

ADJOURNMENT

Fadden Electorate: Gold Coast Waterways Authority

Mr ROBERT (Fadden) (9.29 p.m.)—I rise this evening to call for the immediate reintroduction of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority and the immediate dredging of the Broadwater and associated waterways. The Gold Coast Waterways Authority was abolished by the Queensland state Labor government and must be reinstated. It was, as a local community based expert management group, there to ensure that recreational boating safety, ecological management and effective navigability of our waterways. The Gold Coast has the highest number of boat registrations in Australia with all registration fees going into state Labor consolidated revenue. Estimated revenues from the department of transport for 2007-08 are something like \$300 million, of which \$3 million are from the Gold Coast alone.

Last Friday and over the weekend I was privileged to go to the International Boat Show at Sanctuary Cove in the electorate of Fadden. Fadden is the fastest-growing federal electorate in the nation. The show there is worth somewhere between \$90 million and \$120 million to the Gold Coast and showcased some of the finest boats made in the world, many of them made right there in the electorate of Fadden. I publicly thank Barry Jenkins for all his work and effort in making an outstanding result out of the Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show.

Furthermore, there is at present 1,600 marina berths on the drawing board over the next few years—just to give the House an idea of the size of the marine industry on the coast. I think the issue is best summed up by the *Marine Business News* of 5 May 2008:

Following the third and final meeting of the stakeholders in the 'Gold Coast Waterways Access Needs Study', the findings will be tabled by consultants GHD and channelled into a broader Queensland Marine Infrastructure study. After 12 months vigorous debate and study, there is still no time line on the implementation of sorely-needed dredging and reclamation of the Gold Coast's canals and waterways, leading some participants to lament that by the time something is eventually resolved, it will all be too late for the tourism and recreational industries of the region.

Those involved in the discussion were the Gold Coast City Council, Queensland Small Craft Council, Queensland Charter Vessel Association, the Marine Industry Association, Volunteer Marine Rescue, Queensland Transport, Marine Safety Queensland, Marine Gold Coast and Marine Queensland. The aim of the study was to identify channel dredging needs within the district between Coochiemudlo Island in Moreton Bay and Southport Yacht Club on the Broadwater. It was introduced last year by the former Minister for Transport, Paul Lucas, with the intention of presenting it to the cabinet before December 2007. It is now May 2008, and stakeholders are no closer to formulating a plan for prioritising the areas, estimating costs and devising a recommended revenue-raising options for a 20-year dredging proposal, which has an approximate price tag of \$40 million over the time. But due to delays, extreme buck-passing and complacency by the Labor government in Queensland, there is no date in sight for work to commence. Some of the main proponents, who wished to speak anonymously, estimate there will be severe economic penalties to the Gold Coast of around \$220 million in lost earnings over the next 20 years.

In the face of this, it does not take rocket science to say to the Labor state government in Queensland: 'Do something now! Do something now—dredge the Broadwater and associated waterways and reinstate the Gold Coast Waterways Authority'. The insurance industry lent its voice to the dredging debate—one company presenting figures that showed shoaling and damage to boats currently costs \$1.3 million in payouts per annum, or \$5,000-\$10,000 for each claim. Industry figures estimate the total insurance payouts stand at \$4 million each year from incidents.

According to one industry pundit involved in the waterways plan, John Mickel, the Queensland Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations has no interest in public transport for the Gold Coast. Something needs to be done now. Likewise, speaking to Paul Mcloughlin, CEO of EcoSmart, a company on the Gold Coast, the move to means test the solar panel rebate has meant business in his firm dropping by over 50 per cent, and it is similar right across the Gold Coast. The means test on solar panels is a mockery on the need for clean energy. I demand that the government reassess their view and take away the means testing that is stripping the solar panel industry away from the Gold Coast and hurting companies like EcoSmart that have led the way in cleaner, greener energy. *(Time expired)*