



Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA

Record of Proceedings, 1 November 2016

MOTION

Environmental Protection (Underground Water Management) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (6.05 pm): I move—

That all words after 'Environmental Protection (Underground Water Management) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill' be deleted and the following words inserted:

'be passed or disposed of during the sitting week of 8 to 10 November 2016.'

I said this morning and I will say again: this motion is a ridiculous stunt by the member for Nanango. It is ridiculous because the parliament only received the committee report on the bill she refers to on Tuesday of last week. The government is working through that report—it is a good report—and carefully considering its recommendations, as we should. Now the LNP wants to deny the government and indeed the parliament the chance to reflect on that report. It is also ridiculous because we fully intend to debate this bill next week, and we have demonstrated that intent by the amendment I have just moved.

What is worse is what this procedural trickery means for our farmers and the environment. Tonight the LNP are falling over themselves to desert their supposed support base, falling over themselves to put farmers last when it comes to groundwater. So many times in this House the member for Nanango has yelled at me across the chamber, 'What about the farmers?' Tonight it is us saying to them, 'What about the farmers?' They brought in legislation that guaranteed an unlimited right to take groundwater for large-scale mining projects with no approval. They do not care about the farmers who will be impacted by the groundwater take of these projects. Farming families were not at the forefront of their minds when they decided to tear up Queensland's longstanding water legislation and jeopardise farmers' access to groundwater.

By demanding this bill be debated tonight members opposite are desperately trying to entrench their unfair, guaranteed unlimited right to take for mining companies. They say industry needs more consultation and, as I outlined this morning, I am in that very process. All this motion does is stop that consultation. Those opposite are not really worried about consultation. They never have been. For the sake of a cheap stunt, they will happily leave farmers and the environment worse off. When the LNP were in government they ran roughshod over parliamentary process, ramming through unpopular laws with little or no consultation and the member for Nanango has learnt nothing. The public told the LNP in no uncertain terms that they deserve better and yet here they are again up to their same old tricks.

Along with trickery, this stunt smacks of the LNP's other key trait: hypocrisy. The member for Nanango could not care less about the farmers whose groundwater might be affected by the New Acland mine. She demands that mine have a guaranteed unlimited right to take their groundwater, but

when it comes to Moreton Resources, she has a completely different view. It is like there are two classes of citizens when it comes to the member for Nanango. About that project the member for Nanango said that there must be baseline monitoring and data on groundwater before the project proceeds. Apparently that was the result of her biggest ever survey. I have good news for the people who responded to her survey: that is exactly what Labor is delivering with the laws that we have proposed. Let us be clear: mines in Queensland have always required a water licence until the LNP brought in laws that would become effective in December that took away that requirement. Labor opposed those laws in opposition and we went to the election with a position that the groundwater impact of mines should be assessed and that the public should be consulted on that assessment.

We are delivering on that commitment. In fact, we are streamlining the process for mining companies so that they only have one lot of environmental assessments and possible objections. For companies that have already been through that process, we are making sure they have a proper assessment of their impact on groundwater just as they always have had to previously. What this proves is that only Labor can deliver resource projects with proper environmental protections for our state and for our farmers.