



Speech by

Neil Roberts

MEMBER FOR NUDGE

Hansard Wednesday, 6 October 2004

MARINE PARKS BILL

Mr NEIL ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (2.09 p.m.): I want to say a few words in support of the bill. In doing so I want to outline some of the activities being undertaken by Earnshaw State College at Banyo in my electorate to increase students' knowledge not just about the environment in general but about the importance of Moreton Bay—which is a subject covered in this bill—and the adjacent Boondall Wetlands.

The bill arises out of a policy commitment made during the 2001 election campaign which principally focused on reviewing and strengthening the regulatory protection of our marine parks. The main purpose of the bill is to provide for the conservation of the marine environment. As I have indicated, for constituents in my electorate the visible need and impact of that objective is in the protection of Moreton Bay, which forms the eastern boundary of the Nudgee electorate. The Marine Parks Bill strengthens the multiple use model which is currently in use in Moreton Bay. This essentially means that areas within declared marine parks may be used for a range of legitimate purposes such as fishing, shipping, tourism, ports, aquaculture, extractive industries and marina development, all of which need to comply with relevant appropriate legislative provisions as they apply outside the provisions of this bill.

I was interested to listen to the member for Lockyer's contribution about the SunAqua proposal. He asserted that the campaign by the National Party had some influence on the final outcome of that matter. The facts of the SunAqua proposal are that it was considered by due process—which the government is required to undertake—and at the end of that process the government properly made a decision based on the report following that due process that it was not going to proceed.

As I have said, the Marine Parks Bill strengthens the multiple use model. In addition to that, the bill provides for zoning of particular areas. Two particular zoning areas can be established under the act. They are, firstly, the marine national park zones which are areas set aside for complete protection due to their environmental significance and, secondly, conservation park zones which will allow for activities such as fishing, bait netting, recreational collecting and oyster culture.

An important aspect of the bill is the definition of conservation. It is defined to mean 'the protection and maintenance of the environment while allowing for its ecologically sustainable use'. As I have indicated, that is in keeping with the multiple use model contained within the legislation and a model which, I might say, has broad community support.

There are a number of other important aspects of the bill which I am sure will be covered by other speakers, but it is important to say that this is a significant piece of legislation which will enhance our ability to manage and protect important environmental and economic resources like Moreton Bay in a sustainable way.

As I have indicated, sitting adjacent to Moreton Bay in my electorate are the spectacular Boondall Wetlands. I want to make a brief comment on an initiative which I think is playing a significant role in highlighting not only the importance of Moreton Bay and the marine park there in the protection of that environment but also the protection of the Boondall Wetlands. It involves a cultural and educational exchange agreement between Earnshaw State College at Banyo and the Yatsu-Minami Elementary School in Narashino, which is just outside Tokyo in Japan.

That agreement establishes a relationship between two schools in two countries. It essentially involves year 6 students or the equivalent in Japan and the year 6 students at Earnshaw State College. In June of this year the students from both schools engaged in a landmark exchange which was an Internet based video link—I am not 100 per cent sure of the technology—where the students exchanged information and ideas about protecting the wetlands in Japan and the wetlands and adjacent areas in Queensland. Translators helped the students communicate with each other in both Japanese and English. The event has stimulated considerable interest from the Federal Ministry of Education in Japan and also from Education officials from the Chiba Prefecture where Narashino is located. In November of this year a further Internet based link between the classrooms in the two cities is planned to again talk about the importance of the local environment and, in particular, the Boondall Wetlands.

In addition to the Internet based exchange, students exchange reports each year on the state of the wetlands and the surrounds which are translated into both Japanese and English. Currently there is group of volunteers from the Yatsu-Higata Wetlands, which are located in Narashino, visiting the Boondall Wetlands and the shores of Moreton Bay as part of an annual exchange which occurs under this agreement which was signed last year between the Brisbane City Council, Education Queensland and the city of Narashino. Some of the year 6 students from Earnshaw State College are participating in activities at Nudgee Beach today, furthering that agreement.

With those few words, I want to endorse the exciting initiatives which will arise out of this bill and help the cause of protecting and preserving our marine parks in Queensland. Accordingly, I commend the bill to the House.