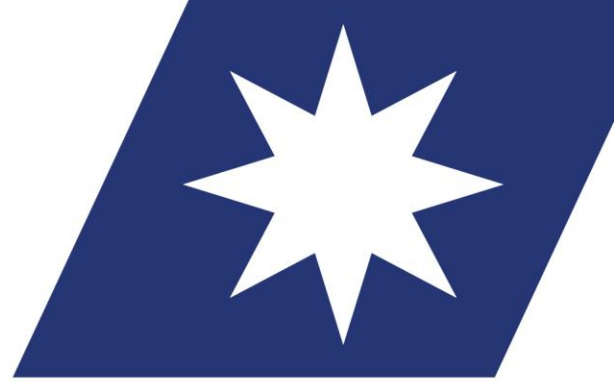


NICK DAMETTO

Member for Hinchinbrook



MEDIA RELEASE

18/3/2019

‘Fishal recognition’ a final blow for industry

LABOR’S decision to fund research into fishal recognition technology will mean the death knell for Queensland’s commercial fishing industry, says Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto.

The Katter’s Australian Party MP said he was shocked and angered that the government was bragging about “fish image recognition” technology, which is being developed to automatically collect information on commercial fishing.

“To think the government was happily gloating about this in a media statement last week sickens me,” he said.

“If you thought vessel tracking was a case of Big Brother gone too far, what the Labor government has in store with this technology completely blows that out of the water.”

Companies Anchor Lab and Fish-e have been working closely with Fisheries Queensland to develop high-tech systems to monitor commercial fishing location, effort and catch under the Advance Queensland Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program.

Electronic monitoring technology, including cameras, sensors and image recognition software, has been installed on a range of commercial fishing vessels over the last six months with the project aiming to eventually provide a “digital observer program” and even replace logbooks that commercial fishers currently fill in.

The two companies were awarded Queensland Government funding of \$278,300 for the feasibility stage of the SBIR challenge.

Following the completion of that stage, they will both share in \$614,200 for the project’s proof of concept phase over a 12 month period to test and refine the technology.

“Let’s face it, this technology is being funded by the government with the ultimate goal to spy on every move a commercial fisherman makes while conducting their day-to-day duties at sea,” Mr Dametto said.

“While vessel tracking is already a gross intrusion of privacy that tracks commercial fishermen in the same way as a registered sex offender, now software is being developed which will see the government eventually have a camera on every vessel in Queensland.

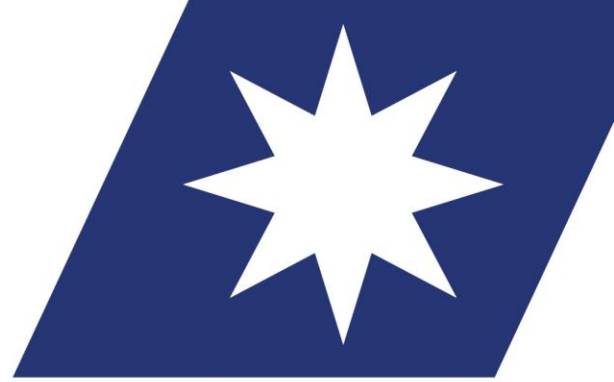
“Effectively, this is no different than having a fisheries officer peer over your shoulder and putting every move you make under the microscope.

“Once again, it doesn’t matter if it’s agriculture, mining or commercial fishing, this State Labor Government is continuing on its warpath to drive small business out of the game.”

Mr Dametto said he would be “very surprised” if Labor did not implement legislation to install fish image recognition technology on all commercial vessels before the next election.

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MEDIA RELEASE

“This type of government encroachment and over-regulation will be the death knell for our commercial fishing industry. Labor should be totally ashamed of what they are doing.”

In February, Labor used its numbers to vote down a disallowance motion put forward by Mr Dametto on the Fisheries (Vessel Tracking) Amendment Regulation 2018, which was quietly passed last November and required all crab, line and net fishers to have vessel tracking technology installed and operational by January 1, 2019.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries will also make it compulsory to have vessel tracking installed on the remainder of the commercial fishing fleet, including licensed charter operators, by January 1, 2020.

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Media Enquiries

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