



Speech by

## Dr Mark Robinson

MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND

Hansard Tuesday, 27 November 2012

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### RECREATIONAL FISHING

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (11.53 am): Queensland is a great state with great opportunities for recreational fishers. The Newman government is getting on with delivering for recreational fishers in Cleveland and all over Queensland. As promised, we are delivering on the net licence buyback that has great benefit to both recreational fishers and commercial fishers. The Marine Infrastructure Fund established by the LNP government will deliver new boat ramps, pontoons, fishing platforms, artificial reefs and other measures for Queensland's population of almost one million recreational fishers and boaties. And we are working with the state's fishing organisations and clubs to deliver good outcomes. I commend the Minister for Fisheries for his good work in this regard.

We have also stuck to our promise that in government we would not create any new marine reserves nor increase the area of marine national parks—green zones that have unfairly locked out recreational fishers. This is a promise that the government is making good on. We have said 'no more' to international green groups who want to stop sustainable recreational fishing. This government is protecting the rights of recreational fishers in Queensland's state waters. We are also standing with our federal colleagues in opposing the federal government's draconian bioregional marine reserves that will have little real environmental benefit but will destroy the livelihood of hundreds of small fishing business families, damage the Queensland economy and strip recreational fishers of the right to fish sustainably.

I have been an advocate of recreational fishing long before I entered this chamber in 2009. I learned to fish with my father from aged five, and through my marine science degree I learnt how we can fish sustainably. I believe strongly that the rights of recreational fishers in Queensland to access the best fishing areas and to fish sustainably must be secured, protected and restored wherever possible by applying more scrutiny, accountability and evidence based approaches to Queensland's state marine reserve system. The trend to needlessly lock away good fishing areas from recreational fishing activity has now been stopped in Queensland's state waters. But I believe we need to go further and implement approaches that support accessibility and accountability with an evidence base using risk assessment approaches. That is why I was happy to be the sponsoring member to an e-petition tabled today from a recreational fisherman, Tim Whittle, in my electorate of Cleveland that would achieve this aim. The issue is that the rights of recreational fishers in the last five years have been trampled on as governments have caved in to pressure from Greens politics and internationally funded green groups like the Pew foundation.

Green politics has created three falsehoods: (1) that there are no fish left in Queensland and that we are fishing unsustainably; (2) that the Queensland mum and dad recreational fishers are vandals of the sea; and (3) that the only solution is to lock recreational fishers out through the blunt instrument and the one-size-fits-all approach of marine reserve. This myopic approach has resulted in the latest federal government plan to create the world's biggest no-fishing area all around Australia. More marine reserves is all they know, and they are rolling them out without any evidence base that they are best practice. In fact, in the face of recent evidence, they are not working well when it comes to fisheries management—a point that I will take up in the parliament at a future opportunity.

With respect to federal waters, I applaud Tony Abbott for showing leadership, balance and characteristic pragmatism on this issue federally, with the introduction of the private member's bill the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Making Marine Parks Accountable) Bill 2012. The opposition leader and coalition ministers for fisheries and the environment, together with Queensland Senator Ron Boswell and Queensland MP George Christensen and others, have put together this bill and introduced it into the federal parliament to make marine reserves more accountable to fishers and the community. While Tony Abbott is proposing practical conservation that protects the rights of recreational fishers and that supports marine industries, the Queensland seafood industry and local jobs, the federal government is proposing the largest fishing lockout area in the world. I urge federal Environment Minister Burke to reject the controls of foreign international green groups and the Senate Greens and to reverse his job-destroying decision.

And this new round of marine reserves will not be the end. We know that the same international green groups want more. More deals will be done—for example, the temperate east zone from northern New South Wales and waters outside Moreton Bay to Hervey Bay. These will follow, but it must stop. While the process cannot be undone, there needs to be considerably more flexible management options that better meet marine biodiversity and fisheries management—for example, easing restrictions in carefully selected marine national parks. This would have many benefits. This more open approach would assist with getting tourism back on track, it would create more jobs and it would also get our national parks back on track. In conclusion, the LNP is getting on with delivering for recreational fishers.

*(Time expired)*