




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

Record of Proceedings, 31 March 2022

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Spanish Mackerel Fishery

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (2.03 pm): I rise to update members on important measures that the Palaszczuk government is taking to protect jobs in fishing sectors in Queensland. Members may be aware that a recent assessment of Spanish mackerel stocks found that the biomass had fallen to just 17 per cent of its original unfished level. That is below the 20 per cent threshold accepted nationally as the trigger point for management action to be taken to rebuild a species. It is important to note that at this stage no decision on management action has been taken.

The stock assessment has been subjected to an external peer review. I know some people are trying to argue that the science of the stock assessment and peer review is flawed. Just to be clear, these reservations related to how resilient Spanish mackerel are. They did not relate to the validity of the input data of the stock assessment. The stock assessment and peer review were presented to the independent Sustainable Fisheries Expert Panel. The expert panel considered that the most responsible way forward is to accept the stock assessment base case as the most credible scenario.

The Palaszczuk government is not going to stand by and watch as important commercial and recreational fish species are fished into oblivion, taking away forever the jobs that depend on those stocks. The science of the stock assessment is sound and the science is not wrong just because we might not like what it says. If there are no fish then there will be no fishing jobs. It is as simple as that. I will do everything I can to restore those stocks so that there will be jobs for decades to come. Doing nothing is not an option.

The Palaszczuk Labor government committed to consult before any management actions are put in place for Spanish mackerel. I can advise that consultation will open on Wednesday next week via the DAF website. I strongly urge people to have their say on how the Spanish mackerel stocks should be managed to ensure they return to a sustainable level. However, we do need to get feedback and make these decisions in time for the season to start on 1 July.

The Palaszczuk government is a government that listens. Since publishing the stock assessment we have heard from some stakeholders that having better recreational catch data is highly desirable. Therefore, we will also be seeking feedback on whether processes used in other states to capture data could be considered. The Palaszczuk government's sustainable fisheries reforms are ensuring that fish stocks are supported for our children and our grandchildren well into the future. I table answers to questions on notice Nos 255, 267 and 283.

Tabled paper: Answers to question on notice No. 255 asked on 29 March 2022, question on notice No. 267 asked on 29 March 2022 and question on notice No. 283 asked on 29 March 2022 [481](#).