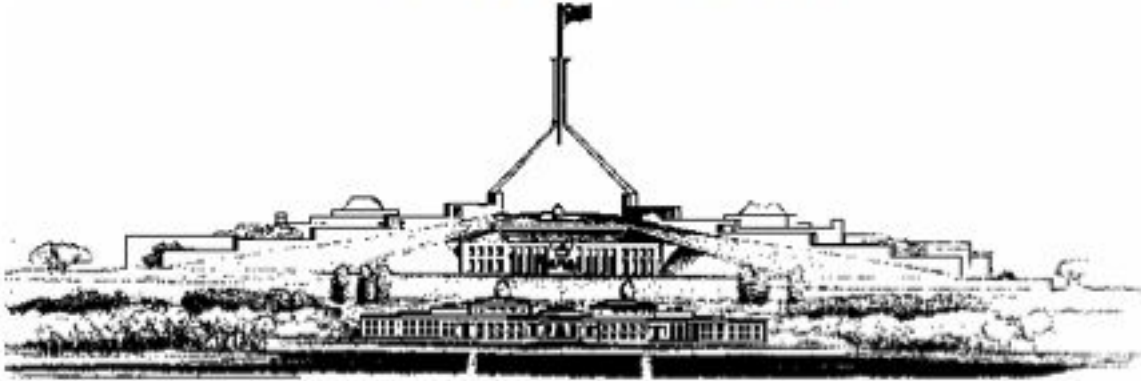




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Queensland Recreational Fishing Programs

SPEECH

Monday, 26 November 2012

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Monday, 26 November 2012
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Questioner
Speaker Cobb, John, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Mr JOHN COBB (Calare) (11:45): I rise to speak on this motion with amazement. I cannot believe the barefaced cheek of the member for Capricornia in daring to point the finger at the Queensland government when, without doubt, the biggest threat to recreational fishing is the federal Labor government. It reminds me of the statement the member for Griffith, Kevin Rudd, made before the 2007 election. He said: 'The Howard government's reckless spending must stop.' Isn't that a joke! The Howard government inherited a \$96 billion national government debt, which we turned into an unencumbered \$20 billion surplus. In comparison, Labor turned the \$20 billion surplus into a very greatly encumbered \$150 billion black hole in considerably less than five years. Labor's mismanagement of the country has included live exports, the super trawler, pink batts et cetera, not to mention the mining tax, which is a new low even for them—a tax which ended up costing the government money.

For the Labor Party, the reality is irrelevant as long as you tell the public you are doing the right thing. The member for Capricornia's motion is surely an own goal. Labor and Minister Burke are clearly the bigger threats to recreational fishing. It was the member for Watson, as Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, who removed all funding from the recreational fishing peak body, Recfish, in 2010, an act that was surely revenge for Recfish's daring to question the minister and lobby against the minister to try to bring some common sense into this debate. It was Minister Burke as fisheries minister who refused to take phone calls over the government's decision to ban mako shark fishing in 2010. He hid. And it was Minister Burke as Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities who has locked up another 2.3 million square kilometres of Australia's oceans. The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences socioeconomic analysis into the impact of this massive lockup of ocean did not even consider recreational fishers. Recreational fishers, understandably, are not that happy with the federal government. There is no compensation for recreational fishers and the associated fishing industry, boat shops, tackle shops and the communities they support.

We are not just being critical. You may ask: what will we do? The coalition supports maritime protection that is based on peer reviewed science and developed in consultation with the community, and that clearly includes recreational fishers. We recognise that Australia's fisheries are amongst the best managed in the world. The coalition is committed to restoring balance and a future coalition government will appoint a science based panel to review all boundaries and all zones. The coalition has introduced a 'Making marine parks accountable' amendment to the EPBC Act into the parliament. This legislation requires the environment minister to commission an independent social and economic impact assessment before any proclamations are made, obtain independent peer reviewed scientific advice before making any proclamations and for this advice to be publicly available, and establish independent scientific reference panels and stakeholder advisory groups for each region to ensure rigorous decision making. The proclamation of many reserves will be disallowable, meaning it will be subject to the scrutiny of both houses of the Australian parliament. The coalition in opposition is doing what the government should be doing in government: implementing sound policy.

What has Labor really done for recreational fishers? It has ignored their phone calls. It has pitted stakeholder groups against one another—fishing against environment, even recreational fishing interests against commercial fishing interests. They have locked Aussies out of Australian oceans.

Honourable members interjecting—

They have completely removed funding from the recreational fishers' peak industry body in an act of revenge. They have failed to understand or even investigate the impact of marine parks on recreational fishers and the important economic contribution recreational fishing makes to coastal communities. They have pandered to the whims of green groups ahead of Australia's recreational fishing communities. They have changed the laws to suit their political purpose rather than sound science. Labor is no friend of recreational or any other fishers and this motion is a sham. (*Time expired*)