




Speech By  
**Amanda Camm**

**MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY**

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### **FOOD (LABELLING OF SEAFOOD) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (5.29 pm): I am pleased to contribute to the Food (Labelling of Seafood) Amendment Bill. I represent the seat of Whitsunday, where I think everyone in this House would agree we have fabulous seafood which is caught and promoted locally. Many of my constituents and those who catch seafood would love it to be promoted and labelled locally. I am very pleased to support the objective of this bill, which is the mandatory country-of-origin labelling of seafood sold across dining outlets. We already do this unofficially in the Whitsundays whether you are eating at Fish D'Vine, one of my local seafood extravaganza restaurants, Fishi takeaway in the Whitsundays or award-winning seafood from Debbie's Seafood. They label their seafood and highlight what is caught locally because they too are commercial fishermen who have been in the industry for such a long time.

I was very pleased to see Mark and Debbie and Craig and Natalie take out the seafood industry of Australia's 2022 Australian large seafood business of the year, so congratulations to them. In 2015 and 2013 they won best small business of the year and in 2017 they won best large seafood business. They are local long-term residents of the Mackay region who support our commercial fishing industry. Most importantly, they have expanded into retail and they know the value of promoting local seafood and ensuring it is labelled. Paton Oysters, from Seaforth on the beautiful Hibiscus Coast, similarly harvest oysters that are labelled locally. They are proud to promote their provenance, which is the Whitsunday region.

The LNP campaigned on this issue in the lead-up to the last state election. As the LNP candidate for the Whitsunday electorate I was proud to promote the LNP's policy around seafood labelling and the opportunities for us to buy and promote local. We recognise the support of the Katter party in relation to our policy, but it is disappointing that those opposite do not embrace this opportunity to support our local seafood industry. On World Mental Health Day I read a press release from the Queensland Seafood Industry Association. It stated—

Our fishing families and onshore workers from seafood stores and processing factories are, emotionally barely treading water as it is. The continued onslaught coming from the Palaszczuk government is the boot holding their heads under water. Our industry's men and women are fast running out of breath.

The bill before the House is a proactive approach to seafood labelling and promoting an outstanding commercial fishing industry in Queensland. It would be a win not only for commercial fishermen but also consumers in Queensland and those who visit our great state, in particular in the Whitsundays. When people come to our region they want fresh, locally caught Spanish mackerel, but they do not know where they are purchasing their seafood from because those opposite have chosen not to support this bill. Those opposite have used excuses like, 'It would be an administrative cost burden.' That does not seem to bother those opposite when it comes to other administrative cost burdens in relation to other policies across this state.

The Northern Territory framework has taken the lead. It was some years ago, I think, that the Northern Territory put a stake in the ground and said, 'We're going to support our fishermen whether they be recreational fishermen or commercial fishermen. We're going to promote the NT.' They already

have that advantage ahead of Queensland. That is a lost opportunity for this state government to support the very sector which right now, as quoted by the Queensland Seafood Industry Association, is under enormous stress.

Some of that stress has been caused by the minister. The minister stood in this House and said that this was a great concept and he would be pleased to support it. I can almost quote him, but I choose not to tonight. He did say that it was a great concept but there are other ways we can support the commercial fishing industry. The recent changes to Spanish mackerel catch conditions certainly do not support the commercial fishing industry—not in my area of Mackay, not in the Whitsundays, and certainly not in Far North Queensland in Cairns and Townsville, where I have met with commercial fishermen. This government is placing stress on an industry that contributes so significantly to our local economy. There are multiple generations of families such as the Drapers in my community who have for 50-plus years operated commercial fishing operations—in particular for Spanish mackerel—and are out there every single day, but they were not engaged by this government when it came to the Spanish mackerel industry, seafood labelling or growth opportunities for their industry. Instead, this government decided to consult in a way that required commercial fishermen to sign commercial-in-confidence arrangements so they could not disclose or engage with their own industry partners. It is disappointing that we have a minister who claims to be the farmers' friend but in fact is no friend of the fishermen of Queensland.

I am pleased that in the Whitsunday electorate we have the Tassal prawn farm. We talk about the opportunity to have both live catch and aquaculture in our region. The Tassal prawn farm will be the largest prawn farm in Australia. Its expansion at Bloomsbury will be incredible in terms of economic benefits and job creation in the Whitsundays. Even though it is farmed here in Queensland, they would be proud to label it as farmed in Queensland aquaculture when they market it overseas. They understand the competitive advantage of marketing, branding and promoting what is Australian and Queensland grown. This government lacks the foresight to take any leadership role in promoting our incredible seafood industry, whether that be aquaculture, oysters or prawns that are caught off Hay Point. This government is out of touch when it comes to promoting and supporting provenance, aquaculture, commercial fishermen or recreational fishermen, for that matter. We saw that throughout with a lack of engagement and consultation in relation to the recent Spanish mackerel decision.

I am very proud of those who not only sell but also supply seafood across the Whitsundays, whether that is the Caracciolo in Mackay or Matt and Bron at Fishi in Airlie Beach. We have incredible retailers, wholesalers, commercial fishing operators, pro fishermen and recreational fishermen, and they know that the LNP team will back commercial fishing and recreational fishing. We will back it every day of the week. I am pleased to support this bill not just as a proud Queenslander but as someone who represents a region that grows, sells and promotes some of the best seafood in Queensland.