



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR OODGEROO

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

Disallowance of Statutory Instruments

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (5.50 pm): I rise to support the disallowance motion put forward by the shadow minister. I will focus my comments on a few areas that revolve broadly around aspects related to sustainable fishing. We have long been a party that has stood for sustainable fishing practice, whether that has been commercial fishing, recreational fishing or in the charter boat sector. We look at the holistic impact of all of those sectors upon every form of fish stock and in each region in which fisheries occur, whether that is in the far north and Great Barrier Reef waters, in bay areas, far offshore in federal waters or right down through central coastal Queensland and into Moreton Bay, where my electorate is located.

In a number of ways fisheries is an incredibly important industry, not only in terms of our seafood industry and the commercial catch but also in terms of recreational fishing and the recreational tourism industry as well as all of the downstream industries that flow, which are sometimes estimated to be worth in excess of \$1 billion in Queensland. Commercial fisheries are worth many hundreds of millions of dollars. We are talking about very important industries. We are also talking about very important activities in the recreational use of our waterways. Therefore, as we consider sustainable practice it is very important that we get this right.

I have had a deep interest in fisheries and fisheries management, both as a recreational fisherman and also in terms of my own studies as a marine science graduate at James Cook University. For me, this subject has always had a very personal dimension. Over the years I have enjoyed being a member of local recreational fishing clubs in the Redlands coast area. At one stage I was the shadow minister for fisheries and marine infrastructure and had the opportunity to have a lot to do with and hear from commercial fishermen, recreational fishermen and charter boat owners from across this state.

Over the years I have noticed the concern around getting the science right and, indeed, the science that is used. As a marine science graduate, I have been concerned about the purity of that science in the past 20 to 30 years and the fact that at times that science has been infiltrated with politics. That trend continues to concern me greatly, which is partly why I support this disallowance motion. I have some real questions around the science that is being used or is purported to have been used. I do not think we have had sufficient access to all of the data. I remain concerned about that.

Over a number of decades I have observed the science presented by scientists versus the catch data presented by commercial fishermen. At times, trying to reconcile that data can be quite a challenge as the figures do not always match up. However, we should not exclude the information from the catch records of commercial fishermen or their views and experiences. I note that recreational fishermen sometimes talk about their catches as being significant. For example, in the last few years in Moreton

Bay they have had very good snapper seasons. While there may be some pressure on the stock, at the same time we need to be very careful about jumping to an early conclusion that the sky is falling in and that we are about to lose the entire stock.

I am concerned about the potential for job losses in the Moreton Bay area, which is a very important region for the seafood industry and recreational fishing charter operators. On North Stradbroke Island, a number of fishermen have been hit with a double whammy. They worked as part-time sandminers and at other times of the year they worked as seasonal net fishermen. They have lost their mining jobs because of the Labor government's laws and now they face real concerns about losing at least some of their income—or being more greatly impacted than that—that they get from fishing. That is a real concern on North Stradbroke Island.

I am concerned about what the government's changes represent for recreational fishing rights. Cleveland and the Redlands coast recreational fishermen get very upset when their rights are taken from them without there being real opportunity for them to speak up, whether that involves new zones being put in place without consultation or curtailing their fishing rights in terms of size and bag limits. Those are issues of great concern.

Numbers of people from the recreational fishing clubs in my electorate have come to me and they are very upset at the way in which these changes have unfolded. Some of them see it as particularly upsetting that, on the eve of the 10-year Moreton Bay Marine Park review, decisions have been made before that review has concluded. Although the review has now started, they are concerned that they will not have the opportunity to speak to issues that will come from the review as the decisions have already been made. The marine park review will include fishing, fisheries management and many other things that are very important and that need to go ahead. However, to jump the gun and bring in these restrictions before the review has concluded is absolutely the wrong way to go about this. In my electorate and the Moreton Bay region, individuals are concerned as they do not believe consultation has happened. When you make a decision first and then you consult, people get angry, and they are angry.

I am very concerned about fishing within the Moreton Bay Marine Park, as well as the review that is underway. There is good reason for that when we look at the history of Labor state governments. Often they have deferred their fisheries thinking and their brains to the Greens. In many political areas or measures, they are sops to the Greens, supposedly on the basis of science but more often it is to do with green politics. In terms of the Moreton Bay Marine Mark plan, some of the zoning was based on science. Leading up to 2008-09, the Moreton Bay Access Alliance did some very good work historically. It concluded that some of the zoning was warranted and important, based on science. However, the rest of it was a sop to the Greens. The Greens wanted 30 per cent lockout areas or green zones where no-one could fish. A lot of people were very upset when they found out that that was not based on science. While some areas were based on science, some zones were based on pure politics. That was very disappointing to a lot of fishermen and people from the science community, who knew that the zoning was based more on politics than on science.

There is good reason to have reservations and be concerned about the way this government has approached this issue. With the Moreton Bay Marine Park review to be undertaken, we are concerned about the further damage that might be done. Obviously, there are changes for commercial fishermen. I will not go over those in great detail because they have been outlined. There are changes for recreational fishermen. A lot of the recreational fishermen are very upset about the changes to bag limits and size limits. Some feel this is unwarranted. They are not yet convinced that the science is solid enough to impose these sorts of restrictions.

Government members interjected.

Dr ROBINSON: This is the reality on the ground and not the reality for the inner-city, soy latte sipping set that would not know what a fishing rod looks like or a fishing net looks like. When those opposite get out into the real world and get out into Moreton Bay and talk to real people they will tell them what they think. They told Labor in 2009 in the Redlands when the seats of Redlands and Cleveland both went to the LNP. One of the issues then was fishing. Labor has it wrong again and it will find out next year.