




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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**SUGAR INDUSTRY (ARBITRATION FOR MILL OWNERS AND SUGAR
MARKETING ENTITIES) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (8.30 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Sugar Industry (Arbitration for Mill Owners and Sugar Marketing Entities) Amendment Bill 2017. It is a bit like *Groundhog Day* today, with the LNP putting up another bungled bill in an attempt to fix the 2015 bungle. The position of the Palaszczuk government has always been that there should be a commercial agreement between the millers and growers without interference from government for cane supply.

Where the growers and millers have been able to mature their relationship and come to a commercial agreement, like MSF, they have continued with sound agreements in spite of the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill. The LNP jumped the gun in 2015 with its bill and stifled any opportunity for the parties to come to a mature commercial agreement. The 2015 bill eroded all trust between parties and has caused a huge wedge in the industry. That is why we are back here today debating this.

The sugar industry contributes greatly to the Queensland economy. It is too important for the livelihoods of many Queenslanders up and down the coast for the LNP to keep interfering in the industry. This bill will not meet the needs of the industry. Will we be back here next year with another amendment to the amended bill, still interfering in the industry? Last year the member for Nanango in her Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill stated—

We have heard so much nonsense about this economic vandalism and winding back the clock to the 1950s. Everyone understands the industry has been deregulated and no-one is seeking to undo those changes.

Unfortunately for the member for Nanango, she has proven the Labor government right. This bill is exposing the sugar industry to economic vandalism before our eyes. The LNP's first bill is wreaking havoc and causing tensions in relationships between millers and growers. We have another rushed bill from the LNP, more town hall meetings with growers and a lot of back-peddalling from the LNP trying to mend the mess and the chaos they created in 2015. They made a promise to the industry that they had the answers to their problems. The industry was sold a pup.

The LNP wants to send the sugar industry back to the future. On this side of the House we want the sugar industry to grow and to evolve into the modern world where it has the potential to produce more than just sugar. The possibilities are remarkable. Biofuels, medicines and plastics are just a start. With the interference of the LNP, there will be no incentive for investors to be involved in R and D in the industry. The Leader of the Opposition and the LNP are short-sighted and doing a real injustice to the farmers and the millers. They are just here to score short-term political points at the cost of the sugar industry. We do not want to see the sugar industry go down the drain. I cannot support the bill.