



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND

Hansard Thursday, 4 August 2011

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL AND APPROPRIATION BILL:
ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENERGY
COMMITTEE**

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (6.01 pm): I rise to speak to the report for the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee. I will focus my comments on fisheries matters. As with my experience in the Main Roads and Marine Infrastructure sessions, the minister was most uncooperative and rarely answered the questions. The session demonstrated why recreational fishers do not trust this antifishing Labor government: because it just cannot provide a straight answer to fishing questions. The government says it is for recreational fishers, but it does them over at every chance. The government says it is for recreational fishers, yet this Labor government imposed annual snapper bans on them. The government says it is for recreational fishers, yet after receiving survey data from these fishermen about their catches the government slapped no-fishing zones on their favourite fishing spots. The government says it is for recreational fishers, yet it plans to tax recreational fishers to catch snapper.

Estimates was important as very little public information is made available about the fisheries department, Fisheries Queensland. It is bundled up with DEEDI figures in the budget documents and not separately itemised, so it is very difficult to find anything. The minister's attempt to answer a question on the DPI and Fisheries website about snapper stock reports revealed that the website is five months out of date. The *Help protect Queensland's snapper* report was well out of date. The latest edition of this report on snapper was issue 9, which was published on 17 February 2011—that is over five months ago—and there has been no new issue since. Why is the website five months out of date when there are over 300 public servants in Fisheries Queensland? This is clearly not good enough.

Why did the minister stop producing snapper update reports in February? Is it because the government wants to hide the fact that Labor MPs voted in the parliament to ban snapper in a March 2011 vote and then claimed to have changed their mind at a later date? When asked directly how the minister voted in the snapper ban disallowance motion in March, the minister refused to acknowledge the fact, recorded in *Hansard*, that he did vote for snapper bans, as did his Labor colleagues. For the record, the LNP MPs voted to stop Labor's snapper bans. These are indisputable facts. This government cannot even tell the truth of what happened on that day in the parliament, and if it cannot own up to that and get it right how can it be believed on anything to do with recreational fishing? The government will continue its snapper bans after an election, no matter what it says before the election. Like the petrol tax and the asset sales, it will be one story before the election and another after. Not only will the government continue its annual snapper bans, but it will increase its no-fishing zones for recreational fishers from 2012 onwards after the election should this Greens-controlled Labor government be returned.

The government has form on this issue. It has shown that bans and closures to recreational fishers are part of its DNA. It has done it before and it will do it again. The pattern last time was that it locked recreational fishers out of their best fishing spots in Moreton Bay after it conducted recreational fishing surveys. It established through those surveys the most frequented fishing areas and then it dropped no-fishing zones on those fishing spots. Needless to say, recreational fishers felt aggrieved that without

scientific basis this government deceived them about the intent of the surveys and then used their openness and that data to take from them their favourite fish-rich spots. Now the government is conducting another fishing survey on the eve of another election. No need to guess how recreational fishers feel about this. Despite my encouragement for recreational fishers to support the fishing surveys, as the data is important to have, many refuse to participate because trust in this government has been shattered. The recreational fishers believe that the data collection is a means of the government imposing more no-fishing zones, and you cannot blame them! The recreational fishers are also fearful of the government imposing a recreational fishing licence since it has been considering a snapper tax.

The minister did not really want to also talk about the carbon tax and its impact, because what we are going to find is that the flow-on effect is that the cost to go fishing will go up—bait will go up, ice will go up, tackle will go up, rods and reels will go up, as will the price to buy a boat. No wonder recreational fishermen hate this government! The cost of the Fisheries Queensland department will go up. The cost to buy fresh fish will go up. Why does the government hate our local fishermen when these prices will go up automatically, and it knows it? It is like a wrecking ball to jobs.

(Time expired)