



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

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NATIVE TITLE (QUEENSLAND) STATE PROVISIONS BILL

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (5.41 p.m.): I also welcome the Native Title (Queensland) State Provisions Bill in that it is a faithful reflection of the first two points of the 10-point plan and will therefore deliver certainty in relation to those tenures dealt with during the intermediate period and confirm the extinguishment principles set down in Mabo and Wik. But the fact is that this is just the first part of the legislation from this Government in relation to the response to the Wik decision. My concern is: where do we go from here?

I suspect it is too much to expect that we will see anything like this degree of support for the 10-point plan when we get into some of the more contentious areas. That is of great concern to me and to the people I represent, because there is obviously a very significant push being made from the Left of the Labor Party—the loopy Left—for many of the policies espoused in the Senate to come to fruition in this State. That would be a real disaster for Queensland.

I note that some Government speakers have tried to suggest that this issue is not a contest between the Left and the Right within the Labor Party. All I can suggest to those people is that they look to the record of the Senate. The positions pushed by Senator Bolkus in the Upper House in Canberra were extreme. Labor in Canberra pushed suppression across-the-board rather than extinguishment. Labor wanted a highly qualified validation regime which would leave many hundreds of Queensland mining titles issued in the intermediate period subject to legal challenge. Labor wanted a retrospective right to negotiate.

Labor did not want a schedule of extinguishing tenures because it believes in suppression, not extinguishment. Labor in Canberra wanted a full-blown right to negotiate to apply not only to mining on pastoral land but to many mining lease renewals, and even on mining exploration activity. Labor in Canberra wants to keep a right to negotiate on infrastructure projects built by third parties, which is a commonplace practice nowadays.

Other speakers have highlighted that this is an issue in Queensland today, with yet another threat developing in relation to the Century project. This could be one of the very far-reaching impacts of the Labor model if it comes into play. The Australian Labor Party has given the Chevron project a reprieve from that sort of burden, but what about every other project in Queensland? Labor in Canberra wanted to put very real constraints on what activities pastoralists could engage in without reference to native title. Labor in Canberra wants to keep a right to negotiate in place on the inter-tidal zone. In short, Labor in Canberra wants to maximise native title at the cost of existing landholders and industries.

I agree with the Leader of the Opposition. I suspect that this Government's timetable for dealing with the more substantive issues is designed to carry this whole episode beyond the Federal election in the hope that Kim Beazley wins and the more extreme version of native title can be implemented. The fact is that there is no real excuse for delay. As Richard Court has shown, legislation can be prepared quite quickly. His legislation is now ready to go and that Bill will form the basis of an alternative to the Government's approach that will be introduced to the House by the Opposition Leader in the Budget session.

Labor should be on notice that if it does try to push ahead with the more extreme version of Federal Labor there will be a very major effort on the part of the coalition to ensure that a more workable and just regime ultimately prevails in this State.
