

Question on Notice

No. 441

Asked on 28 March 2019

MR S KING ASKED MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise how the new Sustainable Fishing Strategy will help to curb fishing from protected areas in Moreton Bay?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

Moreton Bay is a critical ecosystem, home to a vast array of marine habitats, plants and animals. It also plays an important role in our economy and lifestyle, being accessible to around three million people living in the south east region of Queensland. The Sustainable Fisheries Strategy recognises that fisheries resources and fish habitats are highly valued by the Queensland community, and commits to boosting compliance to protect fisheries resources.

The Government has invested \$20 million for the first three years in delivering the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy. This investment has funded 20 new compliance officers and biological monitoring of species important in Moreton Bay such as eastern king prawn, blue swimmer crab and juvenile snapper.

One of the key compliance actions under the Strategy is the requirement for vessel tracking on all commercial fishing boats by 2020. The net, line and crab fisheries were identified as priorities with all boats in these fisheries required to install vessel tracking from 1 January 2019.

Vessel tracking paves the way for a world-class fisheries management system by assisting with on-water compliance; validating logbook data to improve the accuracy of information; and assisting with monitoring the sustainability of fish stocks.

The requirement for vessel tracking is an important step in increasing compliance with marine park rules, such as in the Moreton Bay Marine Park. Vessel tracking data will be provided under strict conditions to compliance partners like Marine Parks, to assist with on water compliance within protected areas.

Recent changes to the *Fisheries Act 1994* have strengthened compliance powers and penalties by addressing serious fisheries offences and black marketing issues.