

ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

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KAP CALLS ON POLLIES TO THROW SEAFOOD SECTOR A LINE

Katter's Australian Party (KAP) Leader Robbie Katter is calling on State Labor MPs to throw a line to Queensland's commercial fishing sector by supporting a "no-brainer" bill that would ensure all seafood sold at cafes, restaurants and fish and chip shops is labelled with its country of origin.

Mr Katter's pro-Aussie seafood legislation, known as the *Food (Labelling of Seafood) Amendment Bill 2021*, works to bring dining outlets selling seafood in line with the retail sector.

Under current Federal legislation it is compulsory for all Australian supermarkets to identify origins of seafood on packaging.

However, this does not extend to take-away shops, cafes, or restaurants.

As a result, around half of Australians (often incorrectly) assume the seafood they buy is Aussie despite 70 per cent of all seafood eaten in Australia being imported.

Mr Katter said the bill, which would be debated in the Queensland Parliament next week, was all about supporting local jobs and industries.

"It's ridiculous to me that we buy fish and seafood from overseas that don't have the same standards as the Australian industries and, worst of all, the majority of the time we are unaware of this," he said.

"I think most Australians want to know where the seafood that they are buying is from, and the Queensland Parliament has a real opportunity next week to make that happen.

"The Committee review process of my bill showed there was overwhelming support with around 80 per cent of submissions supporting it and, I would argue, only flimsy and superficial arguments from those against."

During the public hearing sessions held across the State earlier this year, fishers and seafood retailers spoke of their support for the bill and outlined the benefits it could provide local industries and economies.

At the Townsville Committee hearing, Mark Partland from Ingham Seafood said: "I am very vocal about supporting the local industry, which is under huge threats from government implementing quotas and that type of thing.

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"The labelling or identification of seafood in pubs, clubs, restaurants and the like should have been done years ago when it was implemented into our retail sector.

"This needs to be brought into line with that so that people have a choice and people are aware of what they are buying."

At the Cairns hearing, Shawn McAtamney from the Independent Seafood Producers said: "At the end of the day, the crux of this Bill is about allowing the consumer to make the choice at the dinner plate, which is no different to what they do at the retail counter. It is overdue.

"This bill is vital for Queensland. Obviously it has been in place in the Northern Territory for a number of years.... I think it will have far-reaching ramifications and not just in terms of consumption levels.

"Certainly from my perspective, we are second generation and have 40 years in the industry and this Bill is vital."

To date the Palaszczuk Government has refused to support the bill, prompting Mr Katter to this week issue a last-ditch appeal to Labor's 52 MPs to throw a line of support to the sector.

"The Palaszczuk Government is doing plenty to smash primary industries like fishing, and here we have provided an opportunity for them to offset that slightly at no cost but so far they have proven too petty to do that," he said.

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