




Speech By
Tony Perrett

MEMBER FOR GYMPIE

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Seafood Industry

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (2.50 pm): The agriculture and fisheries minister's incompetence is crippling Queensland's iconic seafood industry. The pain is being inflicted on not just commercial fishers, the businesses they support, their families and communities; it will be felt by every Queenslanders. The detrimental flow-on will impact our tourism and hospitality sectors. Queenslanders will pay the price at the check-out because the government is consumed by a culture of chaos and crisis, hiding from scrutiny, obsession with media management and self-congratulations.

For several years the minister has undermined the fishing industry with drastic regulatory decisions which lack transparency around stock assessment processes, lack supporting evidence around scientific reasons and biomass assessments and lack fairness regarding compensation packages. There is a refusal to consider regulatory impact statements. The minister ignores the pleas of industry for genuine consultation and a seat at the table as these decisions are being made.

The government fears the truth. The government's obsession with trashing Queensland's fishing industry will result in massive increases in the price of our fresh local seafood. Good, clean, fresh Queensland fish will be substituted with imported fish from countries where sustainable practices are not even followed. Substitution is the goal. The minister loves a self-appointed title. Others have bestowed on him the 'Friend of the Fire Ant' and, with the obsession with substitution, yesterday he was anointed 'Mark "Fine Cotton" Furner'.

Gillnet fishing will be phased out by the end of this year, in just over three months time. The government is so consumed by its own chaos and crisis that no-one consulted fishers about these sweeping changes to gillnet fishing zones. They learned about it in news reports and were given no opportunity to provide feedback. The minister has form—this is not the first time he has hidden from commercial fishers. Their industry association, the QSIA, has been completely blindsided and left without a seat at the table. The minister's botched decisions are exacerbated by his continual refusal to complete regulatory impact statements.

The latest devastation is being wreaked on gulf communities such as Karumba and Normanton—areas my colleague the member for Nanango recently visited and heard directly from. The proposed changes lack meaningful consultation. They will have significant impacts on small and family businesses in the gulf and will cripple gulf communities. This has absolutely nothing to do with protecting the Great Barrier Reef; it is in the gulf. Queenslanders and industry recognise the need for sustainable fishing practices to ensure protection of our iconic fish species. It makes sense for commercial fishers. If the practices are not sustainable, they will be out of a job. It is clear that this minister is out of his depth. The failure to stand up for an industry he is supposed to represent is incompetence at best.