




Speech By
David Crisafulli

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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VEGETATION MANAGEMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (5.21 pm): I rise to oppose the bill. Today, we have heard about the impacts that this bill will have on rural and regional communities. We saw the faces of the people outside this building—not just the graziers but also the small business owners and the kids who want a future.

I am from a town where agriculture is everything. Without agriculture, my little home town of Ingham would not exist. I cannot for one moment imagine what a state without such communities would be like. I am not going to base my argument on those things. I am not going to base my argument on my pedigree of growing up on a farm. I have seen my dad be an extremely sustainable farmer. He reduced his chemical usage and fertiliser usage as he was told to. He would clear and leave wildlife corridors. My wife and I own a farm and only half of it is used for production. The other half has creeks, rivers and trees. There is a stone hut on the property that was built nearly a century ago from stone sourced on that property.

I am not going to debate the fact that, in the past few weeks, this bill has been tabled and we have reached the point at which we are at today. We heard members such as the member for Condamine talk about the miles he travelled to hear stories from people who probably today feel like they have not been listened to. There were agricultural groups that were not at the table. As the member for Buderim did a great job in revealing during the committee hearings, there was no modelling on the impacts of the bill. Today, the environment minister all but said that we still need to ground truth things like SLATS.

Instead, I will talk about what I regard as a common-sense suggestion that was put forward by the shadow minister. I understand that, as the member for Ipswich West said, this is something that the government wants to do and wants to achieve. To my mind, what the member for Burdekin has put forward would enable every person in this parliament and, more importantly, people in those regional communities to get something out of what we are debating. It is far from perfect, but, to my mind, the member for Burdekin has suggested some great changes to the bill that do not undermine one thing that the government is trying to do.

The member for Burdekin has made suggestions such as ensuring that officers do not have the right to walk onto a property without a warrant. That is just the rule of law. The member for Burdekin has also suggested allowing a deemed approval to ensure that, if somebody is in the right, they cannot be denied a legal right by a stalling process. The member for Burdekin has also suggested amending the definition of 'high-value regrowth' where people would effectively be penalised because they have not been able to clear owing to not having the financial capacity because of drought or because their property is large enough that they are able to manage it over a longer cycle than what the legislation seeks to put in place. They are good compromises.

In his excellent contribution to this debate the member for Buderim urged the Labor members of the committee—the members for Ipswich West, Bancroft and Mount Ommaney—to cross the floor. That would be lovely, but I understand that agriculture and property rights in agricultural communities are probably not at the forefront of the minds of those three members. They should be for other members, particularly the member representing our most northern area, the member for Cook.

In her maiden speech—an excellent contribution in this place—the member for Cook spoke of her proud association with her people and what she wanted to achieve in this place. She was quoted in her local newspaper as saying that her intention was to stand up and fight for people, to give a voice to those who do not have a voice and to be a passionate advocate for regional and remote communities. I say to the member for Cook that this is her opportunity. The communities in her electorate more than any other, her people in her electorate more than any other, need sensible laws to enable a balance to be struck, because to give with one hand and then not allow those people to be able to make a living on their land is not giving at all.

I conclude my contribution by going back to where I began. Today, we saw what this bill means to a group of people who have probably never been in a protest in their life, but they turned up today because it meant something to them. They turned up because they feel that not just their rights and not just their investment, but their communities are also worth fighting for. In politics, there is always an ability to strike a compromise. The member for Burdekin has put forward that ability. In doing so, we have an opportunity to restore the faith in this place. This government said that it was prepared to listen to submissions that were put forward. Those submissions have led to these good suggestions being proposed and they have the potential to make this bill good legislation. In its current form, I cannot support the bill.