



Speech by


## Howard Hobbs

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

Hansard Thursday, 15 November 2012

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### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER LAND HOLDING BILL: MOTION

 **Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (5.34 pm): I am strongly opposed to this ALP motion. This bill sets the framework for freehold ownership; it will not do anything else. We have to fix up the mess. The bill gives Indigenous people the same opportunities as other Queenslanders. Who else would be happy to have their boundaries disjointed, to have buildings built on the wrong block, to live on land that is not necessarily theirs? None of us would tolerate that in our own areas and I do not see why Indigenous people cannot have the same rights as other Queenslanders. The bill does not give freehold title; it only sorts out the boundary issues and the surveying that needs to be done.

The member for South Brisbane said that there was not enough consultation on this issue. She talked about the trip to the Torres Strait. Yes, there was a cultural event on at that time. I have been going to the Torres Strait nearly every year for the past 15 years. I was up there the week after the committee was there. I was there for many days. People told me that they were very enthusiastic about the legislation. They were keen about it. They wanted to know more about it. They wanted to know how they could help.

Today, what we are seeing is the same paternalistic attitude that Labor has always had. It gives nothing to the Indigenous communities, but it takes their vote. That is all it has ever done. It just takes their vote. When I talk to the people, I wonder why on earth they supported the Labor government. Many years ago I was in the islands and saw that they were still dumping sewage on the beach. That happened under Labor's watch. The water in some of the wells was brackish and could not be drunk. The people said, 'You taste this water', and it was terrible. The coalition government of the day put together the framework to cover all the dams on the islands with plastic to stop the evaporation so that the people had enough water to get through the winter months. Labor has done nothing. All it has ever wanted is to take their vote.

Why shouldn't those people have freehold title? Why shouldn't we start the process? Why can't they be the same as anybody else? It is because Labor never wanted them to be the same. It just wanted to take their vote and keep them down. We want to enhance their rights and allow them the opportunity to be treated the same as any other Queenslanders.