



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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MOOLOOLAH RIVER, DREDGING

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (9.18 pm): The Mooloolaba Spit and the Mooloolah River are special parts of the Sunshine Coast. I have called on the minister for transport to rule out dumping spoils from dredging, which has to be carried out, on the public open space at the end of Mooloolaba Spit or anywhere on the Mooloolaba Spit. This is a beautiful area and heavily vegetated. I have written to the minister advising that I believe it would be totally inappropriate to dump dredging spoils in this area. The river is a vital part of our lives not only for those who rely upon it for their commercial operations, particularly in the fishing industry, but all of those who value its great environmental beauty. It is something that we are very proud of.

The river is something that we are very proud of. It needs appropriate dredging to maintain a safe harbour—a safe navigable passage—but for spoils to be dumped in this area, even in a so-called temporary way on the spit, would be extremely destructive. To date, there has been silence from the transport minister about the plans. Yet the rumours are strong. If, in fact, those rumours are false, let the transport minister deny them, because we believe very strongly that we cannot afford a decision to be foisted upon us by a Brisbane based bureaucracy. In the past decisions have been made with regard to the spit with no consultation. That is why our concerns are so great.

We have also seen a Mooloolaba Spit master plan, which was not released before the election. It is a land based plan. It ignores a number of water issues that we also believe must be addressed, such as water quality, live-aboards and the ongoing concern about the illegal dumping of sewage in the river and the lack of monitoring.

I challenge the Premier to maintain the Mooloolaba Spit for the people. The coalition has a policy of no more high-rise on the spit. I would be delighted if this state Labor government matched that policy and also opposed any moves to sell off any crown land in this area. This public open space and those other areas that are under crown control are too vital to be sold off. Certainly, any higher density in this area would be inappropriate. It is a fragile area and higher-density development must be rejected. The area is too congested now, but more high-rise in the spit would be totally unacceptable.

We need to see more areas repatriated to the people, to ensure that there is a respect for the environment in this area and that mistakes are not made in terms of locking up this land for future development when it should be in public ownership and available for all generations in the future. As I said, I would be delighted if the government matched our policies in this area.