



Speech by

Mr N. ROBERTS

MEMBER FOR NUDGE

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COASTAL PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr NEIL ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (12.12 p.m.): The Coastal Protection and Management Act was Queensland's first comprehensive legislation designed to protect and manage our precious coastline. The act provides for the preparation of coastal management plans, the establishment of a Coastal Protection Advisory Council, regional consultative groups and the establishment of controlled districts along the coast. The state coastal plan has now been finalised and work is currently under way to finalise regional plans. The state plan contains policies that cover issues such as water quality management, public access to the coast, appropriate siting for coastal development, rural land uses, management of cultural resources important to indigenous people, the values of our coastal landscape and the need to conserve biodiversity.

The act is certainly a major advance and improvement on the piecemeal and ad hoc approach that previously existed. Amongst other things, this bill before the House today provides for the application of the Coastal Protection and Management Act as the primary legislation governing the assessment of development activities in coastal management districts and also provides the necessary statutory authority to enable the achievement of sound coastal management outcomes.

The eastern boundary of the electorate of Nudgee is formed by the shoreline of Moreton Bay. So like many members who have spoken to this bill, I have a significant interest in it. I want to take the opportunity, therefore, to say a few words about an important coastal environmental precinct in my electorate. I refer, of course, to the Boondall Wetlands, which is indeed one of the most significant environmental reserves in Australia.

The Boondall Wetlands is the largest remaining wetlands within Brisbane. It is a 707-hectare site located just 15 kilometres from the city centre. The wetlands is one of the city's most valuable conservation and environmental education habitats, and it is ideal for nature-based recreation. It is crucial, additionally, to the Moreton Bay fishing industry. The site was listed as a Ramsar site, and in 1996 the international Ramsar convention was hosted in Brisbane principally because of the importance of the Boondall Wetlands site.

The wetlands is internationally recognised as an important feeding and resting habitat for migratory wading birds that migrate south from countries such as Siberia, China, Japan, Mongolia and Alaska. In recognition of this important pathway of these migratory birds, in 1993 the Brisbane City Council under Lord Mayor Jim Soorley signed an agreement with the Mayor of Narashino in Japan for cooperation and research between the Boondall Wetlands and the Narashino Ramsar site, Yatsu Higata. I want to place on record my congratulations to the Brisbane City Council on the significant efforts and contributions it has made to the preservation of the Boondall Wetlands. That has been channelled through local councillors—formerly Patricia Vaughan and currently Councillor Kim Flessner.

There are a number of shore birds which annually embark on an epic 25,000-kilometre journey between the wetlands in Siberia en route to New Zealand. There are two significant sites at which they rest. I have mentioned the one at Narashino in Japan. One of the other more significant ones is the Boondall Wetlands in my electorate. This amazing feat has brought together the cities of Narashino in Japan and Brisbane. Additionally, in 1998 an agreement was signed between the mayors of both cities to commit both cities to fostering and promoting joint research and cooperation for the conservation of the cities' wetlands which are vital for the survival of these migratory birds. There is a current initiative in

my electorate which is supported by the Brisbane City Council, Education Queensland and the city council of Narashino which will further this objective.

In a recent visit to Narashino by Councillor Kim Flessner, the desire was created to strengthen and further the commitments made by the respective mayors, particularly to involve local schoolchildren in pursuing the objectives outlined in the agreements. I am pleased to advise the House that negotiations are nearing completion to finalise an agreement between Education Queensland, the Brisbane City Council and the council of Narashino which will involve local schools in my electorate and in Japan in pursuing these important objectives of not just preserving the Boondall Wetlands but protecting the waterbirds that use the wetlands as an important staging point on their amazing migration each year from Siberia through to as far as New Zealand.

Some of the aims of the agreement are to assist local schoolchildren and community members to participate in ongoing activities and exchanges to ensure the protection and preservation of the wetlands and shore birds in the fly way and also to implement negotiated programs annually which will connect schoolchildren from Banyo State High School, Nudgee State School, Nudgee Beach Environmental Education Centre and children from Yatsu and Yatsu-Minami elementary schools in Japan. Some of the planned activities in the proposed agreement include that in early March 2002 a group of year 6 students from Nudgee State School will undertake environmental and shore bird studies at Boondall Wetlands. They will complete a two-page environmental report in English on these studies. Year 9 students undertaking Japanese language studies at Banyo State High School will then translate this report into Japanese. Both the English and translated Japanese reports will then be emailed to the Narashino environmental policy section of the Narashino council for dissemination to participating Narashino schools by mid-April 2002.

Similarly, the Narashino students will complete an environmental report on the Yatsu-Higata Tidelands and email that to the Brisbane schools by May 2002. The Narashino schools will also send their report in both languages. Both the Narashino and Brisbane schools will prepare responses and comments relating to the other school's environmental report, including the accuracy and appropriate use of language in the translation. The responses and comments will be emailed back to the other city by early May.

I think members can see that these activities will involve local schoolchildren in my electorate and in the city of Narashino in Japan in a very worthwhile activity of informing them of the importance of the wetlands and the migratory paths of these amazing birds and hopefully instil in them a commitment to preserve our environment and protect those very precious creatures. If these planned activities are successful, it is hoped to expand the connections between the two communities at some time in the future.

I want to thank a number of people for the significant efforts they have made in pursuing this objective: Councillor Kim Flessner, who is the key driver of this initiative following his recent visit to Japan; Greg McKittrick, the principal of Banyo High School; John Swan, the principal of Nudgee Primary School; Maryanne Paterson, the principal of the Nudgee Beach Environment Centre; Larissa Boguslawski, a Japanese teacher from Banyo High School; and Paul Cooke, who heads the International Division from Education Queensland. The proposed agreement is in the final stages of negotiations, and we hope to have the document signed in the very near future to enable these very important activities to proceed.

There is another issue of significance to a number of residents in the Nudgee Beach sector of my electorate. It concerns an application to relocate a concrete recycling plant on the Nudgee landfill site. There has been a concrete recycling plant at this location for a number of years, but there is a current proposal to relocate it from the northern to the southern end of the landfill site. Many local residents in Nudgee Beach and surrounds have expressed concerns about this proposal. Many of the objections relate to the impact of noise and dust on their lifestyles but, significantly, many people have concerns about the potential impact of this relocation on the local Boondall Wetlands.

I have taken the opportunity to pursue many questions that local residents have raised with the Environmental Protection Agency, and I thank it for responding quite openly and frankly to those questions. I have provided that information to local residents to support them in their endeavours to have their objections heard in the evaluation process. Local residents have engaged consultants to assist them in preparing a very professional report and a very professional submission to the Brisbane City Council during the evaluation process.

Both I and Councillor Kim Flessner have provided support, particularly in ensuring that the voices of our local constituents are heard in this important evaluation process, which involves both the Brisbane City Council, which in the first instance will make decisions about this issue, and the Environmental Protection Agency, which will have a role in determining what licences will be granted and what conditions might be applied to those licences if the relocation application is successful. This matter is currently being processed, and the Nudgee Beach community and many other residents are awaiting the outcome. With those few words I commend this bill to the House.