



Speech by

CARRYN SULLIVAN

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COASTAL PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (6.30 p.m.): I, like my Labor parliamentary colleagues, have been eagerly waiting for this bill, and I am delighted to rise this evening to speak to it. Once again I must commend the Minister for Environment, the Hon. Dean Wells, for introducing this bill that shows new direction in coastal management that certainly everyone in this House should have a deep commitment to supporting. I do not have to remind anyone here just how important public access to our beaches is both from a tourism point of view and a recreation viewpoint. I know that many people have moved to the Pumicestone electorate, which I represent—

Ms Keech: You're doing a good job, too.

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN: I thank the member for Albert. Many people have moved to the Pumicestone electorate to enjoy the Pumicestone Passage and its environs. For years we have had to put up with previous governments allowing coastal developments that have been disastrous for our sensitive coastline. I happen to be in possession of a real estate agent's brochure produced prior to the introduction of decimal currency, that is, 14 February 1966, with a map showing clearly the carving up of Bribie Island into canal developments then. These developments have often cut off public access to certain public beachfront, which is something to which I am bitterly opposed—and I dare say I am not the only one. I am trusting that this tough but fair legislation, when passed, will prevent this from happening in the near future and our coastline will be able to be used by all and not just the few who can afford to live in these developments. I refer mainly, of course, to canal developments, which are the single most destructive of developments anywhere, particularly along the coastline. They not only destroy the environment on the top, but they also destroy it underneath.

In Pumicestone we have two canal developments. Both are on Bribie Island—a sand island—which has two underground aquifers. One canal is controlled by a lock which prevents the natural flow of seawater. This causes many problems, including a build-up of weed which, because it cannot be flushed out when it dies, sinks to the bottom and eventually turns into a thick green slime which smells—something that the environmental impact statement some 12 years ago presumed would not happen. The sand also builds up at the entrance and costs the ratepayer huge amounts of money to dredge. Even the ratepayers who do not live on the canal have to pay for its maintenance because the Caboolture council does not have a differential rating system and the original developers were able to give the lock to council to maintain. What a stroke of luck! Canal blocks were sold in the area on the pretence that the waterway was a private waterway and, therefore, the public, that is, the people who actually do not own the canal blocks, could not access it. It was, in fact, part of the 7 per cent dedicated park that council required of the developer. Another good trick if you can get away with it!

I might point out at this stage that I ran for council as a candidate in 1988 and again in 1991 in a bid to get rid of the real estate agents and developers on council. I won, but unfortunately I did not end up with the numbers. At least the members opposite would know what that is like. Much to the disgust of some canal block owners, the council of which I was a part opened up the canal to the public by removing the chains along the only feasible access, which was a piece of land used for local government purposes. We also installed a public pontoon so that people could access the water to fish

or swim or to slip into their small sea craft-like canoes. I am also aware that the Bribie Island surf lifesavers use this safe haven to train in.

The other canal development does not have a lock and, therefore, does not suffer this weed problem. When it dies it has some chance of being flushed into the passage. However, the further the development progresses the more chance that it will not flush as well because of the dead-end finger canals off the main one. It does suffer, as does the first one I mentioned, with very little public access. Once again the canals form part of a public park contribution. People cannot plant trees in canals, and for any council to allow it is a disgrace. We now know that to dig the canal at the depth required for boats, the coffee rock between the aquifers is disrupted, causing the compound iron in it to be disturbed. This has, over the years, found its way into the Pumicestone Passage. Although techniques have improved considerably and water quality is being constantly monitored, nobody knows the extent of the damage and the long-term effects.

During the summer season over the past few years large outbreaks of lyngbya have become a problem. Evidence has been found that it feeds on iron. Unfortunately, the only thing that feeds on lyngbya is the rabbit fish which is caught and sold under the name of black trevally. Fortunately, more research on lyngbya is being done by this state government, and hopefully the cause or causes of its outbreak will be made public in the near future.

An ad on television depicting Pumicestone Passage and the Pacific Harbour canal estate suggests that 84 per cent of Bribie Island is locked up, never to be developed. The ad is misleading, because only 22 per cent of Bribie Island is national park. The rest of the land is divided into a number of uses, including a large percentage that has just been totally destroyed by clear felling for logs by a private company. The state government is growing pines on a large tract of land, as well—approximately 2,000 hectares—and most of the southern tip of Bribie Island has been developed into suburbs. I recently took a plane trip over Bribie. From the air it looks like 84 per cent of Bribie Island has been totally desecrated.

The New South Wales government banned canal development in November 1997. The minister responsible was the Hon. Craig Knowles, Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning. It was an election promise. Some of the reasons that he included for the banning were, of course, environmental and ecological, water quality/water pollution, flooding and structural stability. I would like to quote from what Mr Knowles said in the New South Wales parliament—

Two years ago the Government committed itself to commence the task of protecting our precious coastline. Since then it has systematically applied rigorous environmental controls to conserve and improve the coast, as well as to provide opportunities for appropriate and balanced economic development. The Government's actions to date form an impressive list of conservation and protection measures, and I welcome the opportunity from the honourable member to remind the House of just a few of the more important ones.

I commend the Carr government for doing what it can to protect the New South Wales coastline.

There are many other aspects of coastal management that are important to ensure that our well-loved but, in the past, not so well-protected coastal regions continue to provide social, economic and ecological benefits. What the bill proposes is that all these aspects will be taken into account as we plan for the sustainable use of our precious coastal resources. The bill sets out the criteria that must be addressed when developing areas along the coast. These criteria include considerations of the provisions in the state coastal management plan or Queensland's coastal policy. This state coastal plan provides Queensland's first comprehensive planning tool for managing the coastal zone.

The significance of this plan was recognised when it won the overall award at the recent Queensland Royal Australian Planning Institute—or RAPI—awards for excellence in planning. This was a major step forward for coastal planning in this state. As the Hon. Nita Cunningham commented in the *Courier-Mail* last week, the plan represents the cooperative participation of all levels of government and the community to achieve shared outcomes—at least I hope that is what she said. These shared outcomes will continue with the introduction of this bill as we start to look at coastal management in a broader context than we have in the past.

We need to support all initiatives that deliver integrated planning and management of the overall and cumulative impacts of our activities on the coastal region. The recent win at the RAPI awards shows that the planning industry understands the need for comprehensive environmental planning and welcomes the direction being given by the government. Of course, it is not just the planning industry that welcomes this approach. Industry groups, indigenous traditional owners, conservation groups, recreational groups, tourism operators and some developers are just a few of the others who have recognised the need to take a coordinated approach if we are to achieve long-term benefits. The introduction of this bill and government policies such as the state coastal plan will help all of those involved in coastal management move towards reversing the degradation caused by decades of ignorance.