




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

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FOOD (LABELLING OF SEAFOOD) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (6.18 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Food (Labelling of Seafood) Amendment Bill 2021, the objective of which is mandatory country-of-origin labelling of seafood sold at dining outlets across Queensland. I was the architect from this side of the House on behalf of the LNP opposition who first brought this to the last election as a policy. I did so for two reasons: firstly, as we have heard here tonight, we wanted consumers to know where their seafood was coming from and, secondly, and a point that has not necessarily been debated here tonight, to put a stop to a burgeoning black market in seafood in Queensland.

As members know, commercial fishers across this state are being regulated to death. I have a number of commercial fishers in my electorate who I work very closely with, who I have a lot of time and respect for, and they are certainly finding it tougher and tougher to operate in that industry. This was one way to identify locally caught seafood—we all appreciate locally caught seafood when we go out—but, more importantly, to put a stop to the black market sale of seafood in this state which would mean a greater return for our commercial fishers who are operating under licences and regulation.

Seafood stakeholders agree that the current framework prevents consumers from making an informed choice about the seafood they consume at dining outlets. Seafood stakeholders submitted that 50 per cent of consumers assumed the seafood they buy is Australian when no country-of-origin information was available. I use this analogy: one can go down to Walter's, a steak restaurant most people know, and order a steak and on the menu it will tell you where that steak comes from. As is the case across this state, when one goes to most restaurants and looks at a beef menu, it will identify where those steaks come from. Why are we not applying the same rules and affording the same opportunities to our commercial fishers to have their seafood labelled so that we can make an informed choice when we go to a restaurant and order seafood to know exactly where it came from? We would all love to support homegrown, home-caught seafood produce in this state. Fifty per cent of consumers do not know where their seafood comes from and would love to know where their seafood comes from. I for one would rather eat locally caught seafood than something that has been imported from overseas. It is very clear that Queenslanders would prefer to buy local seafood if given that option. Here we have an opportunity to do exactly that.

We have heard those opposite giving platitudes to the Katter's Australian Party for bringing this bill before the House and saying what a great idea it is but that they cannot support. They cannot support it because it came from this side of the House and not that side of the House. That is a shame. There is an opportunity here to back our commercial fishers, to show that we value them, that we support them and, more importantly, to promote locally caught seafood in this state. I will be supporting this bill because I think it has a lot of merit. I encourage all members of this House, if they are serious about supporting local industry, to also support this bill here tonight.