



HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

13th APRIL 2017

RECREATIONAL FISHING

Debate resumed.

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:44): Thank you Madam independent Deputy Speaker. I wish to speak to the motion from the member for Chaffey, namely:

That this house—

(a) notes the economic and social benefits of recreational fishing to South Australia;

(b) condemns the state government for not undertaking a regional economic impact assessment statement prior to introducing changes to recreational fishing bag, size and boat limits in South Australia; and

(c) acknowledges the impact on communities, particularly along the South Australian coast, affected by the changes to fishing 26 species and spatial closures.

As we are having a discussion about our fishing expertise—and mine is very limited—I had my best fishing as a young lad with my brothers on the Port Lincoln jetty, of all places, in the electorate of the member for Flinders.

Mr Treloar: Nothing like fresh tommies.

Mr PEDERICK: That's it. I think I was the only one that day to catch some fish; it was a yellow-looking thing. I do not even know what it was, but someone advised me you could not eat it. I was keen to take it back to show my family what I had caught, but one of my brothers threw it back. The fish was long dead by this time, so I was not impressed, and I think I let him know.

Beyond that, a few years ago my boys got some fishing rods from their grandmother. We went down to Robe and were there just in the harbor, baiting up the hooks and putting them in and it was all good. Nothing was happening of course. I pulled them up at one stage and there was no bait on the hooks. I thought my wife was not looking, and I just threw the line straight back in. She said, 'What are you doing?' I said, 'Well, I'm fishing.' She said, 'You haven't baited up the hooks.' I said, 'We're getting the same result and just saving on bait.' I got a bit of a reprimand after that.

The Hon. L.A. Vlahos: Did she call you 'fish lips' after that?

Mr PEDERICK: She calls me lots of things, but I will not say. A couple of years ago we were up at Cooper Creek near Innamincka and the Cooper was pretty cold, especially first thing in the morning when you go for an early morning dip. We threw our lines in there and I think all we managed to do was tangle them up in the trees and the undergrowth and it was a bit of a mess.

The most recent enjoyable experience was when I drove over to Western Australia with the family and stopped at Fowler's Bay and caught up with Di and Brian Smith and a whole of crew of people there—a magnificent community in the electorate of the member for Flinders, who could really show a lot of people how life should be lived and how to relax. It is totally off grid, but that is another debate I can have another day.

I went up to my boys and said, 'They're going to take us out to check the craypots.' My boys, being like me, are real landlubbers and just thought we were going out in a little aluminium dingy. It was a bit better than a dingy; it was a little power boat about seven or eight metres long with a very small cabin on it, and we were going out to check the pots. I had no idea how far out we were going either. Fowler's Bay is very protected by a natural peninsula, a beautiful bay.

So, we all got on the boat, about six of us—myself and my two boys and these other blokes. Thank God we had a professional deckie so that they did not have to rely on me! We charged out, went around the end of the peninsula, and there we were in the chop. We were just going up and down, up and down. I was looking at my boys for their reaction. They were not too bad at this stage.

We got around the corner and we were offshore maybe a couple of kilometres, certainly well within sight of land. I looked at my young bloke, who was 12 at the time, and said, 'How you going, Angus?' He said, 'Don't even speak to me.' I thought, 'Okay.' I said, 'Well, look, if anything happens, you can see the land, you know which way to swim', but I do not think he took that as a very happy comment.

We checked the pots—there were only six to check, I think—and we managed to get one cray, so that was a bit of an experience. When we came back into Fowler's Bay itself, the other fishing blokes gave my boys some hand reels and we started hauling in snook. That was a magnificent experience, just essentially trawling along—

Mr Hughes: You didn't eat them, did you?

Mr PEDERICK: Yes, we ate them that night—absolutely—on the barbecue. I got some good photos of the boys having a good crack at these snook. I must say that Fowlers Bay is a gem of a place and if you ever get the opportunity you should go there to visit, especially with the very fine company that we had.

There are a whole lot of things that need to be taken into account about fishing. I note the recent meetings that were had around the state, and I got to several of them. When I was the shadow minister for fisheries I was opposite to the Hon. Gail Gago, who was the minister at the time when there were some recreational fishing limits brought in. I must say I had very good negotiations with Mehdi Doroudi and had a couple of wins.

There is no secret that fishing does need to be managed, but I think there is something else we need to acknowledge, and I know there are some people in the department who will acknowledge this, and that is the impact of the notorious New Zealand fur seals on fish stocks. I know I have talked in this place about their impact on the Lakes and Coorong fishery, and they are still having a heavy impact.

I went to the Northern Zone rock lobster fishery dinner late last year and some of those people said to me, 'Why stop there? I am looking for some sort of program and control,' in regard to New Zealand fur seals. I said that we need to work something out on the inland waters before we get out to sea. What I was reflecting on before is what people in the department are aware of, that I have heard, in regard to declining fish stocks. We know that garfish are fully fished, we know whiting are under pressure, and this is what many people believe is the impact that the well over 100,000 New Zealand fur seals are

having on our ocean species, including whiting and their breeding and spawning grounds up around Eyre Peninsula and Yorke Peninsula.

I believe there does need to be true science, as the member for Giles indicated earlier, in regard to the management of fisheries and that includes what is happening with predator species, no matter what they are, offshore. If we do not do that, we will not have fisheries—we just will not. I know for a fact that, especially in a netting situation, New Zealand fur seals kill for fun.

Other things that need to be managed, obviously, are things like the recreational catch of Goolwa pipis in my electorate. They have become very much a favoured item for human consumption, especially over the last few years. They used to be recognised as bait but are now very much for human consumption. People are very keen to catch as many as they can and, dare I say it, probably take more than they should.

The South Australian Research and Development Institute was looking at getting whiting fish frames to do some research, and I know that has been mentioned by the member for Mount Gambier. I can understand why fishermen (a) do not want to give up where they caught them, and (b) just do not want to be involved with anything to do with government, because basically they got done right over with the marine parks process when fishermen took to government where they fished, where their hotspots were, and guess what? That is where the marine parks turned up.

I have always said in this place that it should not be up to the Department of Environment to manage fisheries, it should be up to the fisheries department. We have one of the best acts and one of the best legislative programs and regulatory processes in the world and to leave it in the hands of the environment department, I have always said, is an utter disgrace.

We already had excellent legislation. The fishermen know that if they cross the line—especially commercial fishers—they are in real strife. We certainly need to manage fish stocks, but if we are going to do the science let's not just manage human intervention, but let's also look at predator species so that we can get an accurate picture of what is happening on our fish stocks now and into the future so that our kids and grandkids can enjoy fishing well into the future.