




Speech by

Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Thursday, 7 April 2011

NORTH STRADBROKE ISLAND PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABILITY BILL

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Greenslopes—ALP) (Minister for Education and Industrial Relations) (2.58 pm): Today I rise to speak in favour of and provide my support for the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability Bill 2011. This bill represents the start of a new era of success and prosperity for the North Stradbroke Island community. As a result of this landmark legislation, mining will be gradually phased out and the enduring beauty and environmental values of this fantastic island will be preserved and protected for future generations.

Furthermore, the passage of this bill will provide the catalyst for North Stradbroke Island to fulfil its potential as a great ecotourism destination. I firmly believe that there is a brighter future in tourism, particularly ecotourism, for North Stradbroke Island than there is in an industry that is systematically degrading the environmental values of this special and unique part of Queensland. I also firmly believe that the transitional arrangements outlined by the Minister for Environment provide a fair deal for the mining industry. The end of large scale sandmining on North Stradbroke Island will not occur until 2019, eight years away. This extraordinarily long notice period provides the mining company and mineworkers with ample time to prepare for this shift to more sustainable arrangements. I would ask all honourable members to think about and reflect on this time period. In eight years a small child taking their first tentative steps into our education system by starting prep will reach year 7 and become a leader in their school community. In eight years a young student in high school can be transformed into a fully qualified teacher, lawyer or engineer.

The residents of the electorate of Greenslopes, which I am privileged to represent in this chamber, support the protection of North Stradbroke Island because they know it is the right thing to do for future generations of Queenslanders. One of those Greenslopes residents who is a strong advocate for the environment and North Stradbroke Island as well as Indigenous issues is Dr Robert Anderson OAM, better known to most of us as Uncle Bob Anderson. Uncle Bob is a man who has dedicated his life to bringing Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities closer together, and he has done so with the utmost recognition, respect and trust. Uncle Bob is a Quandamooka man. He is a champion of reconciliation, a champion of the environment and, if you will indulge my parochialism, a champion of the Greenslopes electorate where he resides. His views and those of his people—the Quandamooka, the traditional owners of North Stradbroke Island—need to be taken into account in this matter, and they support this important initiative. That is exactly what the Bligh Labor government has done.

We are now a decade into the 21st century, yet the backward environmental views of those opposite—views that reflect a time long ago—are still evident. They were staunch opponents of the protection of Fraser Island, a position which history has shown to be foolish, flawed and simply wrong. Fraser Island is now World Heritage listed and is an icon for the ecotourism industry. Their opposition to its protection by a Labor government two decades ago was short-sighted, and so is the Liberal National Party's position on North Stradbroke Island today. It seems that, although time has passed, nothing has changed with respect to those on the opposite side of the chamber. They are still unable to offer a

progressive, contemporary vision for modern Queensland. All they offer is a return to the dark old days when the environment was ignored.

This bill represents a shift from the old to the new for North Stradbroke Island. It will open up new opportunities that will deliver a long-term, sustainable future for the island, its traditional owners and its residents. I congratulate the Minister for Environment and Resource Management on this important and historic bill. I commend the bill to the House.