




Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

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VEGETATION MANAGEMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (6.09 pm): I support the Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. I would like to thank the minister for his work on this bill. I would like to thank the committee and the many submitters. The very high number of submissions is a welcome sign of the interest of the public in this important issue and it completely smashes any notion of a rushed consultation process that ignored the community. This is a myth peddled by those opposite.

Our environmental achievements include: stopping the Franklin Dam; declaring the Wet Tropics of Queensland a World Heritage area; stopping mining for oil on the Great Barrier Reef and creating the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park; increasing the amount of national park area to four per cent of the state; creating bikeways, city farms, low-emission buses and recycling in Brisbane; stopping logging on Fraser Island; introducing a price on carbon, which was sadly later removed; reinstating full objection rights for all Queenslanders in regards to mining activities; and introducing a total ban on single use plastic bags and a container deposit scheme.

All of these were controversial. All of these issues and achievements presented challenges for our community. All required significant changes in attitude and behaviour and all were delivered at the federal, state and Brisbane City Council levels by Labor. This bill, if passed, will continue this great Labor tradition of caring for the environment. Inevitably, many of these issues have required the balancing of the deeply held interests of many people and organisations. However, it is Labor governments that have managed to achieve these important environmental outcomes while balancing the interests of many and varied groups. When we look back on this list as a city, as a state and as a nation, we are rightly proud. One day we will be rightly proud of this bill as well.

The people in my electorate support Labor's action to respond to climate change. They understand that climate change is real and needs real action. The people of my electorate support this bill because it is about taking real action on climate change. They know that if this bill is passed it will protect Queensland's high-value regrowth vegetation, better protect the Great Barrier Reef and restore sustainable vegetation management frameworks in Queensland. They also understand how important agriculture is for our community and for our entire state. They value farmers and they know farmers care for their land.

I would like to briefly reflect on my late father-in-law. He devoted his life to agriculture, both as a farmer and as a long-term public servant with the department of primary industries, particularly in the fruit section. He put himself through his agricultural studies, which augmented years of practical experience gained almost from birth. For the entire time that I knew him he spent his whole week working at the DPI or later for private sector fruit exporters and then raced to one of his farms. There were two things that made him happy: his family and when he was working hard on and caring for his land. Being born in the 1930s, he had a fairly traditional view of land and land management, but in the last 10 years of his life he developed an interest in sustainability. He always spoke passionately about his land and he was the first person I heard speaking passionately about sustainable farming practices.

He did not just speak; he acted, changing his attitudes and his practices, and he based this all on science. I will not speculate on what he would have thought about these laws, but I know he valued science and sustainability and I know he cared deeply about the land. In this he was not unique. The majority of people involved in agriculture have practices that are driven by much the same things that drive my nursing practice: it is driven by science. I care for people and the farmers care for the land, plants and the animals, and these things are to the ultimate benefit of people. Science and sustainability: these are the things that people in the electorate of Greenslopes value and these are what this bill is based upon.

People in my electorate also know that if this bill is passed it will require changes to the way farmers manage their land. Change is hard. We are all having to change to adjust to a changing understanding of the limits of our resources. One of our key strengths as a species has been our willingness and our ability to adapt and to change. In fact, we have supercharged this strength by basing our changes and our adaptations on science.

We have a choice: we can ignore the science and bury our head in the sand, or we can base our policy on the best available science and create a system of sustainable vegetation management. We know what the LNP chose. They ignored the science; they buried their head in the sand; they ripped up the original balanced laws that were put in place by Labor. I choose to support this bill. I choose to support sustainable vegetation management practices in this state that will deliver better long-term outcomes for farmers, for consumers, for the environment and for future generations. I commend this bill to the House.