



Speech by

Dr Mark Robinson

MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND

Hansard Thursday, 11 February 2010

MORETON BAY, ARTIFICIAL REEFS

Dr ROBINSON (Cleveland—LNP) (11.08 pm): I bring to the attention of the House the government's promise of artificial reefs for Moreton Bay. Before the last election at a press conference on 16 December at Wellington Point in my electorate of Cleveland, the then sustainability minister promised \$1 million for the creation of three artificial reefs as part of the government's marine park plan for Moreton Bay. In the LNP, we agreed with this element of the marine park and thought it was a good policy.

The impetus to build these artificial reefs came from various recreational and commercial fishing groups and individual fishers during the drafting of the government's bill. Fishing groups voiced their disapproval towards the most contentious elements of the Moreton Bay Marine Park plan, particularly the green zones, commonly referred to by the local fishers as 'green preference zones'. The idea was that fishermen, particularly anglers, would be recompensed for the loss of the estimated 70 to 80 per cent of the best fishing areas, or the fish-rich areas of the bay, to the marine national park—and this was around 16 per cent of the actual geographic region—by the construction of these new artificial reefs.

The reefs, made from granite and imported German concrete, would be quickly colonised by marine life and would prove to be excellent fishing spots in a short period of time. Notwithstanding the fact that calling the three artificial reefs an acceptable offset for the loss of large amounts of fish-rich areas is a farce, this was the government's rationale. However, to date, the only work that has been carried out is the initial small drop of granite stone at Harry Atkinson Reef that took place a few days before the minister's press conference. Since then, no further progress has been made.

I recently met with local fishing identity Ben Collins, who had this to say about the missing artificial reefs—

It is obvious recreational anglers were once again blindsided by the Labor government in a blatant political stunt to grab Green votes. With the broken promise of developing three artificial reefs in and around Moreton Bay, the Labor government has indicated how they truly feel about recreational anglers. While the majority of viable and productive fishing areas have been zoned 'green', little or nothing has been done to increase the fish stocks through the development of these artificial reefs. This once again highlights Labor's mismanagement of a very important recreation that extends to the tackle, fishing and boating industries.

Ben is representative of the many anglers in my electorate and elsewhere who are disillusioned with this government. They are still waiting for their artificial reefs, and I today again call on the sustainability minister to keep this Bligh government promise for Moreton Bay.