




Speech By
Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

Record of Proceedings, 17 March 2016

**VEGETATION MANAGEMENT (REINSTATEMENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL, REPORTING DATE**

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (11.02 pm): I rise to oppose the amendment moved by the Leader of Opposition Business and, in doing so, I take this opportunity to express my support for the Deputy Premier's motion before the House. What we have seen tonight is some pretty extraordinary examples of parliamentary conventions broken. We have seen a first reading of a bill divided upon for the first time since 1860—

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr HINCHLIFFE:—for the first time not only since people sat in this chamber, but in fact since people sat in the chamber that preceded it down in Queen Street. What we have seen here is the level of desperation to which those opposite want to oppose—

Mr Cripps: The level of conviction.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I take that interjection—the level of conviction that those opposite want to oppose even talking about this bill. The great irony is—

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment. Member for Hinchinbrook, those comments are inappropriate. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr CRIPPS: I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: You are now warned under standing order 253A in relation to your disorderly interjections. If you persist you will be asked to leave the chamber.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: The point I was making is the great contrast, the great inexplicable leap of logic that comes after we see the great level of commitment and conviction from those opposite to oppose even talking about this bill. Now we see an amendment moved to provide more opportunity for even more talk about it. That seems contradictory. I have not heard any of those members opposite speaking in support of the amendment moved by the Leader of Opposition Business and against the Deputy Premier's motion explain that leap of logical faith. I do not get it. If they were so determined that no-one would talk about it at all, why do they think that people want more time to talk about it?

The reasons for the four-week time frame are all about ensuring that we do not see the worst problems when these laws come forward, when these laws are being dealt with, and that is the challenge and difficulty that we might see some level of panic clearing go on. This is the opportunity to make sure that these laws can be dealt with, can be considered by the committee, based upon significant levels of consultation that has gone on as a consequence of the fact that this has been on the lips of everyone not only for the last 12 or so months but, as we have heard from a number of speakers opposite, for more than 12 years—in fact, going back to when tree clearing legislation was first brought into this chamber in 1999.

We heard and have seen these debates over and over again. The issues and the arguments are well known. The proponents on both sides of the account are well placed to put their submissions forward to the committee so that they can deal with them in a timely way to ensure that we do not see the negative aspects of laws like this hanging over the state, the negative aspects where we might see panic clearing occur. That is why we need to ensure that we have a timely process, not an urgent process. We are not seeking to declare this bill urgent and pass it in the middle of the night like those opposite sought to do with any number of bills during the 54th Parliament or indeed—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I am literate; I can read *Hansard*. I can recall and see what happened. I can make observations while I am not in the chamber.

Mrs Frecklington: What?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I heard an interjection suggesting that I was not here; I would not know.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members and minister, I ask you to come back to the issue before the House, the amendment we are now debating. I would urge members to not provoke the minister.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: The issue that I was making the point about is that we have seen a process put forward by the Deputy Premier to which the amendment was moved which would amend the timing of four weeks provided for the committee to consider the bill and report back to the House. Four weeks may be less than what we normally see, but there are good reasons for that, as I outlined, such as wanting to protect ourselves against the worst aspects that might occur out there in the state of Queensland with these sorts of bills and the legislation before the House. This is not like the examples we have seen—not even urgent matters, but other matters where the committee process was shortened and truncated in the 54th Parliament and where things came into a committee for a day and then were sent back. Four weeks is not a day; four weeks is an opportunity to look at the matters, to make sure that all the interested stakeholders have a chance to have their input and make a contribution, and for the committee to consider and report back to the House.

Ultimately as these committee processes go all of this comes back to this House, and this House will be the final arbiter and make the final decisions. We will have a chance to debate the details in intricate detail in this chamber when the legislation comes before it with the benefit of that committee report. This is not a case where we are abjectly using parliamentary powers to try and ram this bill through the House. What we are doing is giving fair opportunity for it to be aerated and dealt with by all stakeholders involved without putting at risk Queensland's environment and the Great Barrier Reef through the challenges and difficulties that we might see should the worst come to be and we see broad, widespread panic clearing. This process is the best balance and this is a great example of what this government is all about: getting the balance right, making sure that we properly provide opportunities for the community to have their say while making sure we protect the best policy outcomes as far as we can.

I urge the House to defeat the motion to blow the committee's time for reporting out by some months and to open the door to potential panic clearing. That is not something that would be a good outcome. I urge the House to defeat the amendment and support the Deputy Premier's motion.