




Speech By
Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Record of Proceedings, 18 February 2025

TRANSPORT OPERATIONS (MARINE SAFETY) LEGISLATION AMENDMENT REGULATION

Disallowance of Statutory Instrument

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (5.05 pm): I rise tonight to speak against the disallowance motion. The Gladstone region that I represent has one of the largest number of boats registered in Queensland and Australia's largest family fishing festival to go with it. I must say, the support on the water during the Boyne Tannum Hookup is second to none, with daily life jacket demonstrations and our water police using positive enforcement on the water, particularly focusing on life jacket safety and those updated flares that you need in your boat.

It is vitally important that when governments legislate that they do it taking into consideration all of Queensland, not just individual electorates, including regulations that require life jackets to be worn by people boating alone or with children under 12 years in an open boat less than 4.8 metres in length whilst underway; by people boating between sunset and sunrise in an open boat less than 4.8 metres in length whilst underway; also by people crossing a designated coastal bar in an open boat, as well as in any open area such as the deck of a ship, of any length; and by children aged one year or more and under 12 years when in an open boat or in the open area of a boat—such as the deck of a ship—of any length whilst underway.

The Queensland coastline is certainly vast and has extremely dangerous coastal bars, reefs and river systems which have taken the lives of boaties trying to navigate these dangerous waterways. It is not acceptable that 16 people have lost their lives in maritime related instances. I also acknowledge that our Volunteer Marine Rescue continues to do an amazing job in supporting our local communities whilst on the water. The work that they do can be traumatic when vessels become distressed or sink, as the rescue of people is their primary objective. The use of life jackets is a real way that boaties can lessen the risk of drowning when they run into trouble. When talking about life jackets, I have had the opportunity to wear and also to inflate the new-style flotation devices that are now available. Modern life jackets are nowhere near as bulky and cumbersome as previous styles and are designed to be lightweight and also slimline to make going about your trip as safe and as comfortable as possible.

As an avid fisher, I get the chance to get out on the southern Great Barrier Reef for a fish, but I must admit that it is a bit rarer these days. Tonight I would like to share with the chamber a personal story of a near capsizing experience when I was on a local boat that was trying to enter through the crossing bar at 1770 with my mate, who is a very experienced boatie, at the helm. We had been out to the reef and on returning, with the sun going down, the tide and wind were playing against us as we attempted that crossing. The boat dug in and turned, leaving the vessel turned on its side and we were within seconds and inches of ending up in the water with a large aluminium vessel that could have created a seriously dangerous situation for us while we were in the water without flotation support. I do acknowledge that this near miss happened before the regulations were passed and that we were not

wearing life jackets. This is just one example of how a great day out on the water here in Queensland can soon turn into a tragic day. I believe that the use of life jackets as indicated in the regulation is vital to help Queenslanders stay safe on the water, not just in selected electorates.