



Speech by

MIKE REYNOLDS

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

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LAND AND RESOURCES TRIBUNAL BILL

Mr REYNOLDS (Townsville—ALP) (5.31 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise in the House to support the Land and Resources Tribunal Bill. In doing so, I acknowledge the Premier's great and progressive leadership in respect of this Bill—something that a number of other speakers from the Government side have acknowledged today.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr REYNOLDS: That is especially so, given that the honourable member for Warwick was the next speaker on the list.

With respect to the tribunal, what we see in this Bill would be in stark contrast to what we would have seen had the Opposition been in Government today. A trilogy of legislation has been put before the Chamber since the Beattie Government has been in power. That this Government has addressed those three areas of concern in relation to native title indicates that it has been willing to bring together the different stakeholders to ensure that we have a just, equitable and balanced legislative program. The parties involved have worked together in a spirit of cooperation to ensure that the State's development continues and is balanced with indigenous rights.

I come from an area of north Queensland where the development of the mining industry is paramount. The Carpentaria/Mount Isa minerals province is potentially the most exciting and challenging mineral development province in Australia. It will offer development opportunities for many decades to come. In my previous role as the chairman of the Townsville Port Authority, I know that we were able to exploit many opportunities. For example, I cite BHP's Cannington project, and also the Western Mining Corporation project that will soon see one million tonnes of fertiliser coming through the port of Townsville. That reflects the great wealth of the Carpentaria/Mount Isa minerals province and our area's potential to assist its development.

That potential for development will be balanced with the important native title principles acknowledged in this Bill. The Premier's Land and Resources Tribunal Bill provides a balance in respect of the membership of the tribunal. There is a recognition that this body will take its place in the community when there is a need for it to examine matters pertaining to the mining industry and native title interests. I am very pleased that the Land and Resources Tribunal Bill, as part of the trilogy of legislation that has been introduced into the Chamber, will have an important role to play in the resolution of issues in the mining industry and which also pertain to native title.

Earlier the member for Bundaberg mentioned the events that took place in Mackay last Friday. As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier in north Queensland, I was very honoured to represent the Premier on that historic occasion, when four native title holders and groups in Mackay—the Mackay City Council and the Mackay Surf Lifesaving Club—cooperated with the Queensland Government in allowing development to go ahead on unallocated State land. The historic and emotional ceremony in the Mackay City Council chambers last Friday illustrated the cooperation between the different stakeholders in reaching and signing the agreements. It also illustrated that the Beattie Government's approach to native title contrasts with that of the Opposition Leader, who over the past two years has run all over the State of Queensland whipping up a frenzy among miners and pastoralists. We can contrast that approach with the Beattie Government's role in the legislation we saw in the House last year and which we see in the House today in the form of the Land and Resources Tribunal Bill.

The Opposition is not interested in achieving a balance and ensuring justice and equity for indigenous people, miners and pastoralists. It is interested in taking a sledgehammer approach to native title. The Bill before us today is a very good example of the Premier's excellent leadership in bringing together all of the stakeholders. This third aspect of native title is a very important component of the legislation required in the State of Queensland. I commend the approach that the Premier has given to us as a Parliament. His leadership has seen Queensland leading the way for every other State in Australia.

I know that, given the make-up of the Land and Resources Tribunal, this State will take into account the very important development opportunities—for example, the Carpentaria/Mount Isa minerals province and other opportunities around the State—and that, importantly, the rights of indigenous people will be balanced with that development. This Bill has my support, and I commend it to the House.
