



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS

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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**

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (10.55 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015 and oppose the bill from the crossbenches. When I think of this legislation, I think of it in the same way I think about a lot of what we are doing in this place in this term of parliament. We are going about the work of restoring Queensland to the way it was before the abnormality of the Newman years.

As an outsider, I understand from a distance a little of the history of North Stradbroke Island. I understand the key role that sandmining has played in the island's economy for many years; that it represents 14 per cent of the jobs on the island; that the company gives considerably to the community and that has been observed by many in their submissions.

Taking a balanced view is important for legislators. In taking a balanced view, I am happy to concede all of these points because I think they are, as far as I can tell, probably truthful. Importantly, they do not undermine my central reason for supporting the legislation to bring a close to sandmining on the island in 2019. The original legislation, which we are going about restoring here now, was introduced in 2011. The original North Stradbroke Island legislation of 2011 was finalised in the context of the Federal Court's native title determination on 4 July 2011 over the island and its surrounds.

The Indigenous land use agreement between the state of Queensland and the Quandamooka people was finalised in conjunction with that native title determination. This legal agreement recognised the traditional owners who have lived on and around the island for more than 20,000 years. There are of course environmental concerns with any mining operation. Nobody can convince me that mining anywhere and anything is an environmentally neutral process. Of course there can be mitigation, but damage is a by-product of mining.

It is the native title argument that I find the most compelling. For as long as mining is occurring, it prevents the Quandamooka people from accessing a sustainable future for their land. The government changed in 2012 and so did the legislation. This legislative seesaw can only have been disruptive to the island's future. I am aware of the alternative proposals to extend the deadline to 2024 or even longer to the 2030s, but if 2019 seems sudden it is only sudden to those who would prefer to ignore the island and the state's history since 2011 and focus instead on the history since 2015. Many in Queensland try to pretend that the period from 2012 to 2015 did not happen, but unfortunately it did and we need to operate in the world as it is, not as we might like it to be. The end date of 2019 is already a compromise for many of the island's traditional owners. The Quandamooka people spent 16 years negotiating their native title claim over the island, and it was through this considered process that the mining end date of 2019 was finally negotiated.

In the committee forum held on the island we learnt of one young Quandamooka woman who had grown up on the island but had never set foot on some of the areas of traditional country, unable to conduct traditional ceremonies, use traditional natural resources, conduct burial rights, learn from or teach others about the physical and spiritual attributes of the area, and maintain places of importance and areas of significance. These are areas that have existed as sacred ceremonial and culturally significant places spanning centuries but in her lifetime these sites had been restricted to the Quandamooka people to make way for sandmining. At least two generations of people have not been able to visit, appreciate or look after these culturally significant lands. It is high time that access to these lands was restored.

We acknowledge that the Quandamooka people have a deep connection to their land and sea country that spans 20,000 years. Understandably, they want to protect their land and their cultural heritage from the damaging effects of mining. Currently, the Quandamooka people hold native title rights over about 54,000 hectares of land and waters on and surrounding North Stradbroke Island. However, the sprawling mining leases by Sibelco have made spectacular and pristine parts of the island inaccessible. These areas are not only beautiful but they also have significant cultural value. The Quandamooka people know these places; most of us do not. Sadly, given the long history of mining in these areas, there are young people who have never had access to these special places. It is incumbent upon us in this place to ensure that the rich cultural heritage of the Quandamooka people is shared with many others in generations to come. This will deliver a better, sustainable future.

Taking a balanced view, this legislation to draw down sandmining in line with its original intent, with a transition package for the workforce and the population, working with traditional owners for a sustainable environment and economic future, is the responsible way to approach this complicated matter. As such, I commend the bill to the House.