




Speech By  
**Lachlan Millar**

**MEMBER FOR GREGORY**

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Record of Proceedings, 28 February 2019

### **FISHERIES (SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES STRATEGY) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (4.49 pm): Thank you for the opportunity to speak on what is an important bill, the Fisheries (Sustainable Fisheries Strategy) Amendment Bill 2018. Even though I come from the electorate of Gregory where there is not too much commercial fishing, the commercial fishing industry is an important primary industry for the people of Queensland. It is probably the industry that has been under the most pressure for the last 20 or 30 years.

**Mr Powell:** Maybe the cane industry.

**Mr MILLAR:** The cane industry as well. I take the interjection from the member for Glass House. The commercial fishing industry has been under the pump from environmentalists. It has been under the pump from the Labor Party past and present. We are seeing less and less commercial fishermen wanting to participate in the industry than 30 years ago. The commercial fishing industry, from Karumba down to Coolangatta, is an important industry for Queensland. We get our high-quality seafood from that industry. I have a couple of mates in the commercial fishing industry. Recently we were on a footy trip to Vietnam and one of them said that with the way the industry is going in future we would be getting our fish from a river in Saigon. Commercial fishermen are struggling. They are waking up every morning thinking, 'How the hell am I going to run an operation when I continue to have red tape and government interference? All I want is to be a commercial fisherman and provide fresh seafood for the Australian consumer—especially the Queensland consumer—and be able to do my job, but we continue to get hammered by green ideology. We continue to be under the pump. We cannot make it work.' Commercial fishermen who were in the industry 10 years ago are glad to be out of the industry because they could not make it work.

The commercial fishing industry plays a significant role in our export dollars and in providing fresh seafood for the people of Queensland. It is just as important as any other primary industry in this state. It provide jobs for young people. We all love our seafood. Our industry continues to be under red tape and green ideology. We are seeing more and more restrictions put on our commercial fishermen, so much so that they are wanting to leave the industry.

**Ms Pease:** This will make it sustainable.

**Mr MILLAR:** I take that interjection, but the problem you have is there are less and less of them around. More and more of them are putting their boats up for sale.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Please direct your comments through the chair.

**Mr MILLAR:** We are seeing more and more of them put their boats up for sale and get out of the industry. We are seeing more and more imports of seafood coming into the country. We do not have to remind this parliament and the people of Queensland about some of the biosecurity issues we face when it comes to importing seafood from overseas. We have a very valuable, clean, green industry. It is a sustainable industry. Commercial fishermen do the right thing. They provide a very important product for our restaurants and our people. They are just as important as any other primary producer in this state. They provide jobs. My concern is that we are starting to see more and more of those in

this industry go. We are seeing people say, 'We have had enough. We cannot continue to do this anymore. We are not making enough money to sustain our families or our employees and we are going.' We have to stop putting red tape and restrictions on a sustainable industry. It provides fresh, clean, high-quality seafood up and down the Queensland coast and into the cape. The Labor Party continues to put more pressure on the industry. I would hate to see an industry that has had enough, where its members say, 'We are out. We cannot do this anymore.' We need the industry to survive.

We have all been involved in the parliamentary committee process. It is arduous and different points of view come across. Two members of the committee from the Labor Party are in here today. I think they did a fantastic job in putting this report together. I acknowledge the chair, Chris Whiting, the deputy chair, Pat Weir, and the member for Ipswich West. Those members did a reasonable and fair job. My concern is that the minister has ignored the amendments put forward by the shadow minister for agricultural industry development and fisheries, the honourable Tony Perrett. These are sensible amendments to fit in with the recommendations of the report agreed to by Labor and LNP members, yet they have been thrown out straight away. We have here sensible amendments that the minister and the Labor Party could support to better protect this industry and make it more sustainable and more profitable, yet these amendments have been thrown out. Here we have a committee report agreed to by the Labor Party and the LNP. I thank them for this committee report. I think they have done a great job. I congratulate them. This is how people want us to work. They want us to come up with recommendations that will see an industry grow, especially a commercial industry.

The shadow minister has put forward sensible amendments but the minister and the executive from the Labor Party are refusing these amendments that will make for a profitable industry, an industry which affects many of us in this House. It does not affect me that much as I come from Western Queensland, but I recognise that the fishing industry is important. The fishing industry is incredibly important to those in the member for Cook's electorate. It is an industry that provides jobs and opportunities. It is an industry that is important for Cairns. The electorate of Cairns thrives on a commercial fishing industry.

We have a recommendation from the committee that says we need to amend this bill to make it just that bit better, to make our commercial fishing industry more sustainable and more profitable, and we have amendments from the member for Gympie, who has done a fantastic job, and they have been rejected by the minister. I find that disappointing. We need a commercial fishing industry that will survive and provide us with clean, high-quality seafood not only for Queenslanders but also for the rest of the nation—an industry that employs people and pays its way in taxes and provides a livable community in those areas.

The committee has put forward some pretty good recommendations. We have amendments that reflect those recommendations so the minister can fix those issues up and they have been rejected. Why is that? Is it because of the political situation? Is it because the member for Gympie had these amendments ready to go? Are we rejecting them because it was the member for Gympie? This is about a fishing industry that is important to all of us, whether you live in Coolangatta, Karumba or Gregory. I see plenty of trucks come out my way delivering fresh, high-quality seafood to the people of Western Queensland that has been caught by hardworking commercial fishermen right throughout Queensland.

I call on the minister and the Labor Party to accept the amendments. These are amendments that suit the recommendations which would make this industry far more sustainable and more profitable so that it is an industry that continues. I would like to see the minister accept the amendments put forward by the member for Gympie.