




Speech By
Stephen Andrew

MEMBER FOR MIRANI

Record of Proceedings, 12 June 2019

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Bajool, Fish Farm

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (2.31 pm): I rise to speak about the apparently absurd circumstances that have led me to question whose best interests the present state government is advancing because it certainly is not Queensland. To provide some background, at Bajool I have a forward-thinking family who were looking for a way to diversify and avoid relying solely on cattle grazing. The idea to farm fish began to take form. The benefits were appealing. They could use their water twice and develop an extra protein source on their rural block.

The Besches self-funded this enterprise and invested close to \$2 million into their business over the last six years. They now supply approximately two tonne of live barramundi into the Brisbane market every month from a business that runs 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year. Indeed, their system was expensive to set up but they have proved the environmental benefits, the fish health benefits and the benefits to the market in being able to provide premium fish consistently all year round.

The grow-out facility is fully enclosed and able to safely manage biosecurity threats facing the industry such as the white spot outbreak that we had recently with prawns. The facility safeguards against farmed fish being able to reach the natural waterways and cross-contaminate our natural species. The facility does not take any water from the creeks, rivers, dams or oceans, so the farm is protected from water quality issues and only discharges approximately one per cent of water a day which is used to improve the cattle-carrying capacity of the property.

In six years of operation their business has not had a single disease or fungal outbreak. As a matter of fact, they have hardly lost a fish. The Besches have not had to treat their fish with any medications or add chemicals or additives to the system. In effect, their system leads the way for the future of aquaculture. So what does the state government do? Our Premier flies to Abu Dhabi to inspect and discuss the expansion of fish farms in the United Arab Emirates when we have the exact same fish farm in Bajool. I would quite happily stamp her passport to come and have a look at the one in Bajool. How could they get everybody together and go over there to have a look at something that was designed and built here on the Sunshine Coast and exists in my electorate of Mirani?

The UAE imports 90 per cent of its seafood, so that should have been a big clue for the Premier to question why. In my book, it is almost akin to selling the rights to cane harvesters to Brazil and then wondering why a couple of decades later our sugar industry is in a perilous state whilst Brazil is now the biggest global producer of sugar cane. The absurdity does not end there. Digging up the Fitzroy Basin to make—

(Time expired)