



Speech by
**Mr DENVER
BEANLAND**

MEMBER FOR INDOOROOPIILLY

Hansard 17 November 1998

BRISBANE RIVER

Mr BEANLAND (Indooroopilly—LP) (12.22 p.m.): I rise to speak about issues relating to the Brisbane River. The former Borbidge/Sheldon National/Liberal coalition Government stopped dredging on the Brisbane River, which will take effect at the end of December. I believe that that is a great step forward in our efforts to clean up the river and to make it more beautiful than it is already.

Brisbane has become known as the river city. I put on record in this place my thanks to the former Environment Minister, the Honourable Brian Littleproud, the member for Western Downs who, as Chairman of the Brisbane River Management Committee, was directly responsible for stopping the dredging of the river. That followed many years of representation not only by me but also by other members on this side.

I believe that cleaning up the river is a way of looking towards the future. It is a most important task. Of course, in taking this course of action one has to be aware of the fact that other issues are afoot. For example, we will have to be most careful of silting and water content. Water quality is a most important issue. In the past, the water has become muddied because of a lack of water quality. In fact, some decades ago there was a lot of growth on the river surface. That occurred because of the various nutrients in the water. So it is very important that, in the cleaning up of the river and stopping the dredging, we do not allow other factors to blemish the river.

I understand that the current Brisbane City Council is keen to create a six-metre-wide walkway along the banks of the river and, in some areas, over the water itself. That might sound okay, but six metres is quite a width for any type of walkway to be constructed along the river banks and, as I say, in parts over the water itself. That comes about because in quite a number of areas along the river there is private property right down to the water's edge and in those places it is not possible to construct a walkway along the banks of the river.

The traffic laws of this State stipulate that three metres is the necessary width for a motor vehicle carriageway. Therefore, a walkway of six metres wide will be of sufficient width to carry two motor vehicles along the river bank and, in some cases, over the river. One has to ask: why will the walkway be of that width? What effect will it have? It will mean that this walkway, which will be many kilometres in length, will require enormous maintenance. The effects that the water will have on the structure itself will be significant. Unless the walkway is allowed to run down and become an eyesore, the maintenance cost to the ratepayers of this city will be quite considerable.

There is also the issue of security for those people who live along the river bank and the effect that this walkway will have on their private access to the river and access by other people. The construction of any walkway along the bank or over the water itself will deny others access to the river bank and the water. I think that it is quite a significant matter about which, to date, I have heard very little. The walkway will affect current access arrangements. As a large number of parks have access already to the river, one has to question the need for this walkway as it is proposed by the council. Currently, many people are able to gain access easily to the river from private property and public areas for their boats and other purposes. Once that walkway is built, their access to the river for those purposes will be affected enormously.

I believe that the Government needs to have regard to the construction of this walkway because I am sure that, at the end of the day, in terms of various maritime Acts the authority of the Minister for

Transport will be required. I appeal to the Minister to have a careful investigation into this matter before giving the council any go ahead.

Although at first blush the walkway might seem to be a wonderful idea and something that should occur, it will create in itself a range of significant issues, not the least of which is the issue that we have seen created in recent times of the need for a rock wall along the river bank. That need has arisen because of the greater use being made of the river through the CityCats. There is no point in people saying that the banks are not soft and that they are not collapsing because, in a number of areas—both in public and private areas—they are. I have looked at a number of areas along the river where people have said that the bank is collapsing and that someone needs to do something about it. In this regard, the council seems to be most reluctant to take action. Nevertheless the wash from the CityCats has created an issue that did not exist previously. Therefore, I suggest to the council that it should consider urgently a program that addresses over time those areas of the banks that are not reinforced with rocks before the bank collapses and serious damage is done.

Although the council says that we are going to benefit from this walkway, there is not much point in constructing it if, at the end of the day, serious damage is being done to the banks and they are slipping away into the river. Over the past decade, parts of the banks of the river have fallen and the subsequent widening of the river has caused problems. With increased usage of the river, there is an increased need to fix the bank walls. Of course, the river is often used as a means of transport for people going about their daily business, and also by sightseers and people engaged in sailing, rowing and so on. There has been a general increase in the usage of the river.

In time to come, as dredging ceases and other action is taken to clean up the river, we may again see people swimming in the river. Perhaps there will again be sandy riverbanks to play on and people will be able to fish in the river, an activity that has largely ceased in recent times.

Time expired.
