




Speech By
Stephen Bennett

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

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MOTION

Revocation and Dedication of Protected Areas

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (5.56 pm): I rise to support the proposal involving the Nature Conservation Act and certain revocations. The origins of some of these revocations were part of the Queensland government's completion of its first comprehensive review of the Great Sandy Marine Park zoning plan first declared in 2006. The review was informed by community and stakeholder feedback, advice from First Nations peoples, recommendations from an independent scientific reference group, socio-economic information and best practice marine park management principles.

As an avid recreational fishermen in my part of the world, the process was problematic and left many not sure of potential outcomes. Many only heard about the review after we distributed information in December 2019. The one proposal that I am thankful has not been recommended is the one to convert Baffle Creek into a green zone. Overall, most of us are very happy with the final proposed plan. I must acknowledge some of the smaller but important outcomes.

First, it will allow sand replenishment at Flat Rock boat ramp at Baffle Creek. Under the final zoning, 87.2 per cent of the Great Sandy Marine Park will remain available for recreational fishing and crabbing. The final plan includes the removal of commercial, large gillnets from the yellow zones in Baffle Creek, Elliott River, the Burrum River system and Great Sandy Strait. Commercial blood worming in the Great Sandy Strait will be prohibited. Commercial crabbing within the conservation park yellow zones at Baffle Creek, Elliott River, the Burrum River system and the Great Sandy Strait will be allowed to continue as a nonconforming use. Commercial tunnel netting within the conservation park yellow zones in Great Sandy Strait will be allowed to continue as a nonconforming use. The use of two handed lines and rods with a total of no more than two hooks in those conservation yellow zones will continue.

The boundaries of some of the green zones that have been modified to reduce the impact on commercial and recreational fisher have been articulated previously. It is important that we understand that the maintenance and possible replacement of boat ramps into the future can be better facilitated if they are not tied up in a marine zone seeking those lengthy and somewhat complicated approvals. This is a very welcome development. A comprehensive mitigation package, as we know, will be developed to address some of the commercial fishing and seafood processing issues. It is a big issue, particularly in Bundaberg. I know that the member for Hervey Bay is here and that he will have his own issues to deal with. Again, there is a comprehensive package on the table and we have to work with our industry as we transition.

A regional economic enhancement package will include the development of additional infrastructure within the marine park—boat ramps and artificial reefs—to support fishing and tourism opportunities. That is a really important part of this. I take this opportunity to again highlight the serious issue of the much overdue replacement of the Walkers Point boat ramp—you never let a chance go by. This is identified as the No. 1 marine infrastructure project needing replacement in Queensland, and it was identified in the government's own consultant's report. It is time that Walkers Point has a new boat ramp.

Based on the findings of the review, the Queensland government has approved a range of zoning and management changes that will be included in the final zoning plan. These changes are detailed in a decision regulatory impact statement. The website also has a range of other resources, including a summary of key changes, zoning maps and other information to assist people's understanding of the effects of the zoning changes in the marine park. It is complex, and those who want to take the time should familiarise themselves with these changes. The legislative process to formalise these changes to the zoning plan are in progress and the new zoning plan is expected to take effect in early 2024. It will revoke parts of the Great Sandy Marine Park containing an area of about 26 hectares, including areas surrounding 12 existing public boating facilities.

In speaking to the revocation of public boating infrastructure, I will target those areas in the electorate of Burnett. The Kolan River boat ramp will be targeted within 30 metres of the north bank adjacent to the Miara caravan park—those people up there will welcome that. Burkitt Street, Bargara will also be excluded and Esplanade at Innes Park. The boat ramp pontoon in the Elliot River will also be part of this.

In closing—I want to give others a chance to talk to this, as we only have 50 minutes—it is important to acknowledge the three ministers. I do not do this very often, but the former chief of staff to the department, Nick, was always there to discuss this with me over the three or four years this has been going on. He does need to be acknowledged in this process. I believed that he had moved on to another portfolio, but Nick was talking about this only yesterday so I give a shout-out to him. This is a good revocation and a good piece of work. We look forward to making sure that boating infrastructure gets funding and the locations sorted out so we can continue to enjoy the Great Sandy Marine Park.