



Speech by

**Andrew Cripps**

**MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK**

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## **MOURILYAN HARBOUR BOAT RAMP AND JETTY**

**Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (10.00 pm): Tonight I wish to draw to the attention of the House the current problems with boating infrastructure at Mourilyan Harbour. I am extremely frustrated by this situation which can best be described as nothing less than a debacle. Queensland Transport and the Ports Corporation of Queensland appear to be in a bureaucratic Mexican stand-off while recreational and commercial fishermen go without basic boating infrastructure.

Despite a briefing today from Queensland Transport staff, for which I am grateful, I could secure no definite answers about when the current problems with the Mourilyan Harbour jetty or the Mourilyan Harbour boat ramp would be resolved between Queensland Transport and the Ports Corporation of Queensland. For months I have been making inquiries with both Queensland Transport and the Ports Corporation about when my constituents could expect work to start on the upgrade of the Mourilyan Harbour boat ramp which has been an ongoing concern for many years.

Late last week local commercial fishing operators contacted me after learning that Queensland Transport intended to remove the lower landing on the Mourilyan Harbour jetty and erect new side railings on the jetty that would restrict access by vehicles used to load and unload commercial fishing vessels. There are many people in the local community, commercial operators and recreational fishermen who are as frustrated as I am. They are not asking for rolled gold infrastructure, just a wharf that can accommodate their loading and unloading needs and a boat ramp where boaties can safely launch and retrieve their vessels.

The wharf is the only all-weather, all-tide facility between Cairns and Townsville that can be used to load fuel and unload a commercial catch. Many people rely on the commercial fishing industry in the Innisfail district. This issue is about jobs and the livelihoods of local families. For them this situation is a nightmare. If nothing is done we will lose these jobs to other ports.

Fishermen cannot use the Johnstone River in all weather conditions and in all tides because it is full of silt and the state government has refused to allow the river to be dredged. Even if they could get in at all times they could not use the Innisfail jetty because it has been closed for some time. Now they have restricted access to the Mourilyan Harbour jetty. I am very concerned that this has occurred without any apparent consultation.

I am also alarmed by the recent indication from Queensland Transport that repairing the lower landing area of the Mourilyan jetty could be contingent on the outcome of current negotiations between the department and the Ports Corporation about the Mourilyan boat ramp. Commercial and recreational fishermen pay their fees for their licences and the registration of their vessels respectively. Fisherman should be able to expect that basic boating infrastructure will be provided and will be maintained so that it can be used by the public safely.

I have sought support from the member for Mulgrave and have drawn the issue to the attention of the minister for transport. I call on Queensland Transport and the Ports Corporation of Queensland to come to an agreement to both repair the Mourilyan Harbour jetty and relocate and upgrade the Mourilyan Harbour boat ramp.