



Speech by


**Mark Ryan**

**MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD**

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## **NORTH STRADBROKE ISLAND PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABILITY BILL**

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (12.09 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability Bill 2011. Like many members of this House, I have enjoyed many holidays and visits to Straddie. I remember my first visit as a young boy with my family and our daily excursions to Brown Lake and Blue Lake and swimming at Main Beach, Point Lookout. Straddie is a great place that needs to be looked after for future generations. Tough decisions need to be made now to ensure that Straddie is environmentally and economically sustainable, not only today but also tomorrow. This bill is about getting the balance right to support the sustainable Straddie of today and the sustainable Straddie of tomorrow. Members on our side of the chamber have given the concept of a sustainable Straddie much thought. In fact, I was part of a delegation of members that met with stakeholders from North Stradbroke Island last year. I thank those people for their time and their insights. I also thank the departmental staff for coordinating those meetings with stakeholders and for providing members with very detailed and informative briefings.

This bill represents a balanced and pragmatic approach that will see a phased end to mining and an assisted transition towards more ecologically sustainable land uses in the North Stradbroke Island region. This bill permanently ends mining in the North Stradbroke Island region by 2025 so that we can protect and restore the region's environmental values through the staged creation of protected areas that are to be jointly managed by the state and the traditional owners of the region, the Quandamooka people.

It is important to acknowledge that, regardless of the bill, mining on North Stradbroke Island would come to an end at some stage in the future as the resource is depleted. I note particularly the specific public statements by one North Stradbroke Island mining company of its intention to shut down the Yarraman mine in 2015. Through a timetable for the phased end to mining on North Stradbroke Island, this bill provides clarity and certainty to stakeholders about the future of mining on the island. It provides clear notice to stakeholders, particularly those employed in the North Stradbroke Island mining industry, and several years prior to mining actually ending, to prepare for the transition to a more sustainable Straddie. Island residents, business owners, those currently employed by mining on the island and others should be confident that they do not have to make this transition alone. An economic transition strategy will guide and assist the community towards an economy based on more ecologically sustainable land uses. Such a transition will take time.

However, the Queensland government is committed to supporting business development, investment and growth in Queensland. Some stakeholders have raised concerns that the decision to end mining on North Stradbroke Island could increase perceptions amongst the business sector that there is an increased level of investment risk in Queensland. This is an important and legitimate concern. To limit and manage such perceptions about investment risk, the bill applies to a confined geographic location. That is to say, the bill applies only to the North Stradbroke Island region, which comprises North Stradbroke and Peel islands. The bill does not in any way impact on mining activities in any other part of Queensland outside the North Stradbroke Island region.

This bill minimises impacts on the existing rights of the mining companies that operate the three active mines on North Stradbroke Island. In fact, the bill renews or extends certain already expired mining leases on North Stradbroke Island to ensure the orderly transition of the phasing out of mining. There was no guarantee that those leases would have otherwise been renewed. The decision to end mining is restricted only to North Stradbroke Island due to its outstanding natural and cultural values and the need to resolve native title issues. This legislation is one component of a broader vision to resolve outstanding land tenure and native title issues with the traditional owners of the region, something that successive Queensland governments have been unable to resolve for over 15 years. That is a major achievement for all, including the broader Queensland community.

The government is also intervening to proactively stimulate an alternative economy on North Stradbroke Island over the period of the phase-out of mining. This will assist in providing opportunities for business and the community to pursue and develop long-term economic development and growth activities. The government remains committed at the state level to providing an investment environment that is capable of supporting a mix of economic activities that contribute to a prosperous and resilient economy and environment. Queensland is a great place for business investment and a great place to visit. This bill supports a sustainable Straddie and means that Straddie will continue to be a great place to invest, live and visit.

I take this opportunity to commend the Premier, the minister, the ministerial staff, the departmental staff and community members for their hard work in respect of this bill and the future of North Stradbroke Island. I commend the bill to the House and I encourage all members to support it.