




Speech By  
**Julianne Gilbert**

**MEMBER FOR MACKAY**

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### **MINERAL, WATER AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (4.25 pm): I rise to contribute to the Mineral, Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill debate. The Mackay electorate is a service centre for the Bowen Basin mining hub and hopefully will service any mines that open in the Galilee Basin. The wider Mackay, Whitsunday and Isaac region is also an agricultural area producing sugar cane, dry crops, beef cattle, vegetables and some dairy. Mining, manufacturing and agriculture are of vital importance to my region. We have skin in the game. We want to ensure that legislation relating to our industries and water resources is right, now and into the future. I will focus on the section of this bill that deals with water.

People who live in my region want a balanced approach to water management and are prepared to work alongside each other's industries. At last week's Mackay Chamber of Commerce AGM, beef producer Peter Hughes and Lucas Dow from Adani talked honestly about water resources. They also talked about how the two sectors can work together, share resources and benefit from the improved infrastructure that each industry develops; for example, the roads that will be built for the mine.

Amendments to the Water Act 2000 will address the effects of climate change on water resources and recognise cultural values and the use of water resources by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The bill reaffirms the Queensland government's commitment to the Climate Change Adaption Strategy. The unpredictability of weather patterns is already evident in my region. Farmers and locals comment on when there used to be a wet season in January, but now there can be a wet winter or no rain at all. We have recently seen that cyclones are behaving differently. Ex-Tropical Cyclone Debbie is a case in point. It went on for days instead of being short and sharp when it crossed the coast.

The bill clarifies and strengthens approaches to climate change by making the consideration of water related effects of climate on water availability an explicit requirement when preparing a water plan. This will ensure that climate change is consistently and transparently considered in water-planning processes. Queenslanders need confidence that climate change risks to water resources have been identified and that strategies have been included in water plans to respond to these risks.

The bill also improves the way water-planning frameworks recognise cultural values and the use of water resources by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This will ensure that future water management decisions will consider cultural outcomes and that water plans will include strategies to achieve these outcomes. This amendment will support existing mechanisms for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to take and access water to support their economic development. I know that in my region our local Indigenous groups are planning on tourism activities and they will need to access some of the water.

Other proposed Water Act amendments include: supporting the productive use of unutilised allocations by providing temporary access to water that has been reserved for strategic water purposes; strengthening the water market by allowing water allocations to be traded multiple times per year; reinstating protections in water plans to mitigate potential risks when managing the capture and storage of contaminated agricultural water as growth of this take increases; and providing new direction power

to take action to deal with certain urgent water quality incidences. The water quality powers would only be used in exceptional circumstances and would take into account potential impacts on critical water supplies and the water security of water entitlement holders. The bill provides increased transparency and operational efficiencies in the Water Act.

I would like to thank Minister Lynham, his staff, the department and the committee for their work on this important bill in my part of the state, where there are sensitive industries working alongside each other. We need strong legislation to ensure our water resources are appropriately managed. I commend the bill to the House.