



Speech by

CHRIS CUMMINS

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Hansard 9 September 2003

MARINE PARKS AMENDMENT BILL

Mr CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (3.27 p.m.): I rise to speak to the Marine Parks Amendment Bill 2003. Members should be aware that Bluewater was a peculiar case requiring a one-off solution. The only option to allow the development to proceed was to introduce these specific amendments to the marine parks legislation. However, these would be drafted so as not to set a precedent for other areas.

Realising that the Environment Minister oversees shipwrecks off the Queensland coast, I would also like to mention that Mr Lance Paterson of Moffat Beach who is a member of the Landsborough Historical Society and who monitors the travel of vessels in the shipping lane leading south into Moreton Bay. Lance came to see me recently and he handed me a copy of his book *Wreck-ollections: Ships and Shipwrecks in Queensland Waters, Volume 1*, which he requested me to present to the Parliamentary Library on his behalf. The book is impressive and I believe it will be an asset to the Parliamentary Library. I presented the book to the Speaker today.

In commending the minister and his department for coming to this solution for Bluewater, I also thank the Environment Minister for attempting to progress the issue of the sinking of the HMAS *Brisbane* off the Sunshine Coast.

Mr Flynn interjected.

Mr CUMMINS: One Nation would have sold it for scrap, would they?

Mr Flynn: No, set it up as a museum—make it useful.

Mr CUMMINS: I take the member's interjection, but I fought long and hard to see it sunk as a dive tourist attraction off the Sunshine Coast. The EPA—and indeed the Beattie government—has become frustrated at the federal government dropping the ball again on the HMAS *Brisbane* project. The federal member has constantly incorrectly attacked and criticised me on the Sunshine Coast artificial reef project over the past two and a half years. So now it is due time for the member for Fisher and the federal Defence Minister to come clean. Is the federal government going to dud the Sunshine Coast and indeed Queensland by pulling the rug from under the Sunshine Coast's artificial reef HMAS *Brisbane* project?

Even a widely acknowledged inept Tory councillor wrote to the editor saying—

With a shortfall of billions in the Federal Defence Budget can anyone doubt that Senator Hill is looking more for income rather than outlays.

Do the maths!

If Senator Hill authorises the ship and the \$3 million we were promised to clean her up, he will be foregoing a \$4 million turnaround in finances.

The \$3 million, plus \$1 million he can get by selling the vessel for scrap.

How easy it is for the Feds to blame the State Government and save the \$4 million.

Now that you are fooling nobody Senator, why not just authorise the ship to be sunk in Queensland waters?

We are all aware that Queensland waters is the only option, as the Australian Maritime Safety Authority have already stated that they will not allow the vessel to be sunk in Federal waters.

Sorry Senator Hill, the game is over!

Not my words; the words of a Tory Sunshine Coast councillor!

In finishing I will quote from a letter that I will table from Graeme Pearce, the Executive Director of SunROC, to Senator Hill, Minister for Defence. It says—

Dear Minister

Re: HMAS Brisbane

I am writing to you to express the concern of the Sunshine Coast Councils, the City of Caloundra and the Shires of Maroochy and Noosa, about the apparent impasse between the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments regarding the sinking of HMAS Brisbane to provide a valuable component of our tourism industry for dive purposes.

While not wishing to canvass the many complex issues involved in the sinking of a ship off the Queensland coast, the Councils wish to comment on what appears to be a major issue, and that is the location of the proposed site for the HMAS Brisbane and the impact this will have on shipping.

I understand the favoured site selected by your Department is 0.8 of a nautical mile from a navigational buoy marking the eastern extremity of Gneering Shoal, which is part of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority's national aids to navigation network for commercial shipping. I also understand AMSA is concerned about the possible interference this site would have on commercial shipping, given the large number of vessels that use the shipping channels in this area.

The Queensland Government has proposed an alternative site in State waters to resolve this issue, however you have not agreed to sink the ship at this site to resolve the matter.

This delay is causing much adverse local reaction to the impasse. The Sunshine Coast Daily, the local daily paper for the region, has two articles in the 17 July edition, including an editorial.

The three SunROC Councils—

Caloundra City, Noosa and Maroochy shires—

urge you as Minister for Defence to resolve this impasse by agreeing to the State Government's proposed site in State waters.

We fear that unless this can occur your Government's election promise to locate the HMAS Brisbane off the Sunshine Coast will not be fulfilled.

With kind regards

Graeme Pearce

Executive Director.

I have been advised, in talks with the Premier and also the minister who is present, that we are still waiting for correspondence promised from Senator Hill on this issue. We were promised that we would receive that correspondence almost a month ago, and we have not received it. These are not my criticisms of the federal member for Fisher and the federal government. Sunshine Coast councils are calling on both the minister and the local member to tidy this issue up, finish it off and put it to bed. That way the Queensland government, which has had a gutful of the inaction by the feds on this issue, can get on with other business. I commend the bill before the House. I commend the minister for the work that he has done.