



Speech By  
**Robbie Katter**


**MEMBER FOR TRAEGER**

---

Record of Proceedings, 12 September 2023

## ADJOURNMENT

### Gulf of Carpentaria, Fishing Ban

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (7.19 pm): It is with regret that I rise tonight to talk about the shock announcement of the proposed net fishing ban in the Gulf of Carpentaria which will be incorporated with those net bans announced along the east coast. I do not make this statement lightly. The Queensland Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries is presiding over the protracted and politically motivated closure of Queensland's commercial fishing sector. The human cost of that is for people like David Wren, an industry giant in Karumba. He employs 35 people and it is very personal for him. He has invested a lot of money over the years, as have the Carroll Bros Fishing group which employs 10 people, the Gulf Caught Seafood retail shop which employs 13 people, Nasty's Fish N Grill which employs 25 people and Dave Wright, known as the 'Mackerel Man', who employs seven people in Cairns. I have just cherrypicked a few, but that is the human cost of people. The minister is destroying their lives and everything they have worked for for political motivation. If he were the minister for the environment that is okay, but not when he is the minister for agriculture.

The Gulf of Carpentaria fishermen were advised of the Palaszczuk government's plans to ban net fishing in the region. The repercussions are still sinking in, but essentially at least 80 per cent of the gulf commercial fishing fleet would be out of business, and it would remove the supply of sustainable and widely sought after barra and Spanish mackerel. The economic fallout would not just be for those fish shops but for all those people who contribute to the economy—the electricians, boilermakers, fuel suppliers and everyone else. Karumba is a pretty big industrial player in the context of fishing even though it is a small town. Taking 80 per cent of its main industry is a town killer for them. There is some tourism there and a couple of other things, but this is really driving a stake through the heart of that town. There are 350 fishermen currently working in the gulf.

I can go on about the facts. David Wren himself has taken out 19,000 metres of latent effort, of net fishing, over the years. They have tried to meet the government halfway. They have reduced from nine licences down to three and there is only a fraction of the boats in the water in Karumba that used to be there. This is not about science. The king threadfin is supposed to be at five per cent, but this is a ridiculous figure to throw around. They are not checking the largest threadfin catcher up there. They do not check him and his biomass. In the Northern Territory, they are talking about 90 per cent biomass and this is five per cent. They must see a stop sign between the gulf waters because it is five per cent there. It is ridiculous what they are talking about with the science around this. It is not science; it is politically motivated.

If you watch David Attenborough, of course you are going to want to shut down the fisheries all around the world. If you want to do that then fine, but be honest with people. Just say, 'We want to shut you all down. We don't want you to be there.' Do not say there is a false consultation period with John Tanzer, the head of WWF, at the head of it. The minister should stand down for this.