

NICK DAMETTO
Member for Hinchinbrook



MEDIA RELEASE

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Minister fails to answer to Spanish mackerel fishers

Commercial mackerel fishers have been left in the dark after the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries, Mark Furner failed to come clean in Parliament this week on looming Spanish mackerel quota reductions which may come into effect July 1.

Katter's Australian Party (KAP) Deputy Leader and Hinchinbrook MP, Nick Dametto said he was frustrated the Minister had failed to yet again provide commercial Spanish mackerel fishers with clarification into what the reforms may entail.

"We have many key stakeholders in Hinchinbrook who have been left out of initial consultation on these proposed quota reductions and a Minister who continues to spruik that every effort has been made to consult," Mr Dametto said.

"However, my calls for a public forum to be held in North Queensland with affected stakeholders last month fell on deaf ears.

"This week when I again asked the Minister in Question Time when fishers could expect to know what changes would come into effect ahead of the season in July, once again he was unable to provide any constructive information, stating at this point in time no decision had been made."

The Hinchinbrook MP urged Minister Furner to stop fishing with the livelihoods of those who rely on the commercial fishing industry and come clean on what the proposed reduction quotas will entail.

"Commercial fishers face significant costs leading up to the start of the Spanish mackerel fishing season, and the proposed reforms which could potentially come into effect in less than a week are causing angst in the industry," Mr Dametto said.

"It's not just putting the jobs of our commercial fishermen at risk but will drive up prices of the much loved Spanish mackerel at the fisher mongers, supermarkets, restaurants and the humble fish and chip shop, not to mention will result in an increase in imported fish being served up to Queenslanders."

Mr Dametto said he had been in contact with a commercial fishers who were concerned the total allowable catch for commercial fishers could be cut by 75-90 per cent effectively overnight.

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"Not only are fishers concerned their livelihoods are at risk, many in the community and wider industry do not feel they've had ample opportunity to have their concerns heard, after exclusive invitation-only sessions were held," he said.

"Minister Furner has said the department will continue to engage with fishers, whether they be recreational and commercial as well as the retail sector, but our industry wants some clarity on the future, and I believe they deserve that."

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Photo: State Member for Hinchinbrook and KAP Deputy Leader, Nick Dametto.

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