




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA

Record of Proceedings, 3 December 2015

NORTH STRADBROKE ISLAND PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABILITY AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (4.20 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Land Court Act 2000, the Mineral Resources Act 1989, the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999, and the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability Act 2011 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Finance and Administration Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and other Acts Amendment Bill 2015 [[1843](#)].

Tabled paper: North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and other Acts Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes [[1844](#)].

I am pleased to present to the House the Palaszczuk government's three-part plan to begin a new chapter for North Stradbroke Island; to unlock the island for all Queenslanders to enjoy. We want all Queenslanders to experience the island's unique natural and cultural values. We will launch new opportunities for the island, its community and economy. North Stradbroke Island, Straddie to many of us, Minjerribah as it is called by the traditional owners, is the second largest sand island in the world. It is right on Brisbane's doorstep and it occupies a special place in the hearts of many Queenslanders. It is important that we take action now to secure the future of this beautiful island. Many Queenslanders know how great Straddie is and it is time to get the secret out. If members read the *Courier-Mail* yesterday they would have seen that Fodor, the biggest English language travel publisher in the world, has rated the island as one of the top 15 under-the-radar destinations on the planet.

This government recognises that the Quandamooka people are the traditional owners of North Stradbroke Island and have a right to use and enjoy their native title land on the island. We have been working closely with the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation, QYAC, the registered native title body corporate, to understand their plans and aspirations for their lands. The Quandamooka people have a deep connection to their land and sea country that goes back over 20,000 years. They want to protect their land and their cultural heritage from the damaging effects of mining. That is not only fair but their right as native title holders. There are spectacular, pristine parts of the island of unbelievable beauty and significant conservation value that are inaccessible because of sprawling mining leases. The Quandamooka people know these places. The rest of us do not. Sadly, there are generations of elders who have never had access to those special places. North Stradbroke Island has the potential to be a world-class tourism destination, just like Fraser Island. It is inconceivable that we would allow sandmining on Fraser Island now, but we once did. We used to mine Fraser just like Straddie. Sandmining came to an end on Fraser only in the 1970s. Look at Fraser Island now. It is one

of our great tourism assets and it is getting stronger every year. On Fraser Island, visitor activity injects \$360 million through direct overnight expenditure into the economy every year. It is also generating nearly \$648 million through transport, accommodation, food services and retail trade. It contributes to securing 6,015 jobs for the region. Straddie could be our next Fraser Island right on Brisbane's doorstep, if we pass this bill.

Today it is my privilege to introduce the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015. This bill delivers the government's commitment to return the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability Act 2011 to its original intent. The original act facilitated a staged phase-out of mining and enabled the island to transition to new economic activities and grow its protected areas, including national parks. The act provided a balanced resolution and certainty for all parties on the island, including mineworkers, residents and the Indigenous community. The previous LNP government undid all the hard work of the local community. It was already on its way to unlocking the island and launching new, exciting and sustainable opportunities when the LNP bluntly amended the act to extend the area and end date for sandmining way out to 2035. Even Sibelco, the island's mining company, was surprised. All it wanted was to mine to 2027. This bill will remove these environmentally and socially irresponsible changes and implement Labor's commitment to return the substantial phase-out of mining to 2019. It is time for the House to unite and provide certainty to the Straddie community. In terms of its features, this bill reinstates a restricted mine path for Enterprise Mine, the biggest mine on the island.

Dr Robinson interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I warn the member for Cleveland that the minister is not taking your interjections so please cease.

Dr MILES: This will ensure that mine production can be completed by 2019 while preserving the unique environmental values around the site.

Dr Robinson interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Cleveland, please cease your interjections.

Dr MILES: The bill also includes provision for the mining company to apply to amend the restricted mine path within four months of commencement of the act. This will ensure the mine path properly reflects contemporary operational issues while avoiding impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage and high conservation areas. The provisions limit the extent of allowable change and ensure threatened ecosystems cannot be included in the mine path and that native title rights and interests are properly taken into account. Any proposed changes to the mine path will be decided at a ministerial level. This bill removes the ability to renew mining leases on the island so as to substantially end mining leases by 2019.

In lieu of lease renewals, we have developed a tool so that land does not need to be locked up and rendered inaccessible to the community just so a former mining site can be rehabilitated. We have created a new legal framework under the Mineral Resources Act 1989 to ensure the mining lease holder will be able to meet their rehabilitation obligations under the environmental authority. This provides certainty to all stakeholders, and all Queenslanders, that rehabilitation work can and will be undertaken. Notwithstanding this, I am encouraged by recent commitments made to me by QYAC and Sibelco to work cooperatively together. I applaud this and I am prepared to give both parties time to negotiate alternative access arrangements for rehabilitation, which might forestall me taking action under existing legal powers.

As I mentioned at the beginning, this bill is the first of a three-part plan the Palaszczuk government has developed to kickstart this transition, building on previous transition work stopped by the LNP. Later today the Deputy Premier will be releasing for public consultation a comprehensive \$20 million economic transition strategy.

Dr Robinson interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Cleveland, I warn you under standing order 253A.

Dr MILES: On top of our \$20 million investment, we will announce an additional \$3.87 million in in-kind contributions for identified actions and implementation and an additional \$5 million package to directly help mineworkers pursue new employment opportunities. I table for the information of members the consultation draft of the economic transition strategy and the workers' assistance package.

Tabled paper: Queensland government: North Stradbroke Island Sand Mining Workers Assistance Scheme, December 2015 [[1845](#)].

Tabled paper: Queensland government: Draft North Stradbroke Island Economic Transition Strategy, December 2015 [[1846](#)].

I have been working closely with my ministerial colleagues and their departments to develop a transition strategy that takes account of the interests and needs of the affected stakeholders. I thank the Deputy Premier, the tourism minister, the Minister for State Development and the Treasurer for their efforts in putting this package together. The strategy focuses on driving sustainable tourism, expanding education and training opportunities and fostering business development and growth. North Stradbroke Island's future lies in its exceptional natural and cultural heritage. This bill, together with the economic strategy and workers' package, will provide certainty and support for the island's transition away from sandmining to a more diverse and stable economy in the longer term.

The government has consulted widely on this bill, the transition strategy and the worker assistance package. Ministers, including the Premier and the Deputy Premier, have met with key stakeholders, including the native title holders QYAC, the mining company Sibelco, the Redland City Council and the Straddie Chamber of Commerce. The changes I propose in this bill will finally draw a line in the sand regarding the duration and extent of mining on North Stradbroke Island. The changes represent a new start for the island and the beginning of the process of ending sandmining. They will transition North Stradbroke's economy away from mining and towards sustainable productive industries. This is what Straddie needs and what Queenslanders want.

First Reading

Hon. SJ MILES (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (4.29 pm): I move—

That the bill now be read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Finance and Administration Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Finance and Administration Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

Hon. SJ MILES (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (4.30 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, under the provisions of standing order 136, the Finance and Administration Committee report to the House on the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and Other Acts Amendment Bill by 31 March 2016.