



Speech by

**Ronan Lee**

**MEMBER FOR INDOOROOPILLY**

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## **WILD RIVERS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr LEE** (Indooroopilly—ALP) (3.35 pm): I am delighted to rise in the House today to speak in support of this wonderful piece of legislation, the Wild Rivers and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I did intend to simply say that I feel this is an historic day for Queensland because we are debating this legislation, but I think I should reflect on some comments made by some of the members opposite and say that I think it is an historic day for two reasons—that is, one, we have introduced and are about to pass this excellent Wild Rivers and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and, two, today marks the day that the people of Queensland get to see firsthand the complete and utter neutering of the Queensland Liberal Party.

What is happening today is what people like me have been saying is the problem with the Liberal Party all over Brisbane and all over Queensland—that is, they do not know what they are doing. They have gone into a negotiation with the fine folk opposite—and I am looking in particular at the member for Darling Downs—and they have been rolled by the member for Darling Downs and the member for Charters Towers.

**Mr HOPPER:** I rise on a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I find that offensive. I did not roll the Liberal Party. I ask for that to be withdrawn. I also ask you to consider that this has nothing to do with the current legislation before the House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hoolihan): I ask the member to withdraw.

**Mr LEE:** I withdraw anything the member found offensive. Let me just say this: what is occurring today is the National Party is completely rolling the Liberal Party. This means that people who want to vote for a Liberal candidate in the next state election are really voting for a National Party candidate. If people live in Moggill, St Lucia, Jindalee or Ascot, at the next state election if they vote Liberal they will be voting for—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Perhaps the speaker could come back to the subject of the bill.

**Mr LEE:** I will, because what I am saying is that those people will be voting for the National Party's environmental policies. This is the National Party that opposed our historic ban on land clearing, and it is now opposing this great piece of wild rivers legislation.

The member for Hinchinbrook came in here earlier today full of bluster, talking about comments that he believed the Premier had made at the Atherton community cabinet meeting about wild rivers—a meeting that the member for Hinchinbrook did not even attend. What was his defence? His defence was, 'You people claim to believe everything you hear on the ABC.' I think the ABC is a wonderful organisation. I actually believe a great deal of the things I hear on the ABC, but let me tell you, Mr Deputy Speaker, exactly what you would believe if you listened to the ABC at any time over the last three months when it reported on state politics? You would hear that the Liberal Party and the National Party are at each other's throats, that they are about to explode and that they cannot govern Queensland. That is what you would hear.

I wonder when the member for Hinchinbrook will set forth his views on what the ABC said about AgForce and wild rivers. I wonder if he takes to heart as much the ABC's fine reporting about the

outrageous and dishevelled state of his own party and its relationship with its junior, junior, junior coalition colleague—that is, the Liberal Party.

I am delighted to support this legislation. Members will recall that in 2004 the Premier made an election commitment to identify 19 potential wild river systems in Queensland. I feel I must address the comments made by the member for Hinchinbrook when he said it was part of some sort of grubby deal. I think his words were it was part of 'a preference deal in 2004 with the Queensland Greens'. Can I place on the record that I actually believe I am one of the people in this parliament who has spoken up most ferociously in support of the wild rivers policy. I think I have done a fair bit of work on that.

I inform the member for Hinchinbrook that I did not get the Greens' preferences in 2004. They were not doing deals with me. This is good policy. This is nothing to do with the way the National Party wants to do things. The problem is that when good policy is placed before the people opposite they are so used to grubby political deals that they just cannot see it. I suspect that the reason the Liberals are not in here supporting this great legislation is that they are trapped in that Santo Santoro, Caltabiano, Michael Johnson view of the world: they have great policy placed before them but all they can see is a grubby deal. It is a disgrace. This is great legislation; it is nothing to do with deals. It is great legislation because it is great legislation.

These river systems were selected because their natural value is largely intact due to low-impact land use and low levels of development. They are not all necessarily pristine but they are in pretty good shape. It is widely accepted that the best way to preserve river health is to manage impacts throughout the catchment and along the river itself. This legislation does precisely that.

One particular wild river that is very close to my heart is the Gregory River in north Queensland. I took a number of members of this parliament to north Queensland. The member for Redlands will remember the trip well; the former member for Ashgrove was there, too. Together with Larissa Cordner, the wild rivers campaigner from the Wilderness Society, and Rupert Quinlan, the wild rivers campaigner from the Queensland Conservation Council, we spent some days looking not just at the Gregory River, which we looked at in detail, but also other wild rivers in north Queensland. It was an experience for me. I went back to my electorate and spoke with great passion to my community groups and constituents about the importance of protecting these wonderful natural assets. This piece of legislation does that and I am delighted to be able to support it today.