




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Record of Proceedings, 15 March 2016

MINERAL RESOURCES (AURUKUN BAUXITE RESOURCE) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (8.58 pm): Tonight I rise to speak in support of the Mineral Resources (Aurukun Bauxite Resource) Amendment Bill 2016. I want to take this opportunity while on my feet to speak about the work that the committee that I was previously on did—the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee under the chairmanship of Jim Pearce from Mirani and all of the other members of the committee that I worked with over the first 12 months of my time here.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr BUTCHER: I rise to a point of order. I take offence to that! I do want to thank the committee, and it was a good committee to work with in terms of both sides of the chamber and the crossbench with Shane Knuth as well. It was a good time and we had some good debate, and we dealt with some good bills and provided some good reports.

I have been involved in the alumina industry for 21 years, so I have a very good understanding of the need for quality bauxite for refineries and the quality of these good deposits. Over many years in this industry I have seen the impacts of poor-quality bauxite. That is why the high-quality bauxite that comes out of these tenements that we have in Australia is so important. I want to touch on a few of the impacts that this poor-quality bauxite from other parts of the world can have on a refinery, such as on pipework and pumps, additional scaling in tanks and general wear and tear from the milling of the bauxite itself. All of those issues create additional cost to business. At the moment, with the price of alumina in the world market, any costs that these businesses can save, particularly in commodities such as bauxite, are a much needed saving.

This product is not only important for refineries but also important for those communities that mine it. The Aurukun bauxite resource is located on land that is traditionally owned by the Wik and Wik Way people, one of the most prominent Indigenous communities in Australia. The resource is located south of Weipa and to the east of Aurukun within a designated restricted area that comprises 11 deposits over an area spanning 75 kilometres long and 25 kilometres wide. The Aurukun bauxite resource is a significant, underdeveloped resource estimated to contain, as we have heard tonight, more than a million tonnes of dry beneficiated bauxite. It is one of a limited number of large bauxite deposits in the world that is currently available for development.

The Palaszczuk Labor government recognises that development of this bauxite resource at Aurukun has the potential to deliver very significant economic development and employment opportunities for the communities of Aurukun and the wider western Cape York area. Over many years successive governments have tried to turn this bauxite deposit at Aurukun into a project that will benefit the community and the state. These amendments to the Mineral Resources Act is another step forward to ensuring that the Palaszczuk Labor government is achieving its election commitments. These amendments restore community objection rights relating to mining developments as soon as possible

to not only local landholders but also the broader Queensland community. The Palaszczuk government remains committed to delivering resource developments while balancing them with the rights of local communities to object. That right goes back through the ages.

In 2006, provisions relating to Aurukun were included in the Mineral Resources Act to streamline that approval pathway and to encourage the development of the Aurukun bauxite resource without the physical constraints that had hindered its development in the past. The amendments will bring the requirements for mineral development licences, or mining lease applications, for an Aurukun project in line with the government's policy that communities are given the opportunity to object to resource projects and have the Land Court consider those objections. I commend the bill to the House.