



Speech by

## Dr Mark Robinson

MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND

Hansard Thursday, 17 February 2011

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### SNAPPER, FISHING BANS

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (11.12 pm): I rise to report to parliament about a fishing event in the Redlands that raises concerns about the way this government is treating the fishers of Cleveland and surrounds and the 750,000 individuals across Queensland who fish. On Monday, 14 February Fisheries Queensland hosted a meeting at the Redlands Bowls Club, Victoria Point to explain the government's four options in the snapper regulatory impact statement.

The meeting was attended by 150 local people including members from recreational fishing groups such as Sunfish and Ecofishers; charter boat operators; commercial fishers; Fisheries Queensland staff and the managing director, Jim Groves; the shadow fisheries minister, Ray Hopper; the member for Redlands, Peter Dowling; the federal member for Bowman, Andrew Laming; and me. No Labor MPs or Greens representatives were in attendance.

During a lengthy Q&A period, the mood in the room became one of mistrust towards the government, disbelief of the government's claim that the science shows that snapper are overfished, anger, frustration and rejection of the future four-month snapper bans in the options. The impact of regular four-month bans would be significant. The bans would decimate the charter boat small businesses in my electorate and elsewhere and deeply hurt recreational fishing tourism in Moreton Bay.

Fisheries Queensland could not rule out the four-month bans starting in June this year. This is at a time when local tourist operators and marine industries are struggling to recover from the worst floods in our state's history. This would be kicking Queenslanders when they are down.

Dr Barry Pollock, president of Queensland's peak recreational fishing body, Sunfish, was at the meeting. His views are outlined in a Sunfish brochure that individuals can fill in and send to the Premier. The brochure reads—

Dear Premier,

I am extremely concerned by the proposals released by Minister Mulherin for the management of Snapper and other rocky reef fish species.

1. The latest scientific review found that the exact status of Snapper stocks is uncertain due to the limitations of available data
2. It is misleading for the Minister to state unequivocally that Snapper stocks are severely depleted
3. Claims of good Snapper catches by recreational Snapper fishers have been disregarded by Fisheries Qld
4. Snapper stocks must remain sustainable through sensible management measures

I urge the State government to reconsider the validity of this extreme and unwarranted management plan.

Finally, the government has been caught out trying to sneak the current six-week snapper ban into Queensland just days before Christmas. It did this to escape public attention and avoid appropriate debate in the parliament. I urge the government to not delay the debate on the LNP's disallowance motion related to this ban. It would be a cowardly and cynical thing to postpone the debate until after the current six-week ban is over.

In closing, like the tremor before the full earthquake hits, the greater concern among Queensland's 750,000 recreational fishers is that Labor's six-week ban is just the beginning of tougher measures to come, as early as June this year.