



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



THE SENATE

PROOF

BILLS

**Food Standards Amendment
(Fish Labelling) Bill 2015**

Second Reading

SPEECH

Thursday, 14 May 2015

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

SPEECH

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Speaker	Lambie, Sen Jacqui	Question No.	

Senator LAMBIE (Tasmania) (10:50): I rise to support 100 per cent Senator Xenophon's private members' bill, the Food Standards Amendment (Fish Labelling) Bill 2015. I congratulate him for putting forward this important legislation. Unlike the cowardly Nationals in this chamber, I will not only 100 per cent support the intent of the legislation; I will 100 per cent reflect that by support on the floor of this Senate and gladly stand on the side of the chamber which supports this bill and the Australian fishing industry. I will vote to put my state and fishing industry first. Unlike the Nationals, whose vote on this legislation will show that they have gone from being the bush's blue heelers in this place to becoming—as of this morning, after listening to Senator Williams's gutless speech, which tried to have two bob each way—the Liberals' poodles. And they are poodles missing a vital part of their male anatomy.

I now turn to the provisions of the bill. The bill is based on recommendations from the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee inquiry. The current Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code covers fish but not seafood that is offered for immediate consumption in places such as restaurants. The committee recommended seafood for immediate consumption also fall under country-of-origin labelling regulations, as it does in the Northern Territory. A change like this is supported by consumers and the food services sector.

The bill gives 12 months for a standard to be developed and implemented to include seafood offered for immediate consumption. The bill's definition of food services includes places that give consumers a choice, not places such as hospitals, where consumers do not have a choice. The committee reported that, when country-of-origin labelling regulations came in for uncooked fish, the trawl fishery industry's turnover increased from \$4 million to \$30 million and snapper prices increased 400 per cent. The committee believes that, if country-of-origin labelling regulations were extended, it would create 4,000 jobs.

In closing, I would like to remind all Australians that Tasmania has the best seafood in the world. I understand that, in some fancy American and European restaurants, one of the normal kitchen appliances and cooking tools is a machine which checks the radiation levels in fish, because some fish, because of the distances they can swim, can be radioactive after swimming in polluted water. If you eat Australian and Tasmanian fish, you will not have to worry about that threat to your health. Our waters are pristine and our seafood is pristine and the best in the world.