



Speech by

**Mark McArdle**

**MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA**

Hansard Tuesday, 6 June 2006

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## **PUMICESTONE PASSAGE; MEN'S HEALTH**

**Mr McArdle** (Caloundra—Lib) (12.10 pm): Today I want to talk about two issues—one affecting Caloundra itself and the other the male population throughout this state. Firstly, I want to touch upon the erosion on Bribie Island. I, with a few locals, have been to the island now on three separate occasions to inspect the damage caused to it by the sea cutting into the northern tip of the island. The gap where this has occurred is approximately 20 metres wide, and on two or three occasions in the past number of months the sea has actually broken through into Pumicestone Passage. The distance would be about 50 metres wide at the mouth of the breakthrough. We all know that the debate on erosion—that is, how it occurs and what we should do about it—is an emotional one. There is, however, no dispute as to the sea starting to cut, and if allowed to continue it will break through into the passage, severing the northern tip of the island from the balance.

Depending on who one talks to, the reasons for the breakthrough vary. One theory is that the dredging in the shipping channel on the seaward side of the island and the removal of that sand to other areas has not allowed the sand on that side of the island to replenish. In addition, there is the question of oyster beds that were laid many years ago within Pumicestone Passage causing alteration to the flow of water and hence the erosion on the Pumicestone Passage side of the island. The number of boats and craft that use the passage coming very close to Bribie Island and the lapping of the water on a continual basis adds to the erosion problem. Irrespective, the erosion on the passage side of the island is devastating when one sees the number of trees that have fallen in or are falling into the passage simply in the last couple of weeks.

**Mrs Carryn Sullivan:** Have you been up there lately?

**Mr McArdle:** Yes, I have—in the last two weeks. In the last two weeks I have been up there. Further, the change of the flow of water within the passage has caused a significant build-up of sand within the passage, and I have been advised that the change in water temperature brought about by the shallowing of the water will mean that fish will not swim in the area. The long-term impact of a breakthrough is unknown, but to allow it to continue unabated is not the answer. People argue that nature needs to take care of itself. I do not believe we can sustain that argument any longer given the impact we have had upon nature. Development brings with it changes in the natural order of things, and the greater the development the greater the alteration. Perhaps in years gone by we could have said that nature will mend or nature will tend to itself. That can no longer apply. I repeat: that can no longer apply. If we wish to continue to enjoy our environment, then we do have an obligation to assist nature in regenerating or repairing itself.

There are certainly many questions with regard to Pumicestone Passage and Bribie Island and the impact of a breakthrough. If we do not take into account or at least consider and study what the impact is going to be and then put in train a course of action to arrest or reverse that alteration, we will be doing future generations a great disservice. Irrespective, there is an obligation on us to look at this matter and have it studied by experts. Ignoring it is not an option, as this government intends to do. The question was discussed at length at a recent public forum at which there were in excess of 200 people in attendance. There was a consensus that there needed to be a study undertaken to establish what the impact would be

if the island was broken through by the sea and the necessity to prevent any immediate breakthrough from occurring. I intend to write directly to the minister for environment to obtain approval to sandbank the seaward side of Bribie Island to stop any potential further breakthrough so that a study can be undertaken. I repeat that leaving it as is is not an option.

The second point I wish to raise is the urgency that concerns men's health issues in obtaining appropriate funding across all levels of government. No-one is denying the necessity for women and women's issues to be funded, researched, studied and potentially cured. However, there is without doubt a reluctance for men to acknowledge the same necessity with regard to their own bodies. Talk to any GP and they will tell you that men do not go to a doctor unless they are sick. Women, on the other hand, go to the doctor for a general check-up, mammogram and Pap smear test. For some reason men do not acknowledge the necessity to look after themselves, with very sad and dire consequences in many cases. We are slowly starting to change that outlook, but we have a long way to go.

The local Masonic Lodge in Caloundra is holding a men's health seminar on 19 August, and I know that a number of schools in Caloundra and throughout the Sunshine Coast have held father and son nights. These are positive steps dealing with important issues for men. The relationships we have with our fathers and sons and the knowledge of the need to look after ourselves, which means regular medical check-ups, are critical. Hopefully the days are slowly coming to an end when men go to the doctor only when they are feeling sick and the days of regular check-ups are becoming part of our lifestyle. As I said, no male is going to argue that women should not have money spent on research, cure and prevention, but we need to get a similar mindset in relation to men's concerns. Issues such as prostate cancer, heart disease, obesity and the like will kill men just as quickly as breast cancer will kill women.

Time expired.