



Speech By  
**Barry O'Rourke**


**MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON**

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Record of Proceedings, 18 November 2021

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT**

**Fitzroy River Barra Bash**

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (2.09 pm): One of the great jobs that I have is attending the Fitzroy River Barra Bash. Since this event started in 2018, it has continued to grow in strength and it was great to see it even bigger and better in 2021. With an expanded program of events and hundreds of participants, it is putting Rocky on the map as a fishing mecca. Events like this keep bringing people to our region. I acknowledge the great work of all Queenslanders and the event organisers for being able to deliver this event in a COVID-safe way.

About seven years ago the Labor state government ended net fishing in the Fitzroy River with the aim of increasing recreational fishing opportunities and thereby supporting tourism and economic growth. This event has increased year on year and is a boost to our local economy via tourism for Central Queensland.

The Frenchville Sports Club brought us our bigger and better Fitzroy River Barra Bash. I must congratulate chairman Paul Brady OAM, general manager of Frenchville Sports Club Damien Massingham and all staff and volunteers involved for a great weekend. The 2021 Fitzroy River Barra Bash three-day event kicked off on Thursday, 28 October. It was a great competition for keen anglers lure fishing for barramundi and threadfin salmon and over \$25,000 in cash and prizes. Over the three days anglers caught 308 barra, with 32 over a metre, and 121 threadfin salmon. The river was going off.

There was also a celebrities fish off on the Wednesday prior that I could not attend due to a parliamentary sitting week. I asked Councillor Drew Wickerson to step in on my behalf with Mayor Tony Williams. I am very pleased that they did not catch anything. I would have been very disappointed if they had cleaned up. There was also a family fun day, giving families a good excuse to get out on the water and cast a line. There was also a boat raffled off.

It is wonderful to be part of a government that supports local events like this. It brings tourists to our areas. It is one of the best fishing events. I encourage people if they have time to come to the barra bash. It is a great competition. All people do is catch fish. It is wonderful. Well done to the Labor government for thinking that far ahead and removing the nets from the Fitzroy River because it created an event like this. Now we have seven or eight charter boat businesses on the river which is great to see.