




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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MINERAL AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (4.17 pm): I rise to speak to the Mineral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. The Mackay, Whitsunday and Isaac regions surround the electorate of Mackay, and it has a balance of mining and agriculture which is comprised of beef cattle, grain, sugar and vegetable crops. Each industry is important to the economy of our region. There needs to be a balance so that each can continue to grow.

The primary objective of the bill is to amend the previous government's Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Act 2014 to deliver two of the government's key election commitments. The amendments will restore public notification requirements and Land Court objection rights in relation to the assessment of proposed mines to all members of the community. Importantly for the agricultural community, the bill will ensure the protection of key agriculture infrastructure under the restricted land framework.

We need to be able to grow food and fibre and protect our rural communities, and at the same time we need to be able to develop the resource sector and provide valuable jobs for Queenslanders. For both mining and agriculture to develop and remain vital there needs to be a balance so that legislation does not favour one sector over the other. There needs to be an environment where farmers and mining companies can operate with a level of goodwill and cooperation. This bill brings back balance to landholders and the resources sector. The timing of this bill is important. Many of the provisions of the act are yet to be implemented, and repealing those provisions before their planned start dates gives certainty to landholders.

The primary concerns of AgForce for landholders can be summarised as a loss of rights to object in many circumstances, limited protection for non-homestead property infrastructure and reduction in negotiating power of producers in general. In its 2014 report it states—

The overall concern being that a reduction in existing rights will erode further any goodwill between the agriculture and resources sector and will not increase possibilities of co-existence.

It also states—

... the removal of these notifications will mean landholders in the vicinity who often have legitimate concerns will not be aware of what is about to occur with a particular mining lease that could impact on them.

The requirement for the publication of a mining lease application in a newspaper notice will allow parties to know of the application, see how it will affect their land and be able to lodge an objection appeal if needed under the unamended section 269(4) of the act.

I have seen mining operations and farmers living and working side by side. Farmers are kept informed by the mining company of their operations. Neighbours of the mine are encouraged and invited on to the mine site for regular updates on the site operations. Landowners may prefer not to have a mine in their backyard, but with negotiations a common ground can be found.

This bill assists landowners by protecting the land framework. The minister will no longer be able to grant mining leases over restricted land where no consent or compensation has been agreed to. The land being farmed needs to be protected so it is viable for agriculture. This bill restricts land within 50 metres of a principal stockyard, dam, bore or artesian well and artificial water storage connected to water supply. The legislative amendments will ensure there is no doubt that landholders fall either under the new restricted land framework or under the previous agreement requirements.

In my electorate of Mackay, residents rely on both the mining sector and the agriculture sector working together for the continued prosperity of the region. Young people from farms take up jobs at mines, using the skills learned on the farm, operating heavy machinery. Mineworkers are looking to the Palaszczuk government to support innovation in the agriculture sector to develop new industries for the future, when mining has reached its end. The people in my electorate want to see a balance. They know that with balance there is a future for our community. I commend the bill to the House.