



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND

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RECREATIONAL FISHING

Dr ROBINSON (Cleveland—LNP) (12.13 am): I rise to speak about the government's failure to handle fishing issues in Moreton Bay. Last sitting week I spoke about the planned sinking of the *Tiwi Pearl* boat at the already existing Harry Atkinson Reef. This 24-metre boat has been dubbed the '*SS Minnow*' for its miniature size. The government calls it fair compensation to recreational fishers for the loss of 70 to 80 per cent of the best fishing spots in the bay. While a good number of anglers do support artificial reefs, as does the LNP, they see them as a small consolation prize, not fair compensation.

The '*SS Minnow*' will be sunk later this month amid claims that the government is looking after, and has the backing of, recreational fishermen. However, it has been rumoured that the sinking event will be held on the same weekend as the Tinnie and Tackle Show, a major recreational fishing event. The reason for the timing clash is obvious: the government does not want anglers to attend the sinking and to protest against the government's anti-fishing policies. It is another example of the sneakiness of this government—pretending to support fishermen but waiting until the coast is clear before venturing into their territory. Like the premier during the election, the Minister for Sustainability will venture bayside without any local support, all the while pretending that the green preference zoning is popular. The fishers of Queensland see through this peewee Tiwi plan and continue to condemn this anti-fishing government.

I want to wind the clock back to a time before March 2009, when the government's green preference deal was imposed on Moreton Bay. In mid-2008, scientific research of the state of the fishery was provided by the fisheries department to the EPA to provide the foundation for the zoning. If the fisheries data showed that the fish stock was in severe decline and likely to be devastated, then tough measures could potentially be justified in order to return the bay to a sustainable situation. But what do we find? The fisheries minister, Minister Mulherin, during estimates on 24 July 2008 stated that his department would provide a range of data including fisheries catch and effort data for the EPA's review of the marine park plan. He went on to then make an amazing admission based on the data his department provided the EPA. The minister said, 'My department has no major concerns about the sustainability of fish stocks in the Moreton Bay Marine Park.' The minister's admission reveals that he knew the fish stock was not in major decline and not needing saving or strong protection measures. The minister's admission shows that the government's policy was not based on any fisheries science but was purely the result of a green preference deal stitched up beforehand. I invite Minister Mulherin in his next ministerial statement to explain whether he still stands by his positive statement about the fish stocks in the bay and why the EPA ignored the data his department provided.

It is time the government does more than tinker at the edges of the fishing problem it created, scraps its current unpopular plan that locks anglers out of fish-rich areas, tells the truth about the scientific research and puts a fair and more appropriate plan in place for Moreton Bay.