



Speech by


**Shane Knuth**

**MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE**

Hansard Thursday, 24 March 2011

---

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—LNP) (12.17 pm): I rise to speak to the Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The amendments proposed in this bill are true to form for a government that is determined to erode and destroy the rights of landowners under the pretence of protecting the environment. Opposing scientific viewpoints are held up for ridicule and contempt because they do not agree with the accepted government position.

This legislation was written in the belief that sea levels are going to rise and we must do nothing, otherwise there will be a catastrophe. On Tuesday, 27 October 2009 the *Guardian* published an article headed 'Climate change threatens Australia's coastal lifestyle, report warns'. The article states—

Australian government environmental committee report warns that thousands of miles of coastline are under threat from rising sea levels and suggests banning people from living in vulnerable areas.

It continues—

Beach culture is as much a part of the Australian identity as the bush and barbecues, but that that could have to change according to a government report that raises the unsettling prospect of banning its citizens from coastal regions at risk of rising seas.

I repeat: that was referring to a government report. Obviously, governments favour reports that suit their own agendas. That is why we are seeing a carbon tax, because it has come from a government report.

The issue at present is not global warming, it is not rising sea levels. There are a lot of battlers out there and the last thing they want is to be hit with a new tax when they are struggling to make ends meet. They have been hit with cyclones and floods, and the last thing they need is a new tax because a government report recommended it.

Through the passage of environmental laws in this state we are seeing not only the death of ownership but also the eradication of the rights of citizens to hold government accountable. The question needs to be asked why a government that has allowed the coal seam gas industry to go ahead without adequate checks and balances is now invoking environmental concerns to justify conferring Gestapo-like authority on a government agency which comprises normal workers. This legislation gives overreaching power and authority to normal workers to invade property. Those who believe they own the property for which they hold the title deed are finding that they no longer have the right to determine who has access to their property and when. They do not have the right to determine what is done with the land that has belonged to them. Even police are required to obtain a search warrant to enter a person's property to prosecute criminality, yet these EPA workers are given more rights than the police.

This legislation makes criminals of anyone who believes they have the right to refuse access to the EPA. It gives extended powers to the EPA to threaten landowners with prosecution. This is very similar to other measures that this Labor Party has put through this House over the years. It introduced the 'spy in the sky' satellites, the 'dob in a farmer' hotline, the tree police, the water police—it does not stop. This is

bad legislation. When the government introduced ERMPs it was all about the perception of protecting the Great Barrier Reef, but nothing was mentioned about the nutrients that run off the rainforest or the nutrients that run from city areas.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr O'Brien): Order! I have given you a fair bit of leeway. I would ask that you now return to the provisions in the bill currently before the House.

**Mr KNUTH:** Sea levels are not rising and we are not going to see the catastrophe that this government is portraying.