




Speech By
Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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ADJOURNMENT

Mudjimba Island

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (7.08 pm): I table a petition with over 1,000 signatories on behalf of my community in the fight to protect the beautiful coral reef around Mudjimba Island.

Tabled paper: Nonconforming petition regarding boats dropping anchors around Mudjimba Island and causing significant damage to the coral reef [419](#).

This petition is calling for the Queensland state government to urgently act to install much needed permanent moorings which boaties can use to protect the coral reef by stopping the dropping of their anchors on the coral below while still maintaining public access in safety. Together with my community, I am strongly advocating for the protection of the coral reef around Mudjimba Island, just off the coast from Mudjimba on the Sunshine Coast. I back my community, who are asking the government to do the right thing to protect this precious coral reef. This is why they asked for the moorings.

The island is a conservation park but the marine area surrounding it is not protected from the damage that is being caused by the growing numbers of boats dropping anchor on the reef below. We want to protect the coral reef and maintain safe access for the public by the provision of these moorings. That is why last year I took a deputation of concerned citizens to the environment department and the minister's office here at Parliament House. The minister's office promised a feasibility study to look into the issue. This week the minister responded, saying that, instead of the moorings which the community requested, they will install six reef protection markers around Mudjimba Island to advise people where they can anchor without damaging the reef.

The minister's media statement also claimed there was no evidence of damage to the reef which local divers dispute. The government should release the feasibility report to explain why the minister believes this is the right solution, whether these markers will have the effect the community wants—which is to protect the reef—what other options were considered and why they were rejected. I quote from one of the local dive community members who said—

Moorings would provide a practical solution for both vessel, reef protection, and safety, especially during strong northerly winds. They would allow boats to operate on the opposite side of the island, sheltered from the winds, without the risk of anchor drag. Our community strongly believes that moorings are the best and final solution, and they can be implemented quickly.

That is why there has been disappointment with the minister's announcement and that the full information has not been released. There are still genuine concerns about whether this will in fact stop the damage. There is also concern that the damage that the diving community have told me about has not been acknowledged. I ask the minister to please release this feasibility report, to explain the information and to engage with the community. They are concerned. We want to see this area properly protected.