



Speech by

**CHRIS CUMMINS**

**MEMBER FOR KAWANA**

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Hansard 27 November 2002

### **ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr CUMMINS** (Kawana—ALP) (12.22 p.m.): I rise to speak to the Environmental Legislation Amendment Bill 2002. The bill provides for amendments to five environmental management related statutes as a package to continue the environmental reforms of the Beattie Labor government. These amendments refine the way in which the legislation can benefit conservation and the public enjoyment of Queensland's parks and forests.

One such park in my electorate of Kawana is the Mooloolah River National Park on the Mooloolah River. The minister is well aware of this park because of my constant conversations with him about the Mooloolah River National Park and how those of us on the Sunshine Coast appreciate it. We must all acknowledge that the quality of water in the Mooloolah River has at certain times been poor. In an effort to address this situation, the Environmental Protection Agency—the EPA—and the local authority undertook work to minimise effluent overflow occurrences and released the *South-East Queensland Regional Water Quality Strategy Report*. I am pleased to mention that following continuing representations to the Minister for Environment, the Hon. Dean Wells, the EPA and the local council have been working in partnership on the development of both the south-east Queensland regional and the Mooloolah River catchment water quality management strategies and have been proactive in addressing issues impacting on water quality.

Under the 2001 SEQ water quality and ecosystem health report, the estuarine section of the Mooloolah River received a B-minus rating and the fresh water section a C-plus rating, indicating generally moderate to good water quality. It also emphasised the need to maintain critical riverine habitats to ensure that the highly developed urban areas and the developing rural areas do not increase sediment loads or turbidity or result in further riparian habitat loss and that pollutant hot spots continue to be pursued.

The EPA and the council are working in collaboration with industry and community stakeholders to address the issues associated with achieving sustainable catchments and waterways management for both the fresh water and estuarine marine reaches of the Mooloolah River. A whole-of-government community implementation group has been established with the responsibility to implement the agreed management actions of the SEQ regional water quality management strategy and the local Mooloolah River catchment group strategy. These actions include, for example, addressing diffuse source discharges to waterways, restoring riparian conditions and addressing the pressures from increased urbanisation through such strategies as urban stormwater management.

The recent and possible future additions to the Mooloolah River National Park add to the area of the catchment that is reversed from urban and industrial development and contributes to the water quality of the Mooloolah River. The Beattie Labor government has ensured that the Kawana sewage treatment plant at the Mooloolah River is locked so that it is no longer the easy option that it used to be to discharge millions of litres of treated effluent. This discharge was as recent as 1999. On behalf of all the residents of my electorate, I thank the minister as I know of his commitment, like theirs—the community—to improve the much-appreciated and fragile environment of the Sunshine Coast.

I also make mention of the collaboration that all departments and developers have had in the upcoming construction of Claymore Road, which will link a new housing development that abuts the Sunshine Coast University and the Mooloolah River National Park. This road comes within the area controlled by the Maroochy Shire Council. The council took the developers to court over the development application and the developers were made to build this road. In hindsight, it would be much better if we did not have it, but it was a court order that the road be built. A lot of fauna from the Mooloolah River National Park, especially the kangaroos, come into not only Chancellor Park but also the Sunshine Coast University. We negotiated that the developer build the road higher and have underpasses and culverts for animals to access and egress the areas. I commend the EPA and the developers for coming up with a very good solution to that problem.

In closing, I would like to make mention of a former federal member of parliament, and indeed then a colleague of the minister, Councillor Elaine Darling, who, as we know, is now the elected representative for the residents of Wurtulla, Currimundi, Creekside and other areas in division 6 of the Caloundra City Council. Councillor Darling has been relentless in ensuring her residents' safety in attempting to remove unexploded ordnances from local parks and reserves in the area. Unfortunately, when it comes to election time, the federal government is big on promises to remove unexploded ordnances, but less than 12 months from the election we hear no more. But Councillor Darling was not going to get into the political argy-bargy. She has taken on board the concerns of her community. Unfortunately, instead of utilising federal taxpayers' money, she has had to use ratepayers' money—I think that is close to \$50,000—to identify areas where these unexploded ordnances are located and attempt to remove them.

I am aware that the Caloundra City Council is trying to get that money back from the federal government. I call on the federal government and the federal member for the area to stop pussyfooting around. This is not a state government issue, it is not a local government issue; it is a federal government issue. The federal government allowed that area of Kawana and Wurtulla to be a bombing range. When it handed over the land 30 or 40 years ago or more, the area was developed, but the ordnances remained. Some of the local community could not even go on a tree-planting day for fear of UXOs in their community parks.

The federal government could engage the army to identify these UXOs and remove them from the area. The developers now have to remove the unexploded ordnances as they develop the area. Unfortunately, the parks that have been there for 30 or 40 years still contain unexploded ordnances. Children play in these parks. We know that children love to play in the bush. There are enough dangers out there without these unexploded ordnances. Over the past two decades I can recall numerous stories of children bringing home a piece of metal and saying, 'Mum and dad, have a look at this.' Unfortunately, the metal was often a bomb. They do not know—and neither do we—whether or not it is live. So the Army has to come up from Brisbane to detonate such bombs. I commend Councillor Darling.

The federal member is big on talking about car hoons and associated issues. That is a state issue that we have dealt with. The federal member is not kidding the people of the Sunshine Coast when he beats his chest. The state government has addressed those issues. It is time the federal government came to the party and did the right thing by the people of the Sunshine Coast. The federal member for Fisher has held that seat on and off now for a decade, be it as a turncoat National Party or Liberal member. It is about time he put back something into the community.

We need to remove these UXOs. I commend the Minister for Environment on the work that has been done on the Sunshine Coast. We have a very good relationship with the department. I have asked and am always asking questions about the water quality of the Mooloolah River. I appreciate the good work that the minister's department has done in assisting me to raise the standard, because the Mooloolah River National Park abuts the area.

**Mr Wells:** The standard has been raised partly because of your efforts.

**Mr CUMMINS:** I thank the minister. I commend the bill to the House.