

Today I speak on the Closure of the Harbour to Fishing.

We live here in the Gladstone Region and we councillors' are the citizen's first port of call. This closure impacts our whole community: we have one of the highest (if not the highest) ownership of boats per capita in Australia; we enjoy recreational fishing; we have a strong retail, wholesale and export fishing industry; associated industries - net-making, refrigeration, fuel sales, retail sales, fish and chip shops, tackle shops and the list goes on

On a daily basis our community is faced with industry, increasing impacts on roads and more significantly housing shortages and rental increases. Whilst the Harbour, and the ability to take the boat out, relax, and catch a few fish, was available to them they were accepting. But now this has gone!

It is extremely important to recognise that this event could be the one which takes away *Gladstone's most important asset* - COMMUNITY SUPPORT OF INDUSTRY.

On Friday morning I contacted the office of Craig Wallace Minister for Fisheries and we organised the Teleconference. Over the weekend I made contact with the Office of the Premier and the DEEDI office and made the suggestion that:

- it would be appropriate for the Premier, Minister for Fisheries and the Minister for the Environment to make a trip to Gladstone together and inform our community of their concern and the process being undertaken to discover the cause.
- a meeting and briefing be convened for Member for Flynn Ken O'Dowd, Member for Gladstone Liz Cunningham and our Council. (this would be a strong indication that all levels of government are working together)
- the community be advised of all results of all testing, irrespective of how bad (or good) the results are - (make a strong commitment to be open and accountable, map the journey, and stick with it, and do it as quickly as possible)

On Sunday I was contacted by Director General Ian Fletcher and he explained the process which was taking place and of his proposed intent to travel to Gladstone on Wednesday.

Yesterday together with Member for Gladstone Liz Cunningham, our Council took part in a Teleconference with Managing Director Queensland Fisheries Maria Mohr. We were brought up to date with how the events had unfolded and the process which is taking place. Results from the first nine barramundi will be available this week.

Our community is asking questions for which we have no answers:

Is it safe to swim in these waters?

When will we know the results?

How long will the harbour be closed?

These questions as well as others need to be answered. For the sake of the well-being of our region, I hope that DG Ian Fletcher has these answers tomorrow.