



Speech By
Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Record of Proceedings, 22 August 2019

TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (3.25 pm): I too rise to address the committee report titled *Inquiry into a sustainable Queensland intrastate shipping industry*. I do so for a number of reasons. First, like the member for Kurwongbah and others, I am a little bit dismayed at the decline in our intrastate shipping. When we think that just outside this chamber is the model of the *Lucinda* we realise that in a bygone era shipping was the only way many in this chamber could have got to or from their electorates or service parts of the Queensland population. We have seen it progressively eroded with the introduction of rail, road and air services, which now largely lead our freight transport means across this state. We are missing an incredible opportunity through our intrastate shipping.

I echo the benefits listed by my colleague the member for Chatsworth in terms of how the opportunities really are sitting there—opportunities that shipping can provide that road, rail and air freight simply cannot. I do welcome this, but I also welcome it for a couple of other reasons. Within the portfolio of state development, manufacturing, infrastructure and planning sit a couple of strategies that over the years have enjoyed bipartisan support, including the superyacht strategy and growing the defence industry. I point out that, whilst we in this state recently had some success around Land defence contracts, we have gone begging in terms of some of the maritime contracts. Recently, I was at the launch of the world's largest ship hoist at BSE Maritime in Cairns, a private investment that is ready to take up the opportunities that renewed interest in intrastate shipping, superyachts and other defence maintenance contracts could potentially provide.

As others have said, the Queensland maritime industry is large and diverse—so much so that even in the electorate of Glass House are individuals who work in the industry. I acknowledge one good friend, Peter Nicholson from Wamuran, who works for AkzoNoble. AkzoNoble provide marine paints to a range of service providers the length and breadth of Queensland. Indeed, in his sales position Peter is often on the road. Peter has a lot to say on the report and has provided some comments on the recommendations. Like us all, he also acknowledged a responsibility of the Commonwealth government. Quite literally, this afternoon he is meeting with Terry Young, his new LNP member for Longman, to discuss the opportunities that the Commonwealth may have around the Coastal Trading Act.

As Peter identified, there are already a number of training providers in the state. There are new vessel manufacturers—companies such as Aus Ships and Aluminium Marine—and marine engineering consultants that specialise in high-speed aluminium vessels. As I mentioned, there are maintenance facilities along the Queensland seaboard that really would benefit from a reinvigorated intrastate shipping industry.

In terms of the recommendations, in recommendation 1 the committee recommends the Minister for Transport and Main Roads encourage industry to use Australian seafarers where at all possible and investment methods to provide incentives. Peter believes this is a bit of a no-brainer. It is the

implementation that is the hard part and, again, why this afternoon he is meeting with my federal colleague Terry Young to talk about the Commonwealth's responsibility in terms of that Coastal Trading Act. Recommendation 2 states—

The committee recommends that, in order to protect against expected skills shortages, the Minister for Transport and Main Roads together, with federal and interstate jurisdictions, investigate methods of expanding the maritime industry to provide training opportunities.

Peter has rightly pointed out that there are countless numbers of private businesses already in existence in Queensland and other states that provide training to help people into the industry. It is not a case of reinventing the wheel; it is a case of working alongside those existing providers and perhaps stimulating their opportunities in attracting new entrants to the maritime industry. Recommendation 3 states—

The committee recommends the Department of Transport and Main Roads works with port authorities to reduce potential barriers to allow for an expanded intrastate shipping trade.

Peter says—

A good recommendation, as the barriers will vary widely for varying types of cargo. Many barriers like the efficiencies of the modern road freight system are significant, but the opportunities with heavy equipment, bulk resources and remote locations should be continually assessed.

I want to finish by touching on the recommendation around Cape York Peninsula and the Torres Strait Islands. Peter says—

Some of these smaller ports have vessel size restrictions, or the port may have berthing and unloading facility shortfalls.

He likens it to trying to park a B-double out the back of IGA Maleny. It is fit for size and fit for purpose. We need to look at ways we can expand on that, grow the industry and see freight opportunities around this state take off by taking on intrastate shipping.