




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

Record of Proceedings, 17 August 2022

ADJOURNMENT

Mermaid Beach Electorate, Shark Net Removal

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (7.26 pm): I rise to enforce the necessity of maintaining the shark-netting regime for the Gold Coast, in particular on Mermaid, Nobby, Miami and North Burleigh beaches in my area. There are strong indicators around that Labor Party minister Mark Furner is submitting to the left-wing demands of their Greens political partners—whom they cannot win an election without—to remove nets from Gold Coast beaches. Minister Furner has flagged smart drum line trials as his smokescreen for acquiescing to Greens' demands, but those of us who understand politics know that if the Greens demand the nets be removed then the Queensland Labor Party will massage the process about how the nets will be removed to satisfy their political partners.

The Gold Coast is first and foremost a tourist destination, and all measures to ensure the safety and reputation of the Gold Coast should be maintained and carnage stopped in the oceans. Yes, there are minor amounts of other sea life casualties as a result of protective netting measures, but these are insignificant compared to the damage that would be done to the Gold Coast if it became known as 'shark attack central' following the loss of human life.

The increased whale migration has obviously been a tourism boom, and when one whale out of the thousands that migrate gets caught in a net it is distressing viewing to all. However, Sea World has done a magnificent job on freeing those whales caught in the nets with minimal loss, so whale 'wailing' is no justification for putting marine life over human lives by the removal of the nets. Increased shark activity following whale migration is another reason to keep the nets in place across the Gold Coast. You only have to look at the voraciousness of great whites feeding on whale carcass blubber to understand how increased whale numbers would naturally attract more great whites following the whale migration.

There is a great maxim that 'if it ain't broke, don't try to fix it'. With the nets providing great safety and security since the 1960s, why would any responsible Queensland government kowtow to minority bleeding heart calls from green activists to remove those nets from Gold Coast beaches? The Gold Coast is a mecca for all Australians and international visitors who enjoy our beaches and beautiful ocean, and putting human life at risk by the removal of shark nets is a non-negotiable retrograde step that should not be entertained by any responsible Queensland government. The fact that the Queensland Labor Party holds no beachside seats on the Gold Coast worries me greatly. We all welcome increased protections such as SMART drum lines and any other modern technology.