




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

Record of Proceedings, 17 March 2016

**VEGETATION MANAGEMENT (REINSTATEMENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL, REPORTING DATE**

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (12.11 am): I am very pleased to speak in this debate tonight to support the motion moved by the Deputy Premier and to oppose the amendment moved by the member for Mermaid Beach. It is an historic day—the first time in the history of responsible government in this state that a group of members of the Legislative Assembly have voted by division to oppose the first reading of a bill. It is an historic day. I am pleased to speak because of that, but I hope it is another 150 years before that sort of stunt is perpetrated in the Legislative Assembly of Queensland.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr DICK: I hear the member for Mermaid Beach calling out. I will have a little bit more to say about the member for Mermaid Beach and his approach to legislation shortly. They do not want this bill debated. That is the bottom line. If they were consistent about that, if there was consistent opposition to this bill, I would accept that. What we have had tonight is hours of argument about consultation and engagement.

Mr STEVENS: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Clearly the minister has not referred to the fact that we are talking about the amendment and changing the date. I ask you, on relevance, to return to what you have basically just—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): I am just waiting for the minister to get to the point of the amendment.

Mr DICK: We have had hours of debate on consultation and that goes to the heart of the motion. We know when we have the member for Mermaid Beach—we know when we have the glass jaw—because he gets up and starts taking points of order. We have an argument about the time of consultation. They opposed the bill outright and then they say, 'We need more time to consult.' That is hypocrisy on double standards and that is what we have had consistently tonight.

The amendment was moved by the member for Mermaid Beach, someone who now professes to be the leader of consultation in Queensland. Of course, what he was the leader of was government business in the 54th Parliament. He was the Leader of Government Business who shut down debate and consultation consistently over and over. Now, he hypocritically comes into this House to suggest that there needs to be longer consultation. What was the form of the previous LNP government? How did they treat the people of Queensland when it came to legislation? This is how they approached consultation. This is how they approached the time that they now say Queenslanders are entitled to. Who said this—

If after being elected the government sent off every bill to a committee, under the standing orders, for six months, the government would be taking no action for six months.

He goes on—

That is a crazy idea. Queenslanders elected this government decisively. They wanted action; they wanted positive change.

Of course, that was the member for Kawana, who did not want any consultation at all—none at all. Not only was it a crazy idea; we ended up with a crazy government that rammed through legislation in the middle of the night.

Mr STEVENS: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I have not heard one word in relation to the amendment that we are supposed to be discussing.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do not agree. There is no point of order.

Mr DICK: What was their experience with legislation that impacted on landholders? What was their form? What was the precedent they set when they have talked over and over tonight about standing up for landholders? It is a mockery. It is a slap in the face. There will be passion and feeling. We had Churchill himself, the member for Whitsunday, talking about fighting on the beaches. We have had all of that. What was their approach? This is what they did when they were in government. Hypocrisy goes to the heart of the debate tonight. Hypocrisy goes to the heart of what the LNP are seeking to do to persuade this chamber that their amendment should be accepted. That goes to the heart of it. It is hypocrisy on double standards.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Many members of this House have had an opportunity to speak. I will ask you to please allow the minister to speak so there is some chance that we can hear him.

Mr DICK: Apart from the many pieces of legislation that were rammed through—some with 24 hours notice, some overnight; motions passed in the middle of the night—how did they deal with one particular piece of legislation? This goes to the conduct of the first speaker in the debate tonight, the member for Hinchinbrook. What was his approach to the Mines Legislation (Streamlining) Amendment Bill? An article in the *Brisbane Times* by Daniel Hurst published on 3 October 2012 stated that environmental organisations highlighted the issue of consultation. The article goes on to say—

... one of the most scathing submissions came from farming lobby group AgForce Queensland, which complained that miners were consulted during the drafting of the law but not landholders.

You have heard tonight, Madam Deputy Speaker, how this government has engaged through various ministers including the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines and the Minister for State Development. You have heard on the parliamentary record, through the Speaker and through others, about the engagement with landholders. When those opposite were in government, what did AgForce say? The article states—

AgForce Queensland general manager of stakeholder relations Drew Wagner took issue with “the ridiculous timing of purported consultation with the community”, saying it was “not conducive to appropriate consultation”.

“To further not include the broader land use sector throughout the development of the legislative arrangement, but to include directly the industries that this review will favour, is tantamount to negligence,”—

negligence by the LNP—

he wrote in a submission to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee in August.

“No landholder, agricultural, environmental or community group appears to have been consulted throughout this process—only the mining and resources sector.

No member of this parliament should listen to the hypocrisy we have heard tonight.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the minister to withdraw that unparliamentary language.

Mr DICK: Hypocrisy? I withdraw. No-one should be persuaded by the double standards of those members opposite. Those bills, including the bills that were rammed through, were supported by most of the speakers tonight including the member for Southern Downs, who said that this is a retrograde step, that it is a backward step, that it is turning Queensland, in his words during the debate, into China and North Korea. What an offensive comment to make about our democracy in Queensland. The member for Callide, the member for Burnett, the member for Nanango, the member for Whitsunday, the member for Toowoomba South, the member for Hervey Bay—they all supported that process. Now they presume to come in here and cry foul. Their argument has no substance at all. At the peak of all of this was their approach to vegetation management and their approach to the timing of vegetation management and how the parliament dealt with it. I will not go on.

In a letter sent out 10 days before the 2012 election, Mr Newman promised the LNP 'will retain the current level of statutory vegetation protection', and they completely changed their position when they came to government.

I believe the committee has adequate time to deal with this. That is what we are talking about—time. I believe the parliament will appropriately resource that committee, as it has in the past with urgent consideration of bills. I thank the Clerk and others in the parliament who have supported committees. I believe the committee has sufficient time under the time frame. This is not a surprise. The legislation before the parliament delivers on our election commitment that this government took to the community. There has been stakeholder consultation. There have been round tables. Every stakeholder group which is affected is aware of the process and the framework. It is a commitment. At least we are consistent. At least we did not promise one thing before the election and do another after—something those members opposite pride themselves on. That is what they did in the 54th Parliament.

I am confident of the capacity of the committee to deal with the draft legislation in the time available. I am confident that landholders will be able to adequately express their views on this. I am confident—

Mr Bennett: You don't care.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection. That is not fair to say. As the Minister for Health, I have resourced Western Queensland. I have put additional resources into dealing with health issues in Western Queensland. This government does care about all of Queensland. We care about Queenslanders in regional and rural parts of our state. We will consult thoroughly and in a detailed fashion as we move forward on this legislation. We had hypocrisy on double standards tonight.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! I ask the minister not to use unparliamentary language.

Mr DICK: We had double standard on double standard during this debate. I am confident that all Queenslanders know our government's position, that they will have adequate time to engage and that the committee will be able to deal adequately and carefully with this. I remind members in the 53rd Parliament that before the committee system was implemented bills had to lie on the table for a minimum of two weeks before they were dealt with. It was a very substantial change to the committee system, which I think has significantly improved how matters are dealt with in the parliament. I am confident with the framework around this legislation—a promise that we made to restore the law as it was in Queensland—that sensible and reasonable landholders will be able to engage with the process. Their voice will be heard with respect by the committee, and then a proper and full examination of those issues will be made by the committee and provided to the parliament in the time available. The amendment should be opposed and the government's motion should be supported this evening.