




Speech By
Jarrold Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Record of Proceedings, 2 May 2018

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (6.54 pm): Everybody in Queensland needs a farmer. Yesterday out the front of parliament I was moved by the placards young boys and girls had hanging around their shoulders that read, 'I want to be a farmer like my dad,' and 'I want to be a farmer like my mum.' For farmers to drop their tools, leave their farms and come to the city, the capital of Queensland, to protest against intervention by the state means so much more than a bunch of union members on their lunch break protesting out the front of parliament. These farmers are not protestors. That is not how they do things. They just want to grow food and leave a legacy for their children.

Earlier the Premier talked about flying into Winton to open the Waltzing Matilda Centre. Flying into Winton did not give the Premier the opportunity to hear what the people wanted the Premier to hear about. In fact, I have seen an email sent to the Premier's office today which said that the only reason that farmers did not boo the Premier is that they respected that it was the opening of the Waltzing Matilda Centre and they did not think it appropriate. The Premier left in a hurry. She did not have the capacity to stay there and talk to the farmers about vegetation management.

Disappointingly, the member for Cook said she was not going to be told what to do by Canberra politicians. Perhaps the member for Cook needs to read the submissions that were put in to the committee inquiring into the vegetation management laws. I quote from the dissenting report by LNP members, where they quote some of the most scathing criticism of this legislation that came from the Cairns hearing, firstly from Mr Shannon Burns, a policy officer from the Cape York Land Council Aboriginal Corporation. He said—

The amendments to the Vegetation Management Act proposed by this bill would have significant impacts on Aboriginal land on Cape York.

Mr Gerhardt Pearson, executive officer of the Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation, said—

Mr Chairman, yes, this law may very well pass, it is poison law, but we will not rest, we will fight until the next government comes in and changes this law. That is our commitment here today. It is bad law.

Member for Cook, they are not Canberra politicians; they are your constituents of Far North Queensland saying that it is poison law.

What gets me most angry about this debate is if one goes on Google Earth and takes a screenshot of the city of Brisbane and South-East Queensland, and one looks at the people protesting out the front in the Greens movement today and the member for Maiwar as a member of the Greens in this parliament, they live in a concrete jungle. They come out of their concrete jungle, they go to their concrete cafes every morning for their drinks and they protest about farmers who have been managing their land for hundreds of years. If one gets that bird's eye view of Brisbane and South-East Queensland and then looks at the protestors, the farmers and those pro the vegetation management laws, tell me who has not managed the land—those living in a concrete jungle in a city or the farmers who continue to develop their land?

Every farmer knows that if they wreck the land they lose their livelihood. Farmers in Queensland are the best protectors of the environment and the land that we have in this state. I do not think farmers should be lectured to by inner city elites who leave their air-conditioned apartments every morning, go and work in the city and then come here and protest about vegetation management laws. These elitists would not have stepped foot in regional and rural Queensland, but they expect to go to the markets every Saturday and Sunday and get their fresh groceries. They want all their fresh produce, but do they not think where it comes from? Do they not think of the many hours of labour that has gone in to preparing that food to sell at the grocery stores or the markets? That is why I oppose this legislation. I oppose this legislation as a South-East Queensland member of parliament.

I have never been a farmer, although I have family members who were pig farmers. I am not going to come in here and tell farmers that I know best for rural and regional Queensland. What I will do as a South-East Queensland member is back them and stand up for them. I will end where I started: everyone in Queensland needs a farmer.