




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

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ADJOURNMENT

Recreational Fishing

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (7.09 pm): In the *Sunday Mail* a few weeks back there was a story written by Greg Stolz under the headline 'Barra-nanza on a whole new scale'. It is interesting that anglers in Rockhampton, Mackay and Cairns have been hooking huge barramundi and king threadfin salmon in what has been a boom since the gillnets were removed. In 2015 the Labor government removed the gillnets from the Fitzroy River and it has made a significant difference to the fishing experience.

The report also spoke about the size of the barramundi being caught now in Cairns. The size has jumped by 30 per cent to 73.7 centimetres, and those reeled in at Rockhampton and Mackay have jumped in size by almost 25 per cent and 13 per cent respectively. Meanwhile, more than 60 per cent of the prized king threadfin salmon caught in Rockhampton's Fitzroy River are now exceeding a metre in length compared to just two per cent of the catch before the ban. We have some of the best fishing competitions such as the Fitzroy River \$10,000 Thready Competition as well as the Frenchville Sports Club's Barra Bash. I am very pleased to say that the Palaszczuk government contributes funding towards this great event.

Prior to 2015 commercial fishing took approximately 86 tonnes of barramundi and 56 tonnes of threadfin each year from the Fitzroy, leaving very little behind for recreational fishers. Prior to the nets' closure almost all barramundi caught by the recreational fisherman were undersize. It was actually very difficult to catch any sort of fish to be honest. Now it is a completely different story. Last year at the Barra Bash catch and release competition, which was limited to 100 teams, they caught 164 barramundi and 69 threadfin salmon. A total of 12 barramundi across the three days were over the magic metre. The biggest barramundi of the competition was 128 centimetres and the biggest threadfin salmon measured 147 centimetres—a monster of a fish.

We have seen recreational fishing on the improve in Rockhampton, Mackay and Cairns and we in Rocky have seen tourism grow. People can fly into Rocky from Brisbane, just an hour's flight, and stay in a five-star hotel. They can almost cast a fishing line off the balcony into the Fitzroy River. They can catch barramundi and threadfin salmon right in the middle of town as the Fitzroy divides North and South Rocky. It is great to see how good it is for our local community.