




Speech by

Michael Hart

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

Hansard Tuesday, 27 November 2012

GOLD COAST WATERWAYS AUTHORITY BILL

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (4.19 pm): By the look of it, I am the last Gold Coast member to rise to support the Gold Coast Waterways Authority Bill. This bill was referred to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee, and that committee came back with one, and only one, recommendation—that is, that this bill be passed. We have already heard from other MPs on the Gold Coast and they feel exactly the same way: this bill should be passed. It is time for the Gold Coast Waterways Authority to get on with the work that the last government failed to do over the 20 years or so that it was in power.

This bill will re-establish the Gold Coast Waterways Authority, which was abolished in 1990, and is another way that the LNP government is empowering and returning control to local communities. We have already heard here today from the member for South Brisbane that she does not think there is much of a problem on the Gold Coast. I think she mentioned that 92 per cent of the boats on the Gold Coast have no issue with the depth of the Broadwater. As a local MP who spends a lot of time on the Broadwater and the waterways of the Gold Coast, I can tell the House that that is wrong. I am sure the other members from the Gold Coast who also thoroughly enjoy our beautiful waterways would agree.

The boating community on the Gold Coast has a saying. People will tell you that they have either run aground or that they have never run aground: those people who tell you that they have never run aground are not telling the complete truth. I can tell the House from firsthand experience, as my family had a boat for the last four or five years that we used extensively on the Broadwater—

Mr Crandon: Did you sink it?

Mr HART: No, I did not. But the Broadwater is extremely shallow in a lot of places and it is not unusual for boats to run aground in the middle of the channels in the Broadwater. I can name off the top of my head probably half a dozen places between Southport and Russell Island where a boat could run aground in the middle of a channel. That is really not acceptable and it is time we did something about that. The local boating fraternity on the Gold Coast would fully reinforce those sentiments.

On the Gold Coast—and I think we have already heard the member for Coomera mention this—we have one of the biggest boating shows in Australia. They have quite large boats there and it is not unusual for them when they are bringing yachts up from the seaway to Coomera to have to get on the side of the boat and lean the boat over so that the keel does not run aground. That happens even when they take those boats in on the highest of tide. They will look at the tide and they will go in in that 10-minute period when the tide is about to turn. They will go in when the wind is blowing in the right direction. They will take all of those things into account, because it is not unusual for areas near Coomera to be 1½ to two metres deep. If you try to take any sort of boat through there, you are asking for trouble.

It is important to recognise, as other members have, that there are 42,000 registered boats on the Gold Coast. Any weekend you can cruise around the Broadwater and you will see those boats anchored up in every anchorage possible on the Broadwater. Unfortunately you will also see people who are not anchored up but who are hard and fast aground in many areas of that same Broadwater, and it is time we

fixed that issue for the boating fraternity—after all, they are paying registration fees and they are supporting the boating mechanics on the Gold Coast. This whole industry is worth about \$420 million to Queensland's economy. It is not something that we can trivially set aside. We have to do something about this.

Also, it is important to recognise that the Gold Coast Waterways Authority will have purview over other waterways on the Gold Coast. In my electorate alone I have Tallebudgera Creek, and I know the member for Currumbin has Currumbin Creek in her electorate. There are severe dredging problems in both of those creeks. Those creeks are navigated by boats on a regular basis. It is not unusual to see 1,000 boats sitting out off Palm Beach Reef when the mackerel are running. Numerous boats have overturned on our bars, and that is exacerbated by the dredging of the channels in both Tallebudgera and Currumbin creeks. Minister Stuckey and I have attended many meetings with the Currumbin VMR. They are adamant that something has to be done about this, and this government intends to do something about it.

With those few words, I commend the minister for bringing this bill to this House in such a timely fashion. Gary Baildon will be, as other members have said, an excellent chairman of this authority. I know that he is waiting to get on with the job, a very important job—remembering of course that the boating industry has a big part to play in tourism on the Gold Coast as well. I know that Mr Baildon cannot wait to get on with the job, and the sooner this legislation passes through this House the better. I commend the bill to the House.