



Speech by

CATE MOLLOY

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Ms MOLLOY (Noosa—ALP) (5.43 p.m.): I rise in the House tonight to speak on the Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2002. What a terrific piece of legislation. The Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2002 continues the magnificent environmental reforms by this progressive government. The amendments show that this government is committed to working with councils, businesses and communities to ensure improved environmental outcomes for Queensland. This amendment bill has been collated after consultation with local government, business and community stakeholders to achieve a mutually agreed position on this bill. In effect, this is a government that is listening but at the same time taking a lead role. No government gets everything right all at once. Governments are constrained as are business operators. Large companies today are confronted by the need to address the issues raised by the Kyoto protocols as are governments of the world, as is this, an Australian government. The EPA in Queensland is an instrument of the government put in place to protect the environment, to check and balance the impact of business, the impact of human activity and the impact of the very communities that today call on governments to check, balance and regulate our environment for a sustainable future.

This bill is designed to make life easier for business and to amend and transfer their environmental licences and approvals. The businesses that will benefit are motor vehicle workshops, garages and panel beaters as they apply for the greatest number of licences from local governments. The bill gives the administering body a new trigger or mechanism to start an amendment to an environmental body. Put simply, if the director-general of the EPA accepts a report about an environmentally relevant activity by a recognised entity such as a government or scientific body, the administering authority may amend the environmental authority to implement the findings of the report. The holder of the authority will be able to use the existing provisions of the EPA to appeal the decision. The bill will enable business to apply for a transfer of all types of environmental authorities in one transaction.

Always mindful of cost, the government has ensured that no new or increased fees will be charged as a result of this bill. The member for Keppel suggested Labor governments slip in exorbitant fees and congratulated the minister for not falling into this trap, apparently an evil habit that only Labor bogies stoop to. I think not. But, yes, the minister is to be congratulated for keeping fees down. The minister is to be congratulated, along with his hard working staff. The EPA is also to be congratulated for its fine work. The EPA on the Sunshine Coast has been nothing more than very helpful and extremely supportive of my endeavours on the Sunshine Coast in the electorate of Noosa. I commend the bill to the House.
