




Speech By  
**Peter Russo**

**MEMBER FOR SUNNYBANK**

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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**

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (9.11 pm): I rise to speak in support of the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015. The continuation of sandmining on North Stradbroke Island has been an issue for at least two elections. The extension to the time frame for mining by the previous government was undertaken without consultation and ignored the 15 years of native title negotiations that had been taking place. The previous government proceeded against the wishes of the traditional owners. I support this bill as it returns the North Stradbroke Island act to its original intent.

As chair of the committee, I would like to take this time to note the outcomes of the Finance and Administration Committee's recent examination of the bill. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the staff of the Finance and Administration Committee for their assistance during this process. The committee consultation process was one of the most extensive undertaken by the Finance and Administration Committee and included calling for written submissions on the bills, the economic transition strategy and the sand mining workers assistance scheme. An impressive total of 301 submissions and 1,600 form submissions were made, and 114 witnesses appeared in public and private hearings—demonstrating that the future of Straddie is important to so many people.

The one recommendation the committee had was that the private member's bill not be passed. While it did not make any recommendations on the government's bill, it may be useful to discuss some comments in the report. Those opposite want to retain the current legislation as amended when their government was in power—they want mining to continue to 2035—suggesting that the bill 'prematurely ceases' sandmining and that the economic transition strategy is not viable. The bill does not prematurely cease mining; it restores the act to its original intent, reflective of the then Bligh and current Palaszczuk government policy to substantially phase out mining by 2019.

**Dr Robinson** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Furner): Member for Cleveland, you are constantly interjecting. I see that you are on the speaking list. If you continue to interject, you will get your first warning and you will miss your opportunity to speak.

**Mr RUSSO:** The bill does not prematurely cease mining; it restores the act to its original intent, reflective of the then Bligh and current Palaszczuk government policy to substantially phase out mining by 2019. It also respects the rights and interests of the Quandamooka people to enjoy access to their native cultural lands. The committee report states that those opposite do not believe there was adequate consultation, but the only end date for mining that has been properly consulted on is the 2019 end date.

Let me point out that the explanatory notes to the 2013 amendment bill—the bill that changed the end date—record that there was no consultation on those amendments. Those opposite also suggest that the government did not understand the impacts of their policy or that Labor’s policy was not clear before the 2015 election. How can this be so when the Bligh Labor government had spent years negotiating with key stakeholders to develop the original policy and the legislation for North Stradbroke Island, which ended sandmining in 2019. The Labor members of parliament strenuously opposed the 2014 amendments—as did the member for Dalrymple, Mr Shane Knuth.

The committee highlighted the need for certainty. The only uncertainty has been caused by the 2013 amendments that were supported by those opposite. The lack of a regulatory impact assessment was also a concern to the committee. I note that there was no regulatory impact statement prepared for the 2013 bill that assessed the cost of that decision in continuing to deny the Quandamooka people new opportunities and access to their land. In relation to the current bill, it would be really hard to argue that undertaking a regulatory impact statement would have provided any different information than what was considered in preparing the 2011 act. The 2015 bill will affect the same key stakeholders in the same way—by facilitating the phase-out of mining by the same date, 2019.

I understand that executives from the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection and the Department of State Development provided an exceptional level of assistance to the committee: attending multiple departmental briefings, public hearings and meetings with the secretariat as well as providing background briefings, responses to questions on notice and answers to letters from the committee, often within very short time frames. I thank them for their professionalism and commitment.

Lastly, I would like to state that this bill sets a clear direction forward for Straddie. The associated \$28 million package will support the continued transition of the island to a sustainable, broad-based economic future, based on the island’s unique cultural and natural values. I am pleased to support the bill. This bill should be supported by parliament to give the North Stradbroke Island community the certainty they deserve. I commend this bill to the House.