



Speech by

Andrew Cripps

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

Hansard Wednesday, 18 August 2010

MOTION: RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL FISHING

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (6.28 pm): When the people of Australia found out in mid July that the Gillard Labor government and the Greens had entered into a preference deal for the coming federal election, many started to get concerned about what Labor had promised the Greens in return for their preferences. It is no surprise that the disconcertedness and the deep sense of foreboding has been the most acute in Queensland, because many Queenslanders were suddenly struck by a terrible sense of déjà vu. It was as if the story of the last Queensland state election was repeating itself. Just as the Bligh Labor government struck a preference deal with the Greens before the last state election, the Gillard Labor government has now struck a preference deal with the Greens ahead of the coming federal election. I represent the electorate of Hinchinbrook in North Queensland and North Queensland has suffered badly after the re-election of the Bligh Labor government, with the implementation of the policies that were part of its deal with the Greens in return for their preferences.

In North Queensland Labor has extended the wild rivers declarations across vast tracts of Cape York Peninsula. It has introduced the so-called reef protection regulations that are set to keep canegrowers and graziers filling out paperwork for several hours a day without any justification instead of undertaking basic farming activities. Labor has also introduced a ban on the management of regrowth vegetation and created buffer zones that will result in lost production.

All of these new layers of regulation and red tape have come in in North Queensland within 12 months of the last state election because the Bligh government did a preference deal with the Greens. North Queensland will again be in the firing line if the Gillard Labor government is re-elected and the terms of its preference deal with the Greens are implemented. Now that the Gillard Labor government has done a deal with the Greens, what can we expect in the 12 months after the coming federal election? We can certainly expect that the Labor-Green alliance will force through an emissions trading scheme. We can also certainly expect that the Labor-Green alliance will impose a super profits tax on the mining industry.

But the Labor-Green alliance will not be content with targeting our major industries with new taxes. Tonight's motion focuses on the fact that the Labor-Green alliance is also looking to impose restrictions on one of the iconic aspects of our lifestyle in North Queensland with the proposal to turn one million square kilometres of the Coral Sea into a no-take marine park and around Australia close off a minimum of 30 per cent of Australia's waters from all types of fishing, both recreational and commercial. These so-called bioregions have been developed and extended out of the declaration of the Coral Sea Conservation Zone by the federal Labor environment minister, Peter Garrett, who took this extraordinary decision following lobbying from the American based Pew Environmental Group.

I heard the Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland in question time here yesterday claiming that these no-take zones were being developed through a consultation process with stakeholder groups. That is a breathtakingly dishonest statement because the Coral Sea Conservation Zone was declared without any impact statement. It was declared without any consultation and without any scientific process. The federal Labor government completely capitulated to the demands of a foreign lobby group and announced the establishment of a massive conservation zone in the Coral Sea off the coast of North Queensland. Minister Garrett arrogantly imposed the Coral Sea

Conservation Zone on North Queenslanders without even pretending to consult with us. The claim by Minister Mulherin that there has been consultation is fraudulent and fabricated.

The rights and interests of commercial fishing families, of charter boat operators and of everyday Queenslanders to pursue that most simple of recreational activities—going fishing—have been completely sold out. The future of businesses attached to commercial and recreational fishing, such as bait and tackle shops, boat retailers, seafood wholesalers and retailers, restaurants, fish and chip shops that prefer to serve quality, domestically sought seafood and the tourism industry that are critical for North Queensland's economy, have been compromised by the Labor-Green alliance.

It is a disgrace that the Bligh Labor government has proven itself to be the lackey of the Gillard Labor government. Labor MPs ought to be ashamed of themselves for selling out their constituents. North Queenslanders have seen the obscene results of the preference deal between the Bligh Labor government and the Greens at a state level. I shudder to think what North Queenslanders will be subjected to if the terms of the preference deal between the Labor government and the Greens at the federal level are implemented after this weekend. This weekend North Queenslanders will tell the Labor candidates in North Queensland what they think of their capitulation.