the political world. It is great in theory but in no way tied to reality. If it is the regulations themselves, they must have ignored the advice to the committee that these regulations, in the most part, are a continuation of the 2008 regulations.

For clarity I will make this as simple as possible for those opposite: regulations expire after 10 years or when the principal act is changed. In the case of the fisheries regulations, the regulations were older than 10 years and formally expired on 31 August 2019; hence, the need for the remake of the regulations. What of the changes that have been included in the remade regulations? I will quote from what has been communicated to fishers across Queensland—

As a result of the consultation on the proposed amendments to the Fisheries Regulation 2008, a number of changes have been made to the structure of fisheries legislation (establishing two separate Regulations), along with changes to some recreational, charter and commercial fishing rules.

This includes a number of changes to rebuild snapper, pearl perch and scallop stocks. These are all considered depleted, with stock levels under the nationally recommended 20% biomass level.

Changes for commercial fishers include:

- a new annual seasonal closure for snapper and pearl perch from 15 July to 15 August
- increasing the size limit of pearl perch from 35cm to 38cm
- new total allowable commercial catch limits of 42 tonnes for snapper and 15 tonnes for pearl perch (there is currently no catch limit on these species)
- expanding vessel tracking for remaining commercial fishing boats from 1 January 2020
- extending the winter scallop closure by 1 month to open 1 December 2019
- increasing the number of spanner crab traps from 45 to 75
- small area closures to protect juvenile prawns in South East Queensland to improve profitability for trawl operators.

Changes for recreational fishers include:

- a new annual seasonal closure for snapper and pearl perch from 15 July to 15 August
- increasing the size limit of pearl perch from 35cm to 38cm
- removing extended charter catch limits for snapper and pearl perch
- new boat limits for mud crab, prawns, snapper, black jewfish, barramundi, Spanish mackerel, shark, tropical rock lobster and sea cucumber, which hold the operator of the boat responsible for ensuring no more than 2 times the possession limit of these 9 priority black-market species is on board at any time (the boat limit does not apply to charter boats)

- general possession limit of 20 fish for species without a prescribed possession limit, excluding some bait species
- reducing the mud crab possession limit from 10 to 7
- reducing pipi and mollusc limits from 50 to 30.

It seems difficult to believe that the opposition have found support to oppose the changes I have just mentioned. In consultation, the majority of Queenslanders were supportive of the changes. It may be of interest to those opposite that stock assessments are available on the DAF website and these assessments give an indication of how the relevant fisheries stocks are doing. The science is clear that we need to take action to recover fish stocks that are depleted, yet the opposition opposes changes that would protect fish for the future. If we do nothing now we will likely have to take more drastic action in the future, as they have in South Australia where the take of snapper will be banned for three years from November this year. I do not think the commercial fishers would be happy to have that.

Of most concern is that this disallowance motion would remove the majority of regulation around fisheries and the unintended consequences could be mind-boggling. It would strip away access rights for commercial fishers and charter operators and leave them in a legal limbo. If the LNP is opposed to sustainable fisheries, they should come out and say it. If the LNP is opposed to reducing the risk of black marketing of priority species, they should say it. It seems that this is a disallowance motion without meaning. The opposition has no fisheries policy but opposes a fisheries regulation that ensures the ongoing ability for Queenslanders, be they commercial or recreational, to have access to Queensland's fisheries.

It is disappointing that the opposition has clearly not read its own report, the MRAG report on fisheries. In fact, there have been multiple reports on fisheries published since this process began. Everything indicates reform is needed and regulations such as these are required, yet it seems that the opposition opposes all reforms. For what purpose it is still unclear, but the very fact that the disallowance motion was moved condemns any future policy put forward by the opposition. If it makes any difference, this is not the first time the opposition has been wrong-footed on fisheries policy. Members may recall the opposition to net-free zones in 2015. They campaigned hard up and down the coast. This disallowance motion was moved by the opposition and lost in 2015. However, during the 2017 election the policy of the LNP was not for getting rid of net-free zones. It did a complete 180 degree turn—

The LNP deputy leader Deb Frecklington and Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Dale Last today confirmed the LNP would retain existing net-free zones at Cairns, Mackay and Rockhampton, if elected at the next state election.

The LNP are flip-flopping all over the place when it comes to fishing regulations. The recreational fishers with whom I met last week want to have regulations in place so that they know what to expect when they go out and fish. They want to have sustainable fishing. Commercial fishers need clarity before they put their boats out. This industry is very important to a lot of people in my region.

I can only wait and see, but I expect that the 2020 election campaign of the LNP will outline exactly what is proposed here today. The opposition has clearly not appreciated that their history on fisheries is repeating as farce and comedy. I oppose this disallowance motion.