



Speech by

Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Hansard Tuesday, 23 March 2010

NATURAL RESOURCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (9.27 pm): I, too, rise to speak briefly in the debate on the Natural Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. As my good colleague the member for Gregory just mentioned, the LNP is opposing this bill, and I am pleased about that. For the second time today we are seeing legislation being rushed through this House to facilitate the sale of Forestry Plantations Queensland.

Government members interjected.

Mr POWELL: I will get to the rush in a minute; just give me a moment. I have put on the record quite considerably my opposition to the sale of Forestry Plantations Queensland and particularly my concern regarding the conditions that are going to be imposed on the workers of that organisation, and I will talk about that later.

I would like to briefly begin by touching on the amendments to the Water Act. These changes are certainly welcome. I have had quite a few constituents over the 12 months that I have been in this role raise their concerns about the varying definitions of watercourses. In my electorate it is less to do with tidal and more to do with non-tidal watercourses. The explanatory notes go into some detail about this. There is quite a level of disagreement among the definitions. It is good to see that this will clarify exactly what is within a property and what is not within a property. It moves away from natural flow which is excellent. It gives some certainty to the property owners, but it also gives some certainty to the landholders' riparian rights. I acknowledge that the minister stated in his second reading speech—

For land with a non-tidal watercourse boundary, a change to a boundary on resurvey will not diminish a landholder's riparian rights in any way. Landowners adjoining a watercourse will still be able to take water for stock and domestic purposes, exercise the right of access and bring action against trespassers.

I think this part of the bill is actually a very welcome part. It does give that clarity around definition that most landholders are seeking while still acknowledging their riparian rights and their access to that riparian area.

I would also like to briefly echo the concerns of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee with regard to amendments to the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003 and the Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003. I note that the explanatory notes suggest this is to amend the definition of the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander native title party for an area to put beyond doubt the identity of the native title party for cultural and heritage purposes in the situation where there are two or more previously registered claimants for an area.

I would touch on the concerns that the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee raised in its *Legislation Alert* around the fact that this may not have respect to Aboriginal tradition and island custom. When I referred earlier to the bill being rushed through, one of my principal concerns is that the committee has asked the minister to address the fact that the legislation may not give consideration to Aboriginal tradition

or island custom. We as a committee would have received a response from the minister on those questions. We are clearly not going to be given the opportunity to do so. It would be appreciated if in his summing-up the minister could make some effort to address the concerns raised by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee, particularly on pages 11 and 12 of *Legislation Alert No. 4 of 2010*.

Finally, let me return very briefly, as I have already spoken once on this today, to my concerns around the changes to the Forestry Act 1959, its regulations and certain other acts. The changes are quite extensive. Some would say they are good in the sense that they will ensure there is continued access to forestry plantation land once the sale goes through. There is certainty for apiarists and other recreational users of that land. Again the question is: why are we rushing this through? We know that the sale is going through and that is why we are rushing it through.

I would like to refer briefly to the comments made by the member for Yeerongpilly in relation to my speech earlier today. He said that if Forestry Plantations Queensland workers have concerns I should be bringing them to him or the minister. Let me say that if the union representing those Forestry Plantations Queensland workers is not getting the outcomes it is expecting from its meetings with the minister, with the parliamentary secretary or with anyone else involved in this then I am seriously concerned that I would be wasting the time of the workers in my electorate by bringing them to see the parliamentary secretary.

Mr Finn: More effective.

Mr POWELL: I will certainly endeavour to take the member for Yeerongpilly up on his request to bring them to him to have their concerns raised. They are concerns around the conditions of employment that they will have following the sale of Forestry Plantations Queensland, particularly the issue that they may be asked or forced to relocate their place of work. Obviously I have workshops in Beerburrum and also nurseries around Glass House Mountains. If they are going to be shut down and staff are expected to move to Toolara to the east of Gympie, that is going to have seriously detrimental impacts on those workers and their families.

Mr Finn: It's been rumoured for 10 years.

Mr POWELL: Here is an opportunity to dismiss the rumour once and for all and ensure that those workers have that certainty about where their workplace will be. I hope this sale is not an excuse to shut down those facilities in Beerburrum or Glass House Mountains and shift those staff away from that area, taking their families with them. With those few comments, I would like to confirm my support for the member for Callide and his comments. As I said, I am pleased that the LNP will be opposing this bill.