




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, Shark Control Program

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (2.03 pm): Coastal North Queensland residents value our beaches and we value our lifestyle. In 1962, with bipartisan support, drum lines were put in place to protect swimmers from rogue sharks. That was done to save human lives. Fifty-seven years later, a Federal Court ruling has been made to remove the Shark Control Program drum lines from our coastal waters. That is astonishing to say the least. In the wake of that decision, the Queensland government has been forced to remove the drum lines.

It is no longer possible to safely comply with the conditions that apply to the program following the Federal Court decision. The new permit conditions require that the drum lines are checked every 24 hours. Any sharks found alive on the drum lines must be safely removed and relocated away from the drum lines. Currently, the contractors are not equipped and have not been specifically trained to safely meet the requirements. The sharks being caught on the drum lines are getting larger and larger. Sharks that are caught have to be tagged, which requires that a vet is on board the vessel to undertake the tagging. That all comes at a huge expense to the Queensland budget. Why should Queensland families and farmers pay for the incompetence of the federal LNP, which has failed to legislate this issue away?

Those opposite have become shark lovers. They are happy to support the trial of smart drum lines and play Russian roulette with people's lives. There are not too many second chances when it comes to sharks. How many shark attacks on swimmers do we need to see in the trial before they agree with the Cardno report?

Smart drum lines are not suitable for the waters of the Great Barrier Reef. As the permit to carry out the program is issued by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority under federal legislation, it is vital that the federal government urgently changes the legislation and allows Queenslanders to go back to the original shark program in the marine park. Federal members of parliament are elected to legislate, so they need to roll up their sleeves and put the legislation in place. Those opposite need to get in touch with their federal counterparts and they must do so quickly.

This is really important to my community and to every community up and down the Queensland coast. We need to ensure that our beaches are safe. We need to ensure that those opposite stop being the LNP greens, but call on their federal counterparts to make—

(Time expired)