




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR YEERONGPILLY

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**NORTH STRADBROKE ISLAND PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABILITY AND
OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL; NORTH STRADBROKE ISLAND
PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABILITY (RENEWAL OF MINING LEASES)
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (11.57 pm): I rise to speak wholeheartedly in support of the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015. In doing so, I acknowledge the Quandamooka people, the traditional owners of Minjerribah—or North Stradbroke Island as it has been more recently known—for thousands of generations. I acknowledge in the gallery tonight all elders and members of the Quandamooka people, including Dr Robert V. Anderson OAM, or Uncle Bob, as he is often known, whose commitment to his traditional land is unwavering and resolute. I also acknowledge my colleague the member for Algeester and Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business, who earlier spoke so eloquently and movingly. I also acknowledge Mr Cameron Costello of the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation in the gallery.

The time to preserve and protect Minjerribah has come. It is unfortunate that this time has had to come twice. It is agreed that sandmining must end on this island, but the issue is whether it should be soon on the basis that enough environmental damage over 67 years has been done to the second largest sand island in the world or whether it should continue unabated for another 16 years beyond 2019.

When history is written, the passing of this bill to become law will be a great credit to this parliament and to the members who supported it. Since sandmining commenced in 1949, Minjerribah has changed substantially. In that time, our values as a community have also changed substantially. We now understand—most of us—that unique environmental values are important and deserve to be acknowledged and protected. We also have a much greater understanding and respect for Indigenous culture and history and their inseparable relationship to their land.

A memorable example of that tonight was to listen to the Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business speak of her traditional lands the subject of this bill in her own Indigenous Quandamooka and, I say advisedly, Australian language, a language that came directly from Minjerribah over thousands of years of local generations. The Queensland parliament in 2011, via the state Labor government of the time, made a clear decision to cease sandmining by 2019. It is unfortunate that the LNP chose not just to reverse those historic reforms but also to extend mining on the island. It is hard not to see that the Newman-Nicholls LNP government decision was in some way punitive and vindictive. The Deputy Premier spoke accurately earlier about the substantial political donations by sandmining corporation Sibelco to the LNP, a matter of public record. She is right to say

that it was no coincidence that the Newman government changes and the donations were aligned and that Queenslanders were right to question the connection of these two factors and the lack of integrity from the LNP government.

I acknowledge the Deputy Premier's strong leadership on this issue as a first term MP and the shadow minister in the last parliament and also the role of the Minister for Education and member for Ashgrove in the historic 2011 bill's introduction and passing. The Newman government bill was a retrospective jump back to the past which has done no favours to anyone in relation to this issue, and history will be harsh upon it. It created false hope for those who supported sandmining and it created unnecessary uncertainty for everyone on all sides of this debate. Labor has a clear and consistent policy on Minjerribah and was never going to change its policy. We were always going to form another government in Queensland and the Newman-Nicholls government law to extend environmental damage would never last to anyone who understood the issue and this state. Labor says 67 years of mining on this unique environmental jewel is enough. Labor says the environmental values of this unique part of the world should not be further destroyed for another 16 years. Labor says it is time to transition Minjerribah to a sustainable future and the challenges that entails.

This reform is consistent with Labor values of environmental protection of unique parts of Queensland. It was Labor who stopped logging on Fraser Island and supported the local workforce to transition in order to protect Fraser. Fraser is now visited by travellers and tourists from all over the world and is revered for its environmental values. It is Labor, through this Palaszczuk Labor government, that acted to protect the Great Barrier Reef and face the leadership challenges that entails in terms of stopping capital dredge spoil being dumped on the reef and working to take real action to minimise climate change and reduce nutrient run-off which affects the reef. Again, the environmental values are a major economic drawcard and job generator for Queensland. History will be kind and favourable to both the Goss and Palaszczuk governments for these reforms. There is no doubt that Minjerribah, on the doorstep of a major city such as Brisbane with a major international airport less than an hour and a half away, has great potential for travellers from all over the world to share its wonderful environmental values and, in harmony with the Quandamooka people, its Indigenous history and values. I have no doubt that history will equally review the reforms tonight in the same light: as a modern and courageous reform of contemporary and inclusive values.

The Palaszczuk government will be supporting local workers whose positions of employment will phase out on the island with a \$28 million investment package to focus on private sector projects and to stimulate the economic transition by creating 151 direct and ongoing jobs across tourism, training and education sectors. Our \$5 million workers assistance scheme, developed in consultation with the Australian Workers' Union, will support affected workers to alternative and diverse job opportunities. We do that because we support both the workers and the environment. We talk to and listen to the representatives of the workers, including and especially when we do not fully agree with their position. Leadership is identifying when reform and change is necessary and working with all parties to achieve optimal outcomes. It is not about short-term thinkers with 20th century values or picking fights, it is about envisioning a new future for a special place, which Minjerribah is.

Let me address a few points raised in debate by the opposition in a remarkably uniform way by many of their speakers. The LNP opposition laces their speeches in parliament ad nauseam alleging the Palaszczuk government is somehow a union dominated government. This bill clearly shows that the Palaszczuk Labor government will make policy decisions based on their intrinsic merits. It is natural for the Australian Workers' Union as the representative of many workers at the mine to seek to extend the life of sandmining. It is the government's view, however, that it is time the island's unique and environmental values were fully protected after 67 years of mining. The embittered opposition, still smarting from losing the unlosable election, remains obsessed by green party preferences. The Greens will make their own decisions. The facts are that Labor is the great reformist party in Queensland when it comes to protecting our environment and implementing the difficult reforms. That is not extreme; that is common sense. That is science. That is modern values. That is political courage. That is living in the real world. Whether it is Fraser Island, the Great Barrier Reef, the integrity of our national parks, the promotion of renewable energy and action on climate change or whether it is protecting Minjerribah, it is Labor that has led this state on environmental policy over the last 25 years. Sadly, the opposition remains in the Bjelke-Petersen era when it comes to our environment in Queensland.

The government bill deserves support. I cannot support the private member's bill as any further delay in my view is unacceptable given the unfortunate and regrettable history under the Newman and Nicholls government. What a tremendous opportunity it was tonight for the opposition leader and member for Clayfield to chart a new course for the LNP by drawing a line under their appalling record on Minjerribah, yet all we got is more of the same: environmental and Indigenous disregard and an absence of leadership. We said before the last election that we would stop sandmining in 2019. Tonight

we do exactly that. We have kept our word and our policy, a policy we have had for five years consistently and clearly. It is a policy we stuck with when we had seven members of parliament in this House. It is a policy we stick with now that we are in government. It is an election commitment. While we respectfully listened to those submitting for extensions of time for a variety of reasons, we do say it is an election commitment and we will stick with it.

(Time expired).