



Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

Hansard Thursday, 29 October 2009

BRUCE WEIR

Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—LNP) (11.50 pm): On Tuesday afternoon the member for Cook addressed this House on the Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and was critical of my absence and for not putting my support publicly on the record in relation to the government's draconian vegetation bill. However, I am puzzled and still bewildered about why the member wasted valuable time and Hansard resources in his whole speech by slamming me and saying that if I do not support the bill then I am not supporting the farmers who could be affected by the sand extraction proposed development above the Bruce Weir on the Walsh River.

It is ironic that the member for Cook in desperation tried in vain to tie the Walsh River into this piece of ludicrous legislation. So, for the public record, as with the vegetation management regrowth clearing moratorium, I vehemently oppose the Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I do, however, support the protection of the Walsh River above the Bruce Weir, which I would describe as the Kakadu of the Dimbulah and Mutchilba area. The member for Cook knows my opinion on this. I do not support sandmining above the Bruce Weir on the Walsh River one iota because of the value this area has to farmers and to the community.

If the member for Cook had bothered to do his research, he would have mysteriously discovered that the riparian vegetation along the Walsh River is already protected under the previous Vegetation Management Act and a quarry material allocation can be granted pursuant to the Water Act 2000. It puzzles me why the member for Cook wasted time and valuable resources pursuing my position when he knows that his own minister has the executive powers to declare the area a high nature conservation area but has not, despite deputations from farmers and me to take such action.

I table a letter I received from the Minister for Natural Resources in which he states that 'there are no grounds that would currently warrant the cancellation of the allocation', even though section 290 of the Water Act says that the chief executive officer can cancel an allocation if he believes there will be degradation in the condition of the watercourse.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 8 October 2009, from the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade to Mr Shane Knuth MP, in relation to a development application for sand extraction above Bruce Weir on the Walsh River near Dimbulah [\[1230\]](#).

The minister has effectively washed his hands of the whole issue and passed the buck to other authorities. The Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability mirrored the same by her response to the petition that the member for Cook sponsored. Both ministers have set the perception that they care for the environment and that they are passionate about protecting the reef and rivers, yet they have introduced draconian legislation to make people's lives a misery while protecting nothing. When it comes to the protection of the Kakadu of the Dimbulah and Mutchilba area, both ministers are invisible. But had there been a permanent colony of flying foxes situated above the Bruce Weir, the sand extraction application would have been thrown out before any due process.

The member for Cook should get out of his subterranean existence and start preaching to his own minister, who has all the reserve powers to protect the Walsh River above the Bruce Weir. It is also ironic

that in the case of the Walsh River it is the farmers who are leading the fight against the sandmining and other mining proposals across the state. It is the farmers who have the environment's best interests at heart as their future depends on the protection of the environment.

(Time expired)