




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR REDLANDS

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FISHERIES (SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES STRATEGY) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (12.50 pm): ‘Yura’ from our magnificent home of the Quandamooka coast. I rise today to speak in support of this bill. Passing the sustainable fisheries bill is an important step towards giving Queenslanders a legacy of a sustainable fishery for our children and our grandchildren. That is the case on our spectacular Redlands coast as much as anywhere else in our fantastic state. Living on the coast, I know how important a sustainable fisheries strategy is. It is a haven for boaties and those who love to fish.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to making our fisheries sustainable for the future, profitable for the commercial sector and enjoyable for recreational fishers. The overwhelming message from stakeholders to a number of reviews since 2014 is that fisheries management must change. Doing nothing is not an option when the current system is not working. In 2017 the Palaszczuk government released the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy, outlining a vision for the future management of the state’s fisheries. The modernisation of the Fisheries Act through this bill is a key step in providing legislative foundations needed to support the implementation of this strategy.

The proposed amendments to the Fisheries Act are intended to achieve four outcomes. The first is to modernise the objectives of the Fisheries Act and recognise the interests of key stakeholder groups. It is important that the bill’s objectives reflect the general public interest of Queenslanders in their natural resources. It is important too that we accurately define and identify the distinct groups and different uses that our fisheries serve. These groups include recreational fishers, commercial fishers, Indigenous fishing interests and conservationists. We all have an interest in maintaining a sustainable fisheries environment. This bill and our government’s Sustainable Fisheries Strategy help point towards the different actions that members of these groups can take to promote this objective.

The second objective clarifies the roles of the minister responsible for fisheries and the chief executive in the management of the state’s fisheries to allow for more responsive decision-making through the use of harvest strategies. Harvest strategies are an important fishery management tool in other jurisdictions. They put clear measurements and rules around the various fisheries and guide what will happen and when.

The third objective strengthens enforcement powers and penalties to address serious fisheries offences such as black marketing. These are critical provisions for our hardworking fisheries staff and boating and patrol officers. I have been very fortunate, along with the minister, to meet many of these officers and staff in my local area on the mighty Moreton Bay. I would like to take this opportunity to give a shout out to Matt Davidson, our district fisheries officer, and our newest recruits Brendan Burmeister and Paul Gibson, who do a wonderful job in our community on the water.

These are critical provisions for Queenslanders who do the right thing and source their seafood sustainably. They will benefit people who are doing the right thing by deterring those who are doing the wrong thing. Together with the industry, the government and the department, we are working toward faster, clear decision-making processes that will support Queensland’s ability to respond to and tackle black marketing and bring us into line with other Australian jurisdictions. That principle—effective

punishment, strong deterrents and clear rules—supports the majority of recreational fishers who are taking within their bag limits, commercial fishers who are demonstrating a sustainable take and consumers who support businesses that can point to where their fish come from. This provision was well supported in consultation.

Finally, the bill does important work to reduce complexity and remove redundant provisions from the existing Fisheries Act. A comprehensive revision of the act in this way will not affect the ordinary fisher in any great way, but it makes it easier to understand and administer. This is a desirable goal for any piece of legislation.

This bill will help steer Queensland towards an internationally leading system of fisheries management. The bill complements the \$20 million our government has invested in our fisheries and will support our broader government's goals within the Reef 2050 Plan and boost regional and rural job opportunities. The strategy and bill complement our environmental obligations at a state, national and international level. By voting to support this bill, we are supporting effective action now and a legacy of sustainable fisheries for our children and grandchildren. I commend this bill to the House.