



Speech by


**David Gibson**

**MEMBER FOR GYMPIE**

Hansard Wednesday, 22 August 2012

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## **MINES LEGISLATION (STREAMLINING) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—LNP) (5.54 pm): I rise to also make a contribution to the Mines Legislation (Streamlining) Amendment Bill 2012 and in doing so note the contributions that have occurred before mine. I do not intend to go into the detail that many of my colleagues have already presented on this bill. I thank them for their information.

As has been noted, the committee's investigation into this bill was conducted within a tight time frame. Whilst that may not have been ideal, I do wish to thank the committee staff for their great work in being able to pull together all the activities that occur. I particularly want to thank the members of the public as well—those who made submissions and those who presented to the public hearing, both in person and via telephone link. I think it highlights the effectiveness of this committee's arrangements at work within the Queensland parliament that we can, in a truncated time frame, engage with the public in such a way that they are able to be heard. Listening to those opposite who have spoken, one would think that the truncated time frame actually denied them any opportunity to be heard—far from it. Whilst it was not ideal, they did have an opportunity to put forward their views and their submissions were heard.

I also want to thank the departmental officers. I know that they worked particularly hard in responding to the committee's questions and concerns, again, within that tight time frame. That was appreciated by the committee and the parliament, and I thank them for that. I ask the minister to pass that on to his departmental staff.

The electorate of Gympie has a strong mining connection. Indeed, Gympie is a township that was established as a result of the discovery of gold. James Nash, as we know from history, did discover gold in the area next to what is now the town hall of Gympie and, in doing so, saved the state of Queensland as an early colony when it was almost bankrupt in the late 1800s.

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Mr GIBSON:** The member for Lockyer has been reading my notes, because what would have happened had James Nash found gold under the legislative requirements that exist currently? I can tell honourable members this: the state of Queensland would not have been saved. We would have lost this state because we would not have had the opportunities to embrace the mining of gold that was so necessary to bring about the wealth and rewards that this state has gained. What we are seeing with this legislation today—and I want to acknowledge this because I think it is important—which is based upon the previous bill, the Resources Legislation (Balance, Certainty and Efficiency) Amendment Bill 2011, is that we are removing that unnecessary regulation and red tape and bringing efficiency back into our operations. That in itself is a critical component. The explanatory notes to the bill highlight—

The purpose of the Bill is to provide the legislative changes necessary to:

- clarify the legislative framework relating to compulsory acquisition of land as it relates to resources interests ...
- implement part of the Streamlining Approvals Project ...
- confirm and clarify current jurisdictional arrangements in relation to the regulation of hazardous chemicals, major hazard facilities and operating plants ... and

- provide increased regulatory certainty for all parties involved in the State's emerging Coal Seam Gas ... to Liquid Natural Gas ... industry ...

I wish to focus my remarks on two of the bill's purposes: the streamlining component and the state's emerging coal seam gas to LNG industry. In doing so, I point out, as I flagged, that a large part of this bill is based upon the Resources Legislation (Balance, Certainty and Efficiency) Amendment Bill, which was introduced in the previous parliament. That is important. Why? Because it blows apart the falsehood that we have heard from others that there has been no public consultation in relation to this bill. Such a large part of this bill was already in the public domain due to the introduction of the previous bill. Indeed, during the public hearing we heard that consultation on elements of this bill—and the previous bill—started as far back as 2009. However, there is a valid criticism, which is that the consultation was with stakeholders and not broadly with the community. I believe—and it has been reported in the committee's report—that the department could do better.

In fact, if we take anything from this particular piece of legislation it is to understand that, whilst, of course, we must consult with stakeholders, there is an appropriate time to also be consulting with the broader public.

**Mr Cox:** It is better than it would have been, or was.

**Mr GIBSON:** I take that interjection, but it is important that we keep that in mind. I had the misfortune of listening to those opposite, and I have come to one conclusion: they have spiked the Kool-Aid on level 9. The contributions we heard could be nothing more than delusional ramblings because of the Kool-Aid being spiked. Clearly, there is a problem on level 9 and we need to get security up there to check before anything dangerous happens to those members.

Let me take a moment to, in the tradition of that great TV show that my kids love so much, *Mythbusters*, bust a few of the myths we heard from those opposite. I will start with the time frame, because we heard from them that there was no opportunity for public consultation. We have already shown by submissions that, whilst the time was short, there was public consultation and views were heard. My adage in life—it is one that many people subscribe to—is that if you want to get a job done you should give it to a busy person. Well, this committee got on with the job and reviewed this legislation and, I believe, has put forward a good report.

The member for South Brisbane would like us to believe that it was a tick-and-flick exercise, that we rubber-stamped the bill. But then, when the Kool-Aid kicked in, she used this very report to criticise the government. Hold on a minute! Does that mean that this committee actually critically looked at the legislation and was providing advice back to the government? I think so. But how could we rubber-stamp if all we are is a mouthpiece of the government? The member for South Brisbane is exposed for the sham that she put forward in this parliament.

This committee has done its job. This committee has a responsibility to this parliament and to the people of Queensland to examine legislation, to be critical and cast an eye across it to ensure it provides the best outcomes for the people of Queensland. That is exactly what we have done. It is evident in the recommendations within the report. I note that the statement of reservations does not provide anything other than a whinge. That is the calibre of the contribution we have seen from those opposite. Instead of actually being involved in the process, they want to throw stones from the side, failing to recognise that under their government this process started—and, indeed, the lack of consultation is a fault of the department, not of either government.

Let us bust another myth, and that is what we heard from the member for Bundamba when she rattled the tin of fear and tried to make the people of Ipswich believe that there would be mines on their doorsteps as a result of this legislation. As has been mentioned by others but I wish to reinforce, the urban restricted area provisions are not damaged because of this bill. RA 384, which is gazetted, is in force and provides that for any town in Queensland with a population over 1,000 people there is to be a two-kilometre buffer. Myth: busted. The member for Bundamba has been exposed for arousing fear, not for reporting on what is accurate.

**Mr Grimwade:** And not for the first time.

**Mr GIBSON:** I take that interjection. What we have, though, and what this committee was able to determine is that, clearly, RA 384 is not enough. There is concern that there are communities within our great state of Queensland of a smaller size than 1,000 people that need to be protected, and the appropriate opportunity to do that is through the statutory regulatory planning process. Indeed, that is what we are seeing. No fear campaign should be mounted on this legislation. There should be a collective cheer—a cheer that this government understands regional Queensland, a cheer that this government understands smaller communities, a cheer that this government is doing something rather than what we saw from the previous government, which was nothing more than spin.

Another myth I wish to bust is about the lack of consultation. I have alluded to it, but I cannot allow the member for South Brisbane to enter into this House—and I appreciate that she is only new to this parliament. She was not here in the dark days of the Beattie government. Under Peter Beattie, consultation meant flying into an area in a chopper, landing at an airstrip, with the media already gathered, and telling the community, 'This is where I am going to build a megadam.' I direct the member to South Brisbane to the history books that are being written about the Traveston Crossing Dam, because they expose Labor's hypocrisy. When the Labor government wanted to consult about the Traveston Dam, they did not do it with the people of Queensland. They did not even do it with their own caucus. We know what the then member for Noosa said as she was strongarmed to make sure she toed the line. If ever we saw an example of rubber-stamping, it was the hypocrisy of Labor as they held their members in line.

**A government member:** What did it cost us?

**Mr GIBSON:** The Traveston Crossing Dam debacle has cost the people of Queensland \$600 million plus. More than that, it has cost them a community—a community that is resilient, a community that is proud and a community that is holding on by the very skin of its teeth but is doing so now with a future. The community was not offered that under Labor. We saw how Labor treat regional and rural parts of Queensland. They march in, kick them in the guts and then walk out.

**Mr Grimwade:** And never apologise.

**Mr GIBSON:** I take the interjection, because the former member for South Brisbane, despite in this House making a promise that she would visit the Mary Valley, never did so. I imagine that, now she has hightailed it out of this state, she will never visit the Mary Valley to explain her actions. Labor is a party of hypocrites and full of hypocrisy. We only need to look at history to show us those examples.

Returning to the legislation, I wish to touch upon the issue of coal seam gas because it is a topical issue. It is one, indeed, about which many people in Queensland are concerned. During its public hearings the committee was fortunate to have the opportunity to discuss with those organisations and individuals that came forward the issue with regard to the movement of produce water and brine. Coal seam gas is an emerging industry. We have never seen its manner of operation on the scale that it is occurring. Quite rightly, the community has concerns and we as legislators have a responsibility to listen to those concerns and to have discussions about them.

What is evident is that the current methodology with regard to the movement of produce water and brine does not provide the best environmental outcome. This bill ensures that amendments to the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act reduce red tape for investors but also provide greater security for landholders and for industry. These amendments are designed to improve the environmental outcome and to increase regulatory certainty for this state's emerging industry. I believe that we should commend that. This is an amendment that will ensure we are able to see processing of that coal seam gas extracted water, rather than have it sitting in large ponds or used for other minor purposes. We will enable this to occur in such a way that there will be a net environmental benefit.

There were issues raised in the submissions which we of course put to the department. I note its responses to those issues. The committee has looked at that. I know that it will be an area of interest for this parliament. I am sure the minister will ensure that, as this rolls out and we start to see the benefits of these particular amendments within the coal seam gas industry, the people of Queensland can have one less concern about coal seam gas. As it is a new industry there will be many concerns, but it is important that we address them, that we do it in an open and transparent way and that we are able to bring the people with us on this journey. I know that the minister is committed to that. I thank him for that and look forward to his further comments.

**Mr Cripps:** The Minister for Environment outlined how impressed and pleased he was with the environmental benefits that will come from the amendments in the bill.

**Mr GIBSON:** I take that interjection from the minister, because it is important. What we have seen from the Minister for Environment is exactly that commitment, and that is what we want to achieve. This is not about an open slather in terms of coal seam gas; it is about a measured, controlled approach to ensure that we achieve both the environmental benefits and the economic and development benefits for this state that are offered by coal seam gas operations.

As I said at the beginning, the time frame we had to deal with this piece of legislation was not ideal. But as a committee we did so, and I believe we did so in a manner that highlights the very effectiveness of the committee structure that this parliament has. We as members of parliament have a responsibility to examine legislation. We have a responsibility to hold the executive to account, and we have demonstrated that we have done so in the report on the Mines Legislation (Streamlining) Amendment Bill. It would not have been possible without the efforts of Rob Hansen and our staff, and they deserve credit for that. It would not have been possible without the leadership provided from our chair and from the membership of the committee, for those who were available to be involved. I commend the bill to the House.