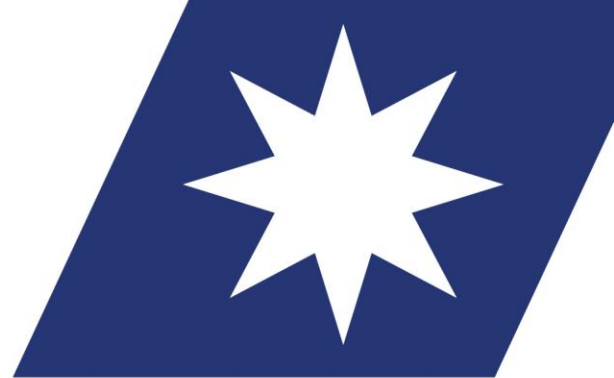


**SHANE KNUTH**

Katter's Australian Party

**Member for Hill**



## MEDIA RELEASE

April 7, 2022

### **Queensland Government Must Explain Management of Spanish Mackerel Fishery**

Member for Hill Shane Knuth has questioned the Queensland Government and Department of Fisheries on their management of the Spanish Mackerel fishery.

Mr Knuth said this issue had been boiling since the initial meeting of DAF and the Spanish Mackerel Working Group in May, last year.

"The working group was provided a presentation on the results of the 2021 east coast Spanish Mackerel stock assessment by Fisheries Queensland which advised them the draft biomass was estimated to be at 17 per cent of unfished biomass," Mr Knuth said.

"Twenty per cent triggers the closure of a fishery under the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy and under National Guidelines."

However, Mr Knuth noted in the departments own 2018 stock assessment of *Australian East Coast Spanish Mackerel Predictions of stock status and reference points* that annual harvests of around 550t (across all sectors) will build biomass towards the 60 per cent level, consistent with the 2027 management targets set in the Governments Sustainable Fisheries Strategy.

Astonishingly, just 3 years later, the working group were informed that the fishery biomass was 17 per cent, despite commercial harvest averaging 300t annually since 2004, well below the current total annual allowable commercial catch for the species.

"Even adding in 170t annually for recreational fishers, the annual total harvest is still well below the 550t recommended by Fisheries Qld to have a healthy fishery," said Mr Knuth.

"My point is this, how can a fishery, that was deemed healthy at an estimate of 60 per cent biomass in 2018, with the annual harvest well under the allowable mark of 550t each year since 2004, suddenly just 3 years later completely drop of a cliff to 17per cent?"

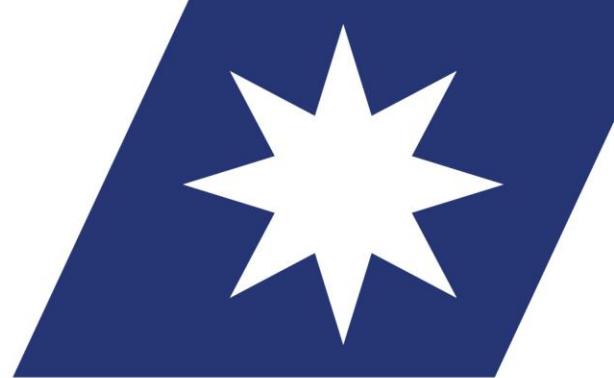
"It simply doesn't make any sense."

Mr Knuth said the assessment model for measuring Biomass was changed in 2018, further adding to fishers' anger.

## SHANE KNUTH

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## MEDIA RELEASE

"Either Fisheries Queensland has been telling fishers the wrong information since 2004 and are responsible for mismanaging the fishery, or the assessment model used to measure biomass is flawed."

Mr Knuth said he has questioned the Minister in Parliament and he had not addressed the anomaly.

"The Minister will say that the biomass model has been peer reviewed, but this was not done in conjunction with industry. Fishers are out on the water constantly and they are telling me that Spanish Mackerel stocks are high, which is a completely different story to the Minister and his department," he said.

Mr Knuth said the statement by the Minister recently in a media release where he said *the Queensland Government has moved to protect fishing jobs and give Queenslanders a say on future management of Spanish mackerel stocks* was laughable.

"The working group has met once since last year and have had zero input into the peer review or any other strategy since then, yet suddenly the Minister wants to give the industry a say, after the damage is done?" he said

"Closing the fishery will destroy jobs and affect restaurants, fish and chip shops and people who enjoy battered and crumbed fish throughout North Queensland.

"The Minister and DAF need to come clean, admit they got it wrong and work closely with the industry to get it right, so jobs, businesses and catching a mackerel is not lost."

**-ENDS-**

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